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EXPORT POLICY

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Contents

Introduction	4
Chapter 1: What are the Challenges?.....	6
1.1 Structural Economic Dependence on Tourism.....	6
1.2 Extremely Low Export Participation.....	7
1.3 Cost and Complexity of Input Imports.....	9
1.4 High Port and Shipping Costs, Low Logistical Efficiency	10
1.5 Weak Trade Facilitation and Regulatory Infrastructure.....	12
1.6 Inadequate Export Awareness and Support for SMEs	13
1.7 Standards and Technical Barriers	15
1.8 Market Access Barriers	16
1.9 Limited E-Commerce Infrastructure and Payment Integration.....	17
Chapter 2: Goals and Objectives	20
2.1 Structural Economic Dependence on Tourism.....	20
2.2 Extremely Low Export Participation.....	21
2.3 Cost and Complexity of Input Imports.....	22
2.4 High Port and Shipping Costs, Low Logistical Efficiency	23
2.5 Weak Trade Facilitation and Regulatory Infrastructure.....	24
2.6 Inadequate Export Awareness and Support for SMEs	25
2.7 Standards and Technical Barriers	26
2.8 Market Access Barriers	27
2.9 Limited E-Commerce Infrastructure and Payment Integration.....	28
Chapter 3: Actions to be Taken	29
3.1 Structural Economic Dependence on Tourism.....	29
3.2 Extremely Low Export Participation.....	30
3.3 Cost and Complexity of Input Imports.....	31
3.4 High Port and Shipping Costs, Low Logistical Efficiency	32
3.5 Weak Trade Facilitation and Regulatory Infrastructure.....	33
3.6 Inadequate Export Awareness and Support for SMEs	34
3.7 Standards and Technical Barriers	35
3.8 Market Access Barriers	36
3.9 Limited E-Commerce Infrastructure and Payment Integration.....	37

Chapter 4: Action Plan.....	38
4.1 Structural Economic Dependence on Tourism.....	41
4.2 Extremely Low Export Participation.....	43
4.3 Cost and Complexity of Input Imports.....	45
4.4 High Port and Shipping Costs, Low Logistical Efficiency	47
4.5 Weak Trade Facilitation and Regulatory Infrastructure.....	49
4.6 Inadequate Export Awareness and Support for SMEs	51
4.7 Standards and Technical Barriers	53
4.8 Market Access Barriers	55
4.9 Limited E-Commerce Infrastructure and Payment Integration.....	57
Annex.....	59
A.1 Governing Principles of the Export Policy.....	60
A.1.1 Export Policy Goal, Objectives, Target Groups and Principles.....	60
A.1.2 Life Cycle of the Policy.....	63
A.2 Current Export Profile in Aruba and the Region.....	67
A.2.1 Aruban Export Companies' Profile	67
A.2.2 Aruban Export Sector	72
A.3 Programs, Services and Export Achievements to Date.....	74
A.3.1 Exprodesk's Programs, Services and Export Achievements to Date	74
A.3.2 Aruba Trade Board.....	78

Introduction

Aruba's economic development over the past decades has been largely driven by tourism, which has served as the country's primary source of growth, employment, and foreign exchange. While this model has delivered prosperity and international visibility, it has also created a structural vulnerability. External shocks such as global health crises, geopolitical disruptions, and climate related risks have demonstrated that heavy reliance on a single export sector exposes the economy to sudden and severe downturns. The experience of recent years has reinforced the need for a more resilient, diversified, and outward oriented economic structure.

This Export Policy responds to that need by providing a coherent framework to strengthen Aruba's export capacity across goods, services, and digitally deliverable activities. It is grounded in the recognition that sustainable economic resilience cannot be achieved through tourism alone, but requires a broader base of internationally competitive firms capable of generating foreign exchange, innovation, and quality employment. Export development is therefore positioned not as a niche activity, but as a central pillar of Aruba's long term economic strategy.

Recently, the Government of Aruba has introduced a series of fiscal and regulatory measures aimed at removing structural barriers to exporting, supporting firm growth, and improving the overall competitiveness of the business environment. These include reforms to the Free Zone framework to accommodate modern service based and knowledge driven exports, targeted fiscal support for start-ups and early stage firms in priority sectors, incentives for urban redevelopment that expand the availability of suitable business space, and updated rules governing secondary employment benefits to enhance talent attraction and retention. Together, these measures represent a deliberate shift toward aligning fiscal policy, spatial development, and labor market instruments with export and diversification objectives.

This Export Policy provides the strategic bridge between those instruments and their effective use by businesses. It identifies the key challenges that continue to constrain export development, including low export participation among firms, high input and logistics costs, weaknesses in trade facilitation, limited awareness of export opportunities, technical and regulatory barriers, restricted market access, and gaps in e-commerce infrastructure. Particular attention is given to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), women led businesses, and firms in emerging sectors, which remain underrepresented in export activity despite significant potential.

The policy further aligns export promotion with the national development priorities set out in the Governance Plan 2025–2028. Priority areas such as agriculture and agri-tech, renewable energy, fintech and digital entrepreneurship, creative and cultural industries,

and urban revitalization are explicitly linked to export development, ensuring that internationalization supports broader economic, social, and spatial objectives.

This document is action oriented by design. It sets out clear goals, targeted actions, and an implementation framework that assigns responsibilities, timelines, and performance indicators. Exprodesk, as the national export authority within the Department of Economic Affairs, Commerce, and Industry, plays a central facilitative role by guiding businesses through the export ecosystem, connecting them to relevant instruments, and coordinating with domestic and international partners. While fiscal incentives and regulatory measures are administered by the competent authorities, Exprodesk ensures that export potential is translated into concrete international activity.

The overarching purpose of this Export Policy is to serve as a roadmap for Aruba's transition toward a more competitive, diversified, and resilient economy. By fostering an export oriented business culture, lowering structural barriers to internationalization, and strengthening the institutional framework that supports trade, Aruba will be better positioned to generate inclusive growth, attract investment, and secure long-term economic sustainability.

Chapter 1: What are the Challenges?

Overview of the Core Challenge

Aruba's economy is heavily over-reliant on the tourism sector, creating a fragile economic structure that is highly exposed to global shocks, such as pandemics, geopolitical shifts, or climate-related disruptions. Despite this vulnerability, only 4.5% of all businesses in Aruba are currently exporting (trade specific, excluding tourism), and these are concentrated in a narrow band of sectors. The lack of diversification in export activity, paired with an underdeveloped ecosystem for SMEs to scale internationally, has created a structural bottleneck that threatens long-term resilience, innovation, and competitiveness.

This policy was developed in response to the pressing need to diversify Aruba's economy through export growth, especially by empowering SMEs and removing critical bottlenecks in the value chain, trade facilitation, infrastructure, and institutional frameworks.

Below the key challenges identified can be found.

1.1 Structural Economic Dependence on Tourism

Aruba's post-oil development trajectory has been defined by a deliberate shift toward the tourism sector. Following the decline of the oil refining industry, Aruba successfully repositioned itself as a premier destination for international travelers, with tourism becoming the primary contributor to gross domestic product, employment, and foreign exchange earnings. This strategic realignment delivered economic stability and sustained growth over several decades. At the same time, it resulted in a structural imbalance, a form of economic monoculture that now poses a significant source of systemic risk.

The vulnerabilities inherent in this model were most clearly exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. With global travel abruptly coming to a standstill, Aruba experienced a sharp and immediate economic contraction. Tourism receipts declined dramatically, businesses closed, employment levels fell, and government revenues came under severe pressure. The crisis revealed the extent to which Aruba's economic performance and fiscal stability depend on a single dominant export sector. In the absence of a sufficiently developed base of non-tourism goods and services exports, there were few alternative avenues to sustain income, jobs, or foreign exchange inflows during periods of external shock.

Despite these warning signals, the non-tourism export sector remains underdeveloped. As identified during the investigation phase of this Export Policy, only 4.5% of Aruban companies currently engage in export activities outside of tourism. Export participation is concentrated among a relatively small number of established firms, often operating in niche markets and benefiting from long standing access to logistics, international networks, and capital. New enterprises, small and medium-sized firms, and women led businesses remain largely absent from global markets, limiting both economic diversification and inclusiveness.

Aruba's current economic structure has also constrained innovation and competitiveness in non-tourism sectors. Skills development systems, infrastructure investment, and financing mechanisms have historically evolved to serve the needs of the tourism industry, often at the expense of sectors such as agriculture, light manufacturing, creative industries, and internationally tradable services. As a result, several potentially exportable sectors have not received sufficient policy attention or market development support to achieve the scale, productivity, and market readiness required for international competition.

Although Aruba has long maintained a Free Zone framework intended to attract export oriented investment, its contribution to export diversification remained limited for many years. Narrow eligibility criteria, administrative complexity, and limited awareness reduced its effectiveness, particularly for service based and knowledge intensive activities. Recent reforms to the Free Zone regime have expanded eligibility to include a broader range of modern, high value industries, including digital and professional services, creative industries, maritime and aviation services, and other technology driven activities. This modernization creates renewed opportunities to reduce structural dependence on tourism and to stimulate export led growth.

Structural dependence on tourism is no longer simply a transitional feature of Aruba's development path, it has become a binding constraint on long term economic resilience. Reducing this dependency does not diminish the continued importance of tourism, but reflects the necessity of complementing it with a more diversified and outward oriented export base. Strengthening Aruba's capacity to export goods and services is therefore a critical step toward building an economy that can better withstand global shocks, generate broader sources of foreign exchange, and support inclusive and sustainable growth across a wider range of sectors.

1.2 Extremely Low Export Participation

A central challenge in Aruba's path toward economic diversification is the exceptionally low level of participation in export activities across the business community. As of the most recent analysis, only 4.5% of all registered companies in Aruba engage in any form

of export activity outside of tourism. This figure highlights a deep structural gap between economic potential and actual international engagement, and underscores the urgency of enabling broader participation in global markets, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Exporting remains the exception rather than the norm. As previously mentioned, current export activity is concentrated among a limited group of firms, most of which are older, well established businesses with the institutional knowledge, capital base, and international networks required to navigate cross border trade. Start-ups, microenterprises, and family owned businesses, by contrast, face significant barriers to entry and rarely succeed in transitioning beyond the domestic market.

The challenge is further amplified when viewed through an inclusion and equity lens. Women owned businesses and enterprises led by younger entrepreneurs are significantly underrepresented among exporters. Despite growing participation of women in entrepreneurship overall, their access to export markets, international exposure, and growth capital remains disproportionately low. This suggests that structural and systemic constraints, rather than firm size or sector alone, continue to limit access to export opportunities.

A contributing factor to low export participation is limited awareness of what constitutes an exportable good or service. Many Aruban businesses, particularly in the service sector, do not recognize that services delivered digitally, cross border, or to foreign clients visiting Aruba may qualify as exports under international trade frameworks. As a result, a significant share of Aruba's potential export capacity remains informal, invisible, or underutilized.

In addition, the small size of the domestic market provides limited incentives for businesses to scale organically. Businesses seeking sustained growth must ultimately look beyond Aruba, yet many lack access to tailored export support services, financing instruments, and risk sharing mechanisms. Without structured pathways and early stage support, firms are often unwilling or unable to commit the time, capital, and expertise required for international expansion.

The cumulative effect is a missed opportunity for diversification, productivity growth, and innovation. A narrow exporter base increases dependence on a small group of firms for trade driven income and foreign exchange, reducing economic resilience.

Addressing extremely low export participation therefore requires more than isolated technical interventions, it demands a systemic shift that repositions exporting as a mainstream and attainable growth pathway for a broad range of businesses, including SMEs, women owned enterprises, and firms in emerging sectors.

1.3 Cost and Complexity of Input Imports

One of the most immediate and tangible constraints facing Aruban exporters particularly those in production and value-added services is the high cost and administrative complexity of importing the inputs they need to operate. These inputs include raw materials, intermediate goods, packaging materials, and other production essentials. For firms that aim to compete in international markets, the inability to access inputs affordably and efficiently significantly undermines competitiveness and scale.

Aruba's import system imposes duties on virtually all goods entering the country, including materials that are not consumed domestically but are instead used for processing, repackaging, or transformation into export products. The cost burden created by these import duties is particularly acute for businesses engaged in light manufacturing, agriculture, food processing, and craft-based exports. Without exemptions or rebates, input costs accumulate across each stage of the value chain raising final product prices and reducing the ability of firms to compete with international producers that operate under more favorable trade conditions.

Although Aruba has a legal mechanism in place to grant import duty exemptions for industrial enterprises, the application of this system is limited in scope and overly complex in practice. The current framework requires firms to demonstrate that they fall within a narrowly defined set of criteria, including a 35% local value-added threshold and minimum employment targets. Moreover, the process for securing exemptions is often time consuming, lacks transparency, and is not accessible to smaller businesses that may not have dedicated compliance staff. As a result, many eligible exporters do not apply, and those who do often face delays or denials without clear feedback or recourse.

The burden of input costs is compounded by the limited reach of Aruba's international trade agreements. Apart from established relationships with the European Union, the United States, and Curaçao, Aruba has not negotiated access to broader preferential or bilateral trade frameworks. This restricts the ability of local firms to source affordable raw materials from regional or global partners under favorable tariff terms. It also places Aruban businesses at a disadvantage when compared to regional competitors who benefit from deeper trade integration.

In addition, some packaging materials despite being essential to the sale and export of goods are not eligible for duty exemptions under current law. This further increases costs for sectors such as agriculture, food and beverage, cosmetics, and artisanal products, which rely heavily on specialized packaging to meet both regulatory requirements and consumer expectations in foreign markets.

The overall result is a policy environment in which production for export is not adequately distinguished from production for domestic consumption. Exporters are effectively penalized for importing the inputs required to create products that bring foreign exchange into the country. This runs counter to global best practices, where most export oriented economies provide zero rated or duty free access to raw materials used in export production.

Reducing the cost and complexity of input imports is therefore essential to improving export competitiveness and encouraging investment in new and emerging sectors. Addressing this constraint will require more targeted and accessible duty exemption mechanisms, alongside clearer and more efficient customs procedures. Without reform in this area, Aruba's ambitions for economic diversification and inclusive export growth will continue to be constrained by structural inefficiencies that undermine the commercial viability of producing for international markets.

1.4 High Port and Shipping Costs, Low Logistical Efficiency

Aruba's geographic location and small domestic market make efficient port operations and cost-effective shipping systems critical to the success of any export strategy. However, current logistical conditions significantly undermine the ability of local businesses to move goods competitively and predictably to regional and global markets. Exporters face not only high transportation costs but also structural inefficiencies at the port and within customs processes that create delays, reduce reliability, and weaken price competitiveness abroad.

One of the most pressing challenges identified by exporters is the high cost of outbound sea transport. Aruba's limited shipping volume, combined with a lack of competition among service providers, drives up prices for containerized and pallet-based exports. Unlike larger economies that benefit from scale, Aruba struggles to negotiate favorable shipping rates, and exporters often face higher per-unit costs than their regional competitors. The issue is compounded by the fact that most shipments from Aruba are not part of consolidated, high-volume routes, which further restricts economies of scale and scheduling flexibility.

Another cost-related inefficiency lies in the treatment of full-circle tariffs on sea containers. Under current rules, businesses are required to pay container related import duties regardless of whether the container's primary purpose is to re-export goods. For example, shipping by sea/container shipping is currently subject to a full-circle tariff, which means a rate is charged in advance for the container for both inbound and outbound shipments. Other countries that have considerable imports and exports charge these separately, but Aruba's importers pay the tariff for exports as well (even though they are not exporting any goods). The rate for loaded containers and trailers

subjected to a full-circle tariff covers the discharge of the unit from the carrier (excluding crane rental charges), hauling to the stacking area, delivery, and gate control, and the same procedure upon return of the unit up to and including loading of the unit on the loading carrier (excluding crane rental charges). This one-size-fits-all tariff structure fails to distinguish between importers and exporters, thereby discouraging businesses from using shipping containers to move goods abroad. Exporters who rely on containerized freight are essentially penalized with additional fees that erode their margins.

Storage capacity and handling operations at the port also remain limited. Delays in container clearance, insufficient cold storage, and constrained space for staging outbound cargo contribute to logistical bottlenecks that delay shipment timelines and increase holding costs. These constraints are especially harmful for time sensitive products such as fresh produce, perishables, and seasonal goods.

Beyond costs and capacity, Aruba's logistical environment suffers from limited route frequency and poor inter-island connectivity. Exporters seeking to serve nearby markets such as Curaçao, Bonaire, or other Caribbean territories often face infrequent sailings, unpredictable schedules, and high minimum volume requirements. This limits the ability of small exporters to grow incrementally or build stable distribution relationships in the region.

Customs processes further compound these logistical challenges. Exporters report inconsistent documentation requirements, limited access to customs officials during off-peak hours, and delays in the inspection and clearance process. The lack of a pre-clearance mechanism means that goods cannot be processed in advance of departure, increasing the risk of last-minute delays. Moreover, customs personnel are often stretched thin, and exporters have noted a lack of specialized staff who understand export-specific requirements. Furthermore, processing time for packages is a barrier experienced by companies that utilize the services of Post Aruba N.V., as all packages, without exception (100% control), have to be inspected by customs. Inspecting every single package takes a long time and slows down the processing speed.

There is also an infrastructure gap in small package logistics. Businesses using Post Aruba services to send goods abroad do not currently have access to tracking systems or internationally recognized proof-of-origin documentation. This disproportionately affects SMEs engaged in e-commerce or low volume trade, which are among the most likely to need reliable, affordable parcel based export options.

Taken together, these logistical constraints create a cumulative disadvantage for Aruban exporters. Firms face elevated costs in sourcing inputs and then encounter a costly, slow, and unpredictable environment for moving goods to market. The combined effect reduces competitiveness, discourages export participation, and limits the potential for

firms to scale. Addressing port efficiency, shipping costs, customs procedures, and digital logistics is therefore essential to strengthening Aruba's export performance and enabling broader participation in regional and global trade.

1.5 Weak Trade Facilitation and Regulatory Infrastructure

A key barrier to Aruba's export growth lies in the limitations of its current trade facilitation and regulatory infrastructure. While the country is part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and enjoys a relatively open and rules based economic system, the institutions that govern and support cross border trade are not yet optimized for the realities and requirements of modern export activity. As a result, businesses particularly small and medium-sized enterprises face administrative, procedural, and information based obstacles that deter or delay their entry into international markets.

At present, Aruba does not have a fully functional, end-to-end trade facilitation system. There is no centralized export registry or digital platform through which exporters can submit documentation, access support programs, or track transactions. Only when exporting to the European Union can Aruban exporters make use of the online platform "REX" (Registered Exporters).

Customs processes remain largely manual and are not integrated with other trade relevant entities such as the ports authority, tax office, or statistical bureau. This creates duplication of effort, inconsistent procedures, and limited transparency for businesses attempting to comply with trade rules.

Moreover, Aruba lacks a dedicated export unit within its customs authority. Exporters must navigate systems and staff primarily designed for imports, and there is little specialized capacity to handle outbound trade efficiently. Export documentation often requires manual input, repeated visits to government offices, and physical stamps or signatures, which increases the time and cost required to ship goods.

Language accessibility is another barrier. Most customs and trade related documents are only available in Dutch, despite the fact that a large portion of the business community and many of its target export markets operate in English or Spanish. This restricts the ability of entrepreneurs to understand their obligations, reduces compliance, and creates avoidable misunderstandings with international clients or partners.

In addition, certain procedural gaps make it difficult for small exporters to access basic trade functions. For example, businesses using Post Aruba to send packages abroad are currently unable to obtain official certificates of origin or use standardized parcel tracking systems. These services are essential for establishing the legitimacy, reliability,

and traceability of shipments particularly in e-commerce, where small exporters rely on reputation and speed.

Rules of origin required to qualify for tariff preferences in partner markets are poorly understood and inconsistently applied. There is no dedicated unit or service to help businesses determine eligibility or secure advance rulings. The absence of a domestic framework for non-preferential origin determination also prevents Aruba from developing a formal “Made in Aruba” export identity, which is an increasingly important factor in global branding and consumer trust.

Another critical weakness is the lack of data collection and dissemination. Without reliable and up to date export statistics disaggregated by product, firm size, and destination, policymakers and support agencies are unable to target interventions or monitor performance effectively. Businesses, too, are left without the market intelligence needed to assess demand trends, pricing benchmarks, or regulatory changes in key markets.

Finally, trade related institutions in Aruba often operate in silos. Customs, ports, investment promotion agencies, and trade support organizations function independently, with limited coordination or shared objectives. This fragmented governance structure creates confusion for exporters and results in inconsistent policy implementation.

Taken together, these weaknesses result in a trade facilitation environment that imposes unnecessary burdens on exporters while failing to provide adequate support. To unlock Aruba’s export potential, trade facilitation must evolve from a compliance focused system into an enabling framework that supports efficiency, transparency, and competitiveness. Modernizing customs processes, improving digital integration, enhancing language accessibility, and strengthening institutional coordination are therefore essential components of an effective export strategy.

1.6 Inadequate Export Awareness and Support for SMEs

One of the most pervasive yet less visible barriers to Aruba’s export development is the widespread lack of awareness among local businesses particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) about what exporting entails, how to begin, and what support mechanisms are available. This knowledge gap significantly hinders the country’s ability to expand its base of active exporters and build a culture in which international trade is seen as a viable and desirable pathway for business growth.

Despite Aruba’s open economy and access to global markets, many businesses remain unaware that they are already participating in export activities or have the potential to do so. This is particularly true for service-oriented firms. Under international trade

frameworks, services can be exported not only by delivering them abroad, but also when they are consumed in Aruba by foreign clients such as tourists, students, or business delegations. Yet most local firms do not recognize these transactions as exports, nor are they aware of how to structure their operations to benefit from this status.

Even among businesses that produce goods or offer technical services, there is limited understanding of how to access foreign markets. Entrepreneurs frequently lack the knowledge, tools, or strategic outlook needed to develop export plans, conduct market research, comply with international standards, or navigate logistical and customs requirements. As a result, firms that may be technically capable of exporting are held back by uncertainty, perceived risk, and insufficient information.

The problem is compounded by the limited visibility of support programs and advisory services. While institutions such as Exprodesk have offered export coaching, training events, and trade-related workshops, participation rates remain modest, and the reach of these efforts has been uneven. Many entrepreneurs are either unaware of the available programs or perceive them as too bureaucratic or generic to address their specific needs. As noted in consultations and workshop evaluations, businesses often need targeted, sector specific, and practical guidance rather than abstract training or one-off events.

Financial barriers also play a significant role. Most SMEs in Aruba are self-financed and risk-averse. The perceived costs of exporting related to shipping, certification, marketing, or legal compliance can deter businesses from even exploring the possibility. Without access to early stage financing, export guarantees, or cost sharing instruments, many firms remain focused solely on the domestic market, where risks are more familiar and returns more predictable.

The absence of a unified national campaign or institutional framework to promote export awareness has left many businesses to rely on informal networks, word-of-mouth, or ad hoc information to guide their decisions. While some businesses succeed despite these gaps, the system does not scale. Without a broader effort to demystify exporting and provide structured, accessible entry points, Aruba's SME sector will continue to underperform in international markets.

Strengthening export awareness and support for SMEs is therefore a central requirement for inclusive export growth. Expanding participation will require addressing informational gaps, improving visibility and accessibility of support mechanisms, and aligning institutional outreach with the needs of firms at different stages of readiness. Without progress in this area, structural constraints identified throughout this chapter will continue to limit Aruba's ability to broaden its exporter base and fully realize the potential of trade-led diversification.

1.7 Standards and Technical Barriers

For many Aruban businesses, the ability to access international markets is not limited by the quality or appeal of their products, but by their capacity to meet the technical and regulatory standards required in those markets. Compliance with international norms such as sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, technical barriers to trade (TBT), labeling regulations, and certification schemes has become a non-negotiable aspect of global commerce. Unfortunately, Aruba's current support infrastructure does not adequately equip exporters, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to overcome these requirements.

A significant number of local businesses struggle to access affordable and timely services for testing, inspection, and certification. Sectors such as food production, agriculture, cosmetics, natural products, and crafts are especially vulnerable. These sectors often involve small producers who lack the technical expertise, equipment, or financial resources to verify product compliance. Without recognized certification, these businesses are either excluded from export opportunities or exposed to reputational and legal risks if products do not meet foreign regulatory standards.

The problem is particularly acute for producers targeting highly regulated markets such as the European Union or the United States. In these jurisdictions, stringent rules govern everything from product composition and packaging materials to health and environmental impact. A business may have a viable product, but without the ability to demonstrate compliance via laboratory tests, conformity assessments, or approved labeling it will not be allowed to enter the market.

At present, Aruba does not have a strong domestic framework to support businesses in navigating these technical requirements. There is no national certification body or accredited testing laboratory that can provide exporters with the necessary documentation locally. As a result, firms must often send samples abroad for testing, adding time, cost, and logistical complexity to the export process. For small producers, this is frequently a prohibitive burden, and many choose to forgo international opportunities altogether.

In addition to the physical infrastructure gap, there is a broader issue of information and technical capacity. Many entrepreneurs are not fully aware of the standards that apply in different markets, how to identify them, or how to interpret them correctly. The lack of accessible training, sector-specific guidance, or support from experienced consultants leaves businesses navigating complex regulatory systems on their own.

There is also limited coordination between government agencies, trade support institutions, and international partners to build the local ecosystem needed to address this challenge. Existing programs are fragmented and insufficiently resourced, and there

is no national strategy to systematically upgrade compliance readiness across priority sectors.

These technical barriers do more than block market entry they contribute to inequality within the export landscape. Larger firms with international networks or access to external financing can often navigate these systems, while smaller businesses remain locked out. As a result, Aruba's export profile remains narrow, excluding a wide range of potentially competitive products that reflect local knowledge, natural resources, and creativity.

Addressing standards and technical barriers is therefore essential to expanding Aruba's export base. Building credible and accessible compliance pathways strengthens trust in Aruban products, enhances international competitiveness, and enables a wider range of firms to participate in global trade. Without progress in this area, many potential exporters—particularly SMEs—will continue to face structural barriers that limit their ability to access high-value international markets.

1.8 Market Access Barriers

While Aruba maintains long-standing economic relationships with key partners such as the European Union, the United States, and Curaçao, its overall access to international markets remains limited and underleveraged. This is particularly problematic for a small island economy with limited domestic demand and a strong need to scale production beyond its borders. Market access constraints both structural and strategic continue to undermine Aruba's efforts to expand its export base and integrate more fully into regional and global trade systems.

One of the primary limitations is the country's narrow participation in preferential trade arrangements. Beyond existing frameworks with the EU and U.S., Aruba has not actively pursued membership or inclusion in regional trade agreements that could lower tariffs, reduce non-tariff barriers, and facilitate smoother entry into new markets. As a result, Aruban exporters face higher duties, complex customs procedures, and inconsistent regulatory expectations in many potential destination markets. Competing producers in neighboring countries often enjoy more favorable terms, placing Aruba at a disadvantage despite the quality or uniqueness of its goods and services.

Even where trade preferences do exist, many businesses struggle to take full advantage due to difficulties complying with rules of origin. These rules intended to ensure that only eligible goods benefit from preferential treatment require exporters to track, document, and sometimes physically verify the origin of inputs and processing activities. In Aruba, few businesses have the technical knowledge or administrative systems needed to manage this process efficiently. This is particularly burdensome for

SMEs, which often rely on imported components, produce in small batches, and lack dedicated export compliance staff.

Currently, there is no national unit tasked with helping businesses interpret and apply rules of origin, and no accessible reference materials are available in multiple languages. As a result, many firms either misapply the rules, forgo preferences, or avoid exporting altogether. Furthermore, Aruba lacks a formal system for issuing advance rulings or managing non-preferential origin declarations. This limits transparency and increases uncertainty in cross-border transactions.

In addition to institutional gaps, Aruba has not yet developed a national framework for promoting a “Made in Aruba” brand. In global markets, origin labeling plays an important role in building product identity, signaling quality, and supporting place-based marketing strategies. Without a legally defined and widely adopted origin mark, Aruba’s products are less recognizable to consumers abroad, and producers miss the opportunity to distinguish their offerings from mass-market alternatives.

Another missed opportunity lies in the underdevelopment of digital and services trade agreements. While Aruba has a growing creative and professional services sector, including digital content producers, designers, and consultants, these exporters operate without the benefit of market access frameworks that reduce administrative and regulatory frictions. The lack of mutual recognition agreements, cross-border digital tax coordination, or standardized data privacy rules creates barriers that limit the scalability of these service exports.

The broader implication is that Aruba’s exporters operate in a fragmented and competitive global environment without sufficient institutional support to navigate it. This restricts the country's ability to diversify its export destinations, penetrate niche markets, or take advantage of regional demand for Caribbean goods and services.

Strengthening market access is not solely a matter of negotiating lower tariffs. It also requires institutional capacity to support exporters in navigating trade rules, leveraging preferences, and building credible origin-based identities. For Aruba, improved market access is a necessary condition for export diversification, competitiveness, and inclusive economic growth.

1.9 Limited E-Commerce Infrastructure and Payment Integration

As global trade increasingly shifts to digital platforms, Aruba’s ability to compete in international markets depends in part on the strength of its e-commerce ecosystem. While some local entrepreneurs have begun to use digital tools to reach overseas customers particularly in creative services, fashion, and craft-based products they face

a series of persistent legal, infrastructural, and financial barriers that limit their ability to participate fully in the global digital economy.

One of the most critical obstacles is the lack of reliable international payment processing options. Aruban businesses are currently unable to access commonly used e-commerce payment systems such as Stripe, PayPal, Square, or Shopify Payments due to restrictions related to the island's regulatory and banking framework. These platforms are standard in international e-commerce transactions and are often required by global marketplaces, customers, and even web design templates. Without access to them, Aruban businesses cannot easily receive payments from foreign clients, integrate payment gateways into websites, or automate invoicing and financial reconciliation.

This lack of integration puts Aruban exporters especially small businesses and freelancers at a significant disadvantage compared to peers in other countries. Entrepreneurs are forced to rely on manual bank transfers, which are slower, more expensive, and less trusted by international buyers. The absence of digital payment systems also undermines customer experience and trust, both of which are crucial in online retail environments. In effect, many Aruban businesses are locked out of the modern e-commerce landscape. This limitation has compelled local businesses to establish accounts outside Aruba with more innovative options offering lower bank fees, enabling them to tap into global markets.

Compounding the problem is the absence of a comprehensive legal framework for e-commerce. Aruba does not yet have a fully developed set of laws that regulate online transactions, digital consumer protection, data privacy, or platform liability. This legal ambiguity creates uncertainty for businesses and consumers alike and makes it more difficult to build reliable, scalable e-commerce services. Entrepreneurs may hesitate to invest in online storefronts or digital services without a clear understanding of their legal rights and obligations.

Moreover, logistics systems have not been fully adapted to support the needs of small-package exports. As noted previously in the policy, Post Aruba does not currently offer robust parcel tracking or easy access to certificates of origin both of which are necessary for selling through e-commerce platforms that require verified shipping and customs compliance.

Taken together, these legal and technical constraints are preventing Aruba from taking advantage of a growing segment of global trade. While other small economies have turned to e-commerce as a pathway for SME-led export growth, Aruba's current environment makes this channel difficult to access and costly to operate.

Addressing limitations in e-commerce infrastructure and payment integration is therefore essential to expanding Aruba's export base, particularly in services, creative industries, and digitally deliverable activities. Without progress in this area, a growing

segment of entrepreneurial and export potential will remain excluded from global markets, undermining competitiveness and long-term economic resilience.

Chapter 2: Goals and Objectives

2.1 Structural Economic Dependence on Tourism

In response to Aruba's structural overreliance on tourism, the central strategic objective of this Export Policy is to diversify the national economy by expanding the scale, scope, and sophistication of non-tourism exports. This objective is grounded in the recognition that long-term economic resilience, income stability, and productivity growth can only be achieved by broadening the country's productive base and increasing the contribution of export-oriented activities beyond tourism.

The Export Policy explicitly positions Aruba's transition away from a mono-export, tourism-based economic model toward a more balanced and diversified export structure that includes goods, services, and knowledge based activities. Export development is therefore framed not as a sector specific intervention, but as a structural transformation of the economy. This policy provides, for the first time, an integrated and operational framework to guide export development, align institutions, and translate diversification ambitions into coordinated action.

A core objective underpinning this transition is the cultivation of an export oriented business culture among local firms, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Many Aruban businesses currently operate exclusively within the domestic market or tourism value chain, despite possessing products or services with clear export potential. This includes not only physical goods, but also services such as information and communication technology, creative industries, professional services, logistics, and other digitally deliverable activities. The policy therefore seeks to reposition exporting as a mainstream growth pathway by improving awareness, strengthening capabilities, and reducing structural barriers to internationalization.

Achieving this objective requires targeted interventions that enable firms to progress from domestic operations toward sustained participation in regional and global markets. The Export Policy prioritizes measures that lower the cost and risk of exporting, improve access to trade related infrastructure and support services, and strengthen the overall competitiveness of non-tourism sectors. By doing so, the policy aims to expand the number of export-capable firms, stimulate investment in productive activities, and generate higher value-added employment.

This diversification objective is closely aligned with national development priorities set out in the Governance Plan 2025–2028, including the promotion of SME growth in sectors such as agriculture and agri-tech, renewable energy, creative and cultural industries, fintech, and other innovation-driven activities. Export development within

these priority areas contributes directly to reducing vulnerability to tourism shocks while supporting sustainable job creation and technological upgrading.

In addition, recent reforms to Aruba's export related policy framework reinforce this strategic objective. The modernization of the Free Zone regime supports the attraction and scaling of export oriented enterprises in service based and knowledge intensive sectors, while targeted fiscal and regulatory measures improve the broader enabling environment for non-tourism economic activity. Together, these instruments complement the Export Policy's objective of building a more diversified, outward facing, and resilient economy.

2.2 Extremely Low Export Participation

In response to the extremely low level of export participation among Aruban firms, this Export Policy sets the strategic objective of significantly increasing both the number and diversity of active exporters. With only an estimated 4.5 percent of registered companies engaged in export activity outside of tourism, expanding participation is essential to achieving meaningful diversification and resilience. Particular emphasis is placed on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), women led businesses, and new market entrants, which remain substantially underrepresented in international trade.

This objective seeks to foster a pro-export business culture by improving awareness of export opportunities, strengthening access to support mechanisms, and lowering the practical barriers associated with entering foreign markets. Exporting is positioned not as an exceptional activity reserved for a limited group of firms, but as a viable and attainable growth strategy for a broad segment of the business community. Special attention is given to service based and digitally deliverable activities, which are often overlooked despite their export potential.

A key element of this objective is the strengthening of institutional support for first time and early stage exporters. Exprodesk is positioned as a central coordination and facilitation point within the export ecosystem, supporting firms through awareness building, diagnostics, and targeted guidance. By improving the visibility, accessibility, and relevance of export support services, the policy aims to encourage more firms to take initial steps toward internationalization.

The objective further emphasizes the need to reduce entry barriers for smaller firms and underrepresented groups. Creating a more inclusive export environment requires addressing informational gaps, capability constraints, and perceived risks that disproportionately affect SMEs and women led enterprises. By expanding tailored

coaching, practical guidance, and phased support mechanisms, the policy seeks to enable a wider range of firms to participate meaningfully in global trade.

Expanding export participation contributes directly to national development priorities outlined in the Governance Plan 2025–2028, particularly the promotion of SME growth and entrepreneurship in emerging and innovation driven sectors such as creative industries, fintech, agri-tech, renewable energy, and professional services. A broader and more diverse exporter base also supports balanced economic activity across different geographic areas, including urban revitalization zones and newly developed economic areas.

By increasing the number of firms that export and by diversifying the profile of exporters, this objective strengthens the foundations of a more resilient, inclusive, and outward oriented economy.

2.3 Cost and Complexity of Input Imports

To address the cost and administrative burden associated with importing production inputs, this Export Policy sets the strategic objective of improving the competitiveness of export oriented firms by reducing input related costs and simplifying customs procedures. The policy recognizes that Aruba’s import dependent production structure disproportionately penalizes firms that produce for export, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises that rely on imported raw materials, packaging, and intermediate goods.

This objective is grounded in the principle that inputs used exclusively for export production should not be treated in the same manner as goods imported for domestic consumption. Reducing tariff and procedural barriers on production inputs is therefore essential to improving price competitiveness, cash flow, and scalability for export producing firms.

The policy seeks to modernize and rationalize existing duty exemption mechanisms to better reflect the realities of contemporary export production. While current industrial enterprise exemptions provide a legal basis for tariff relief, their scope and administrative complexity have limited uptake, particularly among SMEs. The strategic objective is to broaden eligibility, simplify requirements, and improve accessibility so that a wider range of export oriented firms can benefit from input duty relief.

Special attention is given to inputs that are critical to export viability but are not consistently recognized within existing exemption frameworks, such as packaging materials and production related consumables. By addressing these gaps, the policy aims to reduce cumulative cost pressures across the value chain and enable firms to compete more effectively in international markets.

Lowering the cost and complexity of input imports supports export development across priority economic sectors identified in the Governance Plan 2025–2028, including agriculture and agri-tech, renewable energy, creative industries, manufacturing, and emerging production activities. It also strengthens the economic viability of export oriented firms operating in urban revitalization areas and redevelopment zones, where access to affordable inputs is a key determinant of business sustainability.

By improving the treatment of production inputs within the trade and customs framework, this objective contributes to a more enabling environment for value added production, export growth, and diversification of Aruba’s economic base.

2.4 High Port and Shipping Costs, Low Logistical Efficiency

To address the structural disadvantages created by high port charges, shipping costs, and logistical inefficiencies, this Export Policy sets the strategic objective of improving the efficiency, predictability, and affordability of Aruba’s trade logistics system. Given Aruba’s geographic realities and small market size, competitive logistics are a prerequisite for export growth rather than a supporting condition.

This objective focuses on reducing cost burdens and operational delays that disproportionately affect exporters, particularly those engaged in goods production and value added activities. High sea freight rates, limited route frequency, and weak inter island connectivity currently undermine Aruba’s ability to serve regional and international markets in a reliable and scalable manner. Improving logistical performance is therefore essential to strengthening export competitiveness and market access.

The policy emphasizes the importance of closer coordination among key trade and logistics stakeholders, including the Aruba Ports Authority, shipping agents, customs authorities, and relevant public entities. At a strategic level, the objective is to ensure that port operations, tariff structures, and inspection procedures adequately distinguish between import and export activities, and that exporters are not disproportionately burdened by cost structures designed primarily for inbound trade.

Improving logistical efficiency also requires modernization of procedures and systems governing the movement of goods. Streamlining documentation, expanding the use of digital processes, and improving scheduling and operating flexibility are critical to reducing delays and uncertainty. A more export responsive logistics environment improves reliability for international buyers and reduces working capital pressures for exporters.

Establishing a modern, transparent, and cost-effective logistics framework directly supports export growth across priority sectors, including agriculture and agri-tech,

renewable energy technologies, creative industries, and other production oriented activities. More efficient logistics also facilitate the movement of materials and outputs associated with urban revitalization and redevelopment initiatives, strengthening the commercial viability of export oriented firms operating in these areas.

By improving trade logistics and reducing export related shipping costs, this objective contributes to positioning Aruba as a more reliable and competitive trading partner, capable of supporting sustained export activity despite inherent scale and geographic constraints.

2.5 Weak Trade Facilitation and Regulatory Infrastructure

To address institutional fragmentation and administrative burdens affecting exporters, this Export Policy sets the strategic objective of strengthening Aruba's trade facilitation framework and creating a more integrated, export oriented regulatory environment. Efficient and transparent trade institutions are essential to reducing transaction costs, improving predictability, and enabling firms, particularly SMEs, to engage in international trade with confidence.

This objective focuses on improving the coherence, accessibility, and responsiveness of trade related institutions and procedures. Exporters currently interact with multiple public entities through processes that are often manual, duplicative, and insufficiently coordinated. Strengthening trade facilitation therefore requires better alignment across customs administration, ports, postal services, trade support institutions, and data producing agencies.

A central element of this objective is the development of export friendly systems and processes that are designed around outbound trade, rather than adapted from import focused frameworks. This includes improving the clarity and consistency of export procedures, enhancing language accessibility, and increasing the use of digital tools to streamline documentation and information flows. Improving the availability and quality of trade related data is also essential to supporting evidence based policymaking and informed business decision making.

By strengthening institutional coordination and modernizing regulatory processes, the policy aims to reduce compliance burdens, shorten processing times, and increase transparency for exporters. A more predictable and user oriented trade facilitation environment lowers entry barriers for new exporters and improves the operating conditions for firms seeking to scale internationally.

Enhanced trade facilitation supports export growth across all priority sectors identified in the Governance Plan 2025–2028. Streamlined and coordinated procedures benefit goods exporters by reducing delays and costs, while service oriented and digital firms

gain greater regulatory clarity for cross border operations. Improved institutional effectiveness also contributes to a stronger investment climate, supporting export oriented activity in urban revitalization areas and redevelopment zones.

Strengthening trade facilitation and regulatory coordination is therefore a foundational objective for building a more competitive, efficient, and inclusive export ecosystem in Aruba.

2.6 Inadequate Export Awareness and Support for SMEs

To address gaps in export awareness, readiness, and technical capability, this Export Policy sets the strategic objective of strengthening the export capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Increasing the number of firms that are informed, prepared, and capable of engaging in international trade is essential to expanding Aruba's exporter base and ensuring that diversification efforts are inclusive and sustainable.

This objective focuses on improving knowledge, confidence, and practical capabilities among SMEs that have limited exposure to export activity. Many firms possess viable products or services but lack clarity on export processes, market requirements, and risk management. Strengthening awareness and capacity therefore aims to reduce informational barriers and transform exporting into a realistic and attainable growth option.

A central element of this objective is the provision of accessible, practical, and demand driven support that reflects the realities of the local business environment. Export related guidance must be tailored to firms at different stages of readiness and responsive to sector specific needs. Particular attention is given to women owned businesses, microenterprises, and first time exporters, which remain underrepresented in international trade despite demonstrated entrepreneurial potential.

Exprodesk plays a key facilitative role in advancing this objective by coordinating outreach, diagnostics, and advisory support within the broader export ecosystem. By strengthening linkages between awareness building, capacity development, and other export enabling instruments, the policy seeks to create clearer pathways for firms to progress from domestic operations to international markets.

Enhancing SME export capacity directly supports national development priorities outlined in the Governance Plan 2025–2028, including entrepreneurship, innovation, and inclusive economic growth in sectors such as creative industries, fintech, agri-tech, renewable energy, and professional services. Strengthened export readiness among SMEs also contributes to more dynamic economic activity in urban revitalization areas, reinforcing Aruba's broader objectives for balanced and resilient development.

By expanding export awareness and capacity among SMEs, this objective lays the foundation for a broader, more diverse, and more competitive exporter base capable of sustaining long-term trade-led growth.

2.7 Standards and Technical Barriers

To address barriers related to standards and technical compliance, this Export Policy sets the strategic objective of strengthening exporters' ability to meet international quality, safety, and regulatory requirements in a credible and cost effective manner. Compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, technical barriers to trade (TBT), and market specific certification requirements is a prerequisite for accessing many international markets and must be treated as a core component of export competitiveness.

This objective focuses on reducing the structural disadvantages faced by Aruban exporters, particularly SMEs, when navigating complex standards regimes. Many firms lack affordable access to testing, certification, and technical guidance, which limits their ability to demonstrate compliance and enter regulated markets. Strengthening compliance capacity therefore aims to ensure that technical requirements do not become exclusionary barriers to trade.

Priority attention is given to sectors where standards compliance is most critical, including food production, agriculture, cosmetics, natural products, crafts, and other regulated goods and services. Enabling firms in these sectors to understand, interpret, and apply relevant international standards is essential to expanding export participation and diversifying Aruba's export profile.

Improving standards compliance also contributes to building trust in Aruban products and services in international markets. When firms can reliably demonstrate conformity with recognized norms, Aruba's reputation as a quality producer and trading partner is strengthened. This, in turn, supports market entry, repeat transactions, and long term commercial relationships.

Strengthening compliance with international standards aligns with national development priorities outlined in the Governance Plan 2025–2028, particularly in sectors such as agriculture and agri-tech, renewable energy technologies, creative industries, and other value added activities. Enhanced compliance capacity also supports inclusive export growth by enabling SMEs and smaller producers, including those operating in urban revitalization areas and redevelopment zones to compete in regulated markets.

By reinforcing exporters' ability to meet international standards and technical requirements, this objective contributes to a more competitive, credible, and diversified export base capable of accessing higher value markets.

2.8 Market Access Barriers

To overcome barriers related to limited and underutilized market access, this Export Policy sets the strategic objective of expanding Aruba's effective access to international markets while strengthening the country's export identity. For a small, open economy with limited domestic demand, sustained export growth depends not only on firm level competitiveness, but also on the ability to navigate trade frameworks, leverage preferences, and position products and services clearly in global markets.

This objective focuses on improving Aruba's capacity to benefit from existing and future market access arrangements and to reduce uncertainty faced by exporters when entering new destinations. Many firms are unable to fully utilize available trade preferences due to limited understanding of rules of origin, lack of advisory support, and absence of structured guidance. Strengthening institutional capacity in this area is therefore essential to enabling exporters to compete on fair and predictable terms.

A key dimension of this objective is reinforcing Aruba's export identity through clearer origin determination and recognition. Establishing a coherent approach to non-preferential origin and strengthening the visibility of Aruban products and services in international markets supports differentiation, trust, and value creation. A recognizable national export identity enhances market positioning and complements firm level branding efforts.

Improved market access also requires attention to emerging forms of trade, including services and digitally deliverable activities, where regulatory clarity and mutual recognition increasingly shape competitiveness. By strengthening its approach to market access across both goods and services, Aruba can better integrate into regional and global value chains and diversify export destinations.

Expanding market access and strengthening export identity aligns with the Governance Plan 2025–2028 and supports export development across priority sectors such as agriculture and agri-tech, creative industries, fintech, renewable energy, and professional services. Enhanced access and clearer origin positioning also reinforce the role of urban revitalization areas and redevelopment zones as visible sources of export oriented activity.

By improving market access conditions and elevating the global profile of Aruban products and services, this objective contributes to a more competitive, diversified, and resilient export economy.

2.9 Limited E-Commerce Infrastructure and Payment Integration

To address emerging barriers related to digital trade, this Export Policy sets the strategic objective of enabling e-commerce driven exports by strengthening access to international payment systems, improving regulatory clarity, and ensuring that logistics and support infrastructure are compatible with online trade models. As global commerce increasingly shifts toward digital channels, the ability to transact, receive payments, and deliver goods and services online is becoming a core determinant of export competitiveness.

This objective recognizes that limited access to internationally accepted payment platforms currently constrains Aruban firms' participation in the global digital economy. The absence of seamless online payment options restricts the ability of businesses, particularly SMEs, freelancers, and creative and service providers, to sell to foreign clients, integrate with global marketplaces, and scale digital operations. Addressing these constraints is essential to ensuring that Aruban exporters can compete on equal footing in online markets.

Beyond payments, effective participation in digital trade requires an enabling legal and institutional framework that provides clarity and confidence for both businesses and consumers. Regulatory coherence in areas such as electronic transactions, consumer protection, and data governance supports trust, reduces risk, and encourages investment in e-commerce based business models.

Digital trade is also dependent on logistics systems that can accommodate high volume, low value shipments typical of e-commerce. Ensuring that postal, customs, and documentation processes are compatible with small parcel exports improves reliability and market access for online sellers, particularly first time exporters.

Enabling e-commerce and digital trade directly supports priority sectors identified in the Governance Plan 2025–2028, including fintech, digital entrepreneurship, creative industries, and professional services. Enhanced digital export capacity also provides firms in agriculture, renewable energy, and urban revitalization areas with additional channels to reach international customers.

By strengthening the foundations for e-commerce and digital trade, this objective expands Aruba's export toolkit, supports innovation driven growth, and ensures that the country remains competitive in an increasingly digital global economy.

Chapter 3: Actions to be Taken

3.1 Structural Economic Dependence on Tourism

To reduce Aruba's structural dependence on tourism, the Ministry will pursue a coordinated set of export oriented actions aimed at accelerating diversification into goods, services, and knowledge based activities. These actions are designed to operationalize the strategic objectives set out in Chapter 2 and to translate recent fiscal and regulatory reforms into tangible export outcomes. The focus is on enabling firms to internationalize, strengthening competitiveness, and building resilient non-tourism sources of foreign exchange.

A central action under this objective is the effective deployment and alignment of existing fiscal instruments that support export oriented activity. Recent incentive frameworks, including preferential tax treatment for qualifying activities, targeted duty relief mechanisms, and the modernized Free Zone regime, will be positioned as export enabling tools rather than standalone investment incentives. The Ministry will ensure that these instruments are applied in a manner that lowers production costs for exporters, supports value added activity, and encourages firms to orient their business models toward international markets.

In parallel, the Ministry will strengthen the institutional framework for export promotion and coordination. Exprodesk will function as the central facilitation and navigation point within the export ecosystem, guiding firms toward appropriate regimes, support instruments, and international opportunities. Institutional coordination across government entities involved in trade, investment, customs, and economic development will be reinforced to ensure coherence, reduce duplication, and improve execution.

Targeted outreach and capacity building activities will support the development of a broader export culture beyond tourism. Awareness initiatives, export readiness diagnostics, and market oriented support will be used to help firms identify export potential and take initial steps toward internationalization. Particular attention will be given to SMEs, women led enterprises, and first time exporters in priority sectors.

The renewed Free Zone framework will be actively leveraged as a scaling instrument for export oriented firms in service based and innovation driven sectors. By facilitating access to a competitive operational environment for internationally tradable activities such as digital services, professional consulting, creative industries, medical services, and renewable energy related activities, the Free Zone will support diversification into higher value added exports.

All actions under this objective will be aligned with the Governance Plan 2025–2028 and focused on priority sectors including agriculture and agri-tech, renewable energy, fintech and digital entrepreneurship, creative industries, and other emerging activities. Through coordinated fiscal, institutional, and promotional actions, the Ministry will advance a practical and execution focused pathway toward reducing Aruba's dependence on tourism and strengthening export led economic resilience.

3.2 Extremely Low Export Participation

To address Aruba's extremely low level of export participation, the Ministry will implement a coordinated set of actions aimed at lowering entry barriers and creating clearer pathways for firms to enter and sustain export activity. With export participation concentrated among a limited number of firms and sectors, expanding the exporter base, particularly among SMEs, women led enterprises, and first time exporters, is essential to diversification and economic resilience.

A key action under this objective is the structured strengthening of export readiness and guidance mechanisms. Through Exprodesk, businesses will be supported in assessing export potential, understanding market requirements, and developing realistic pathways toward internationalization. Rather than one off interventions, the emphasis will be on phased engagement that allows firms to progress from awareness to preparation and, ultimately, to market entry.

Collaboration with the Free Zone framework will be leveraged as a scaling pathway for firms that demonstrate export maturity and growth potential. The modernized Free Zone regime provides an enabling environment for service based, technology driven, and knowledge intensive activities to scale internationally from Aruba. Alignment between Exprodesk's exporter pipeline and the Free Zone will ensure that firms transition into this framework at the appropriate stage of development.

Targeted outreach and awareness activities will support the normalization of exporting as a business growth strategy. By working with sector associations, chambers of commerce, and local stakeholders, the Ministry will improve visibility of export opportunities and clarify the practical steps required to engage in international trade. Particular attention will be given to sectors and geographic areas where export participation remains limited.

Access to finance remains an important enabling condition for new exporters. The Ministry will therefore work with relevant financial institutions and partners to improve awareness and uptake of existing export relevant financing and risk mitigation instruments, while avoiding the creation of parallel funding structures. Improved

information flow and coordination will help SMEs better navigate available financial options when preparing to scale for export.

All actions under this objective will be aligned with the Governance Plan 2025–2028 and focused on priority sectors such as agri-tech, fintech, renewable energy, creative industries, and other emerging activities. By expanding export participation in a structured and inclusive manner, the Ministry aims to build a broader, more resilient base of exporting firms capable of contributing to sustainable economic growth.

3.3 Cost and Complexity of Input Imports

To address the cost and administrative burden associated with importing production inputs, the Ministry will implement targeted actions aimed at improving the treatment of inputs used for export oriented production. High duties and complex procedures on raw materials, intermediate goods, and packaging materials continue to undermine the competitiveness of Aruban exporters, particularly SMEs engaged in value added activities.

A central action under this objective is the operational alignment and more effective use of existing duty relief and exemption mechanisms for export oriented firms. The Ministry will work with relevant authorities to ensure that inputs used exclusively for the production of export goods are clearly distinguished from goods imported for domestic consumption, and that exporters can access duty relief in a predictable and transparent manner. Particular attention will be given to production related inputs and packaging materials that are essential for meeting international shipping, safety, and marketing requirements.

The Ministry will focus on improving the accessibility, clarity, and practical applicability of current incentive frameworks. This includes reviewing eligibility criteria, reducing unnecessary administrative complexity, and improving guidance to ensure that SMEs are able to benefit from existing provisions that support export production.

To support efficient implementation, customs related procedures linked to export input treatment will be streamlined where possible, with an emphasis on clearer processes, improved information flow, and reduced processing times. Enhancing transparency and predictability in customs interactions will lower compliance costs and improve planning certainty for exporters.

These actions directly target one of the most significant structural barriers identified by exporters: the cumulative cost impact of imported inputs on export competitiveness. By improving the treatment of export related inputs within the trade and customs framework, the Ministry will enable firms to expand production, invest in value added

activities, and compete more effectively in international markets, contributing to broader export diversification and reduced dependence on tourism.

3.4 High Port and Shipping Costs, Low Logistical Efficiency

To address high port charges, shipping costs, and logistical inefficiencies, the Ministry will pursue targeted actions aimed at improving the efficiency, predictability, and export responsiveness of Aruba's logistics system. Given the island's geographic characteristics and scale constraints, reducing friction in goods movement is essential to improving export competitiveness and reliability.

A key focus of action under this objective is strengthening coordination with logistics and transport stakeholders, including port operators, customs authorities, postal services, and aviation partners. Rather than introducing new tariff structures at policy level, the Ministry will work with relevant entities to identify and implement operational improvements that better distinguish between import and export related logistics processes and reduce cost burdens on exporters.

Special attention will be given to improving logistics conditions for small parcel and low volume exports, which are increasingly important for SMEs and e-commerce driven trade. Enhancing reliability, transparency, and service standards in parcel handling and shipment tracking will support trust and market access for first time and small scale exporters.

Improving logistical efficiency also requires more predictable scheduling, reduced processing delays, and smoother coordination across inspection, handling, and clearance functions. The Ministry will support measures that improve workflow alignment among customs, port, and transport operators, with the objective of reducing turnaround times and uncertainty for exporters.

Where feasible, existing infrastructure and operating arrangements will be used more effectively to support export flows, including improved use of available operating hours, better information sharing, and incremental process improvements. Emphasis will be placed on low cost, high impact actions that can be implemented within current institutional and budgetary constraints.

By improving port efficiency and reducing export related logistics frictions, these actions will strengthen Aruba's position as a reliable trading partner, lower operational costs for exporters, and support sustained growth in goods and e-commerce based exports across priority sectors.

3.5 Weak Trade Facilitation and Regulatory Infrastructure

To address structural weaknesses in Aruba's trade facilitation and regulatory infrastructure, the Ministry will focus on modernizing processes, improving institutional coordination, and enhancing accessibility for exporters. Efficient, transparent, and export oriented trade facilitation systems are essential to reducing administrative burdens, lowering transaction costs, and enabling firms, particularly SMEs, to engage in international trade with confidence.

A central action under this objective is to improve the export responsiveness of customs and related trade institutions. The Ministry will work with Customs Aruba and other relevant entities to strengthen internal capacity for handling export related processes, improve clarity around exporter interactions, and enhance consistency in the application of procedures.

Improving access to trade related information is a priority. The Ministry will support measures to ensure that essential information on export procedures, documentation requirements, and applicable regulations is clearly communicated, up to date, and accessible to businesses operating in international markets. Enhancing language accessibility and consolidating guidance materials will reduce misunderstandings and improve compliance.

Regulatory and procedural modernization will also be pursued to support more efficient export processing. This includes reviewing existing legal and administrative frameworks to allow for more streamlined handling of export documentation, improved coordination between agencies, and reduced reliance on manual processes. Where feasible, greater use of digital tools and process standardization will be encouraged to improve transparency and predictability.

Strengthening coordination among trade related institutions, including customs, postal services, ports, and trade support bodies, will be essential to ensuring a coherent exporter experience. Improved alignment across these entities will facilitate smoother export processes, reduce duplication, and enable exporters to navigate regulatory requirements more efficiently.

By strengthening trade facilitation and regulatory coordination, these actions will contribute to a more modern, reliable, and exporter friendly trade environment, supporting the effective implementation of the Export Policy and the sustained growth of non-tourism exports.

3.6 Inadequate Export Awareness and Support for SMEs

To address gaps in export awareness and readiness among small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), the Ministry will implement targeted actions aimed at improving understanding of export opportunities and strengthening practical capacity for internationalization. While many Aruban businesses, particularly in services, possess export potential, limited awareness, uncertainty about processes, and lack of tailored guidance continue to constrain participation.

A core action under this objective is the delivery of focused outreach and engagement initiatives coordinated through Exprodesk. These initiatives will prioritize sectors with underutilized export potential, including professional services, creative industries, digital entrepreneurship, and other internationally tradable activities. Outreach will emphasize practical examples, peer learning, and clear explanations of export pathways to demystify international trade for first time exporters.

In parallel, the Ministry will actively facilitate access to export coaching and advisory support by leveraging existing financing and support instruments available within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, including export coaching vouchers and internationalization support schemes administered by external partners. Exprodesk will guide eligible SMEs toward relevant instruments, such as export coaching, market entry support, and advisory trajectories, that can be accessed through established frameworks, including those available via the Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland (RVO).

Capacity building support will be structured to reflect different stages of export readiness. Firms will be supported in developing concrete export action plans, identifying priority markets, and preparing for market entry through a combination of coaching, diagnostics, and advisory referrals. Particular attention will be given to SMEs, women led enterprises, and first time exporters, for whom access to structured guidance and risk sharing mechanisms can be decisive.

Collaboration with business associations, sector organizations, and local stakeholders will be used to embed export awareness and coaching pathways within existing entrepreneurial ecosystems. Integrating export promotion and access to external financing instruments into broader business development and urban revitalization initiatives will help reach firms that are not actively engaged with traditional trade support channels.

By combining awareness building with facilitated access to export coaching vouchers and internationalization financing instruments, these actions aim to normalize exporting as a viable growth strategy, expand SME participation in international trade, and ensure that local firms are able to pursue export opportunities using existing, cost-effective support mechanisms.

3.7 Standards and Technical Barriers

To reduce barriers related to standards, quality assurance, and technical compliance, the Ministry will implement a National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) as a core pillar of Aruba's long term export and competitiveness agenda. The establishment of an NQI is recognized as essential for enabling exporters to meet international standards in a credible and sustainable manner. The NQI will have to be developed through a phased and pragmatic approach, aligned with Aruba's scale, capacity, and priority export sectors.

The Ministry will sequence the implementation of the NQI to ensure that early actions deliver immediate benefits to exporters while laying the groundwork for more comprehensive quality infrastructure over time. Initial efforts will focus on improving access to standards, testing, and certification services through existing legal frameworks, regional partnerships, and internationally recognized accreditation systems, consistent with best practices for small island economies.

As part of this phased approach, the Ministry will work with relevant authorities to review and modernize the regulatory framework governing testing, calibration, and conformity assessment, with the objective of enabling participation by accredited private and regional service providers. International standards such as ISO, HACCP, and Codex Alimentarius will be systematically referenced and promoted through guidance, sector specific support, and regulatory alignment as the NQI framework is progressively established.

Given the current absence of comprehensive domestic testing facilities, Exprodesk will play a facilitative role in the early phases of NQI implementation by improving exporters' access to accredited regional and international laboratories. This includes compiling and maintaining reference lists of recognized testing and certification providers, supporting exporters in identifying appropriate compliance pathways, and encouraging pooled or sector based solutions to reduce compliance costs, particularly for SMEs.

In parallel, the Ministry will progressively develop domestic components of the National Quality Infrastructure where justified by demand, economic impact, and feasibility. This may include the establishment or attraction of accredited testing, calibration, or conformity assessment services over the medium term, potentially in partnership with private providers or within designated economic zones like the Freezone. Such developments will be sequenced to ensure cost effectiveness, institutional readiness, and alignment with priority export sectors.

By implementing the National Quality Infrastructure in a phased and pragmatic manner, these actions will strengthen trust in Aruban products, expand access to regulated

markets, and ensure that standards and technical requirements become an enabler, rather than a barrier, of export diversification and inclusive economic growth.

3.8 Market Access Barriers

To address market access barriers and improve the effective use of existing trade preferences, the Ministry will implement actions aimed at strengthening exporters' ability to access, navigate, and benefit from international markets. While Aruba already benefits from preferential access under existing arrangements with the European Union and the United States, these opportunities remain underutilized due to limited awareness, technical capacity constraints, and weak origin related support structures.

A central action under this objective is improving exporters' understanding and practical application of rules of origin. The Ministry will support awareness building and technical guidance to help firms determine eligibility for preferential treatment and comply with origin requirements in key markets. Where relevant, exporters will be guided toward existing mechanisms such as advance rulings and advisory services to reduce uncertainty and transactional risk when entering new markets.

In parallel, the Ministry will strengthen Aruba's export identity by improving the framework for origin recognition and product attribution. Developing a clearer and more credible approach to non-preferential rules of origin will support transparency, public procurement participation, and export branding efforts. A recognizable and trustworthy "Made in Aruba" designation will be pursued as part of a broader origin and identity framework, enhancing differentiation and visibility of Aruban products and services abroad.

Market access actions will also focus on practical exposure and relationship building. Exprodesk will facilitate participation in trade missions, exhibitions, and business matchmaking activities where these align with priority sectors and market opportunities. Emphasis will be placed on targeted, outcome oriented engagements rather than broad based promotional activity.

To support informed market entry and risk management, exporters will be connected to existing sources of market intelligence and trade risk mitigation tools, including export credit insurance awareness and advisory support. These measures aim to reduce informational and commercial risks associated with entering new markets, particularly for SMEs and first time exporters.

By strengthening rules-of-origin capacity, reinforcing export identity, and supporting targeted market engagement, these actions will expand Aruba's effective market access and enable exporters to compete more confidently and credibly in regional and global markets.

3.9 Limited E-Commerce Infrastructure and Payment Integration

To address constraints related to e-commerce infrastructure and payment integration, the Ministry will pursue targeted actions aimed at strengthening Aruba's digital trade environment in a pragmatic and sequenced manner. Digital channels are increasingly central to export growth, particularly for services, creative industries, and SMEs, yet regulatory uncertainty and limited access to international payment systems continue to restrict participation in global online markets.

A key action under this objective is the review and alignment of existing legal and regulatory frameworks relevant to digital trade. The Ministry will work with competent authorities to assess gaps in areas such as electronic transactions, consumer protection, data governance, and cybersecurity, with the aim of improving clarity, consistency, and trust for cross border e-commerce. Where appropriate, regulatory alignment with widely accepted international principles will be pursued to support interoperability and legal certainty.

Improving access to digital payment solutions is another critical component. The Ministry will engage with financial institutions and relevant stakeholders to identify practical pathways that improve compatibility between domestic banking systems and internationally used payment and settlement mechanisms. The focus will be on reducing friction for exporters, improving reliability for international customers, and enabling compliant participation in global digital marketplaces.

The Free Zone framework will be leveraged as a controlled environment to support experimentation and scaling of digitally deliverable and fintech related export activities. Within this context, the Ministry will encourage coordination among regulators, financial institutions, and service providers to support compliant digital operations, innovation, and cross border service delivery, while managing risk and regulatory oversight.

In parallel, efforts will be made to strengthen SME readiness for digital trade through guidance and facilitation. Improving understanding of digital compliance requirements, payment processes, and logistics integration will help firms make effective use of online channels for export.

By strengthening regulatory clarity, improving payment interoperability, and supporting digital trade readiness, these actions will enable Aruban businesses to participate more effectively in e-commerce driven exports and ensure that Aruba remains competitive in an increasingly digital global economy.

Chapter 4: Action Plan

Summary Table

Problem	Objective	Key Actions by the Ministry
4.1 Structural Economic Dependence on Tourism	Diversify the economy beyond tourism	Promote export led diversification in priority non-tourism sectors including agri-tech, renewable energy, fintech, creative industries, and professional services; align and deploy existing fiscal and regulatory instruments to support export oriented activity; leverage the modernized Free Zone framework to scale internationally tradable services and innovation driven exports; strengthen institutional coordination and export promotion through Exprodesk.
4.2 Extremely Low Export Participation	Increase number and diversity of exporters	Expand awareness of export opportunities among SMEs and underrepresented groups; establish structured export readiness pathways through diagnostics, coaching, and advisory support; facilitate access to existing Kingdom level export coaching and internationalization instruments (e.g. RVO/SIB); strengthen linkages between Exprodesk, sector associations, and the Free Zone to support firm progression from domestic activity to export markets.
4.3 Cost and Complexity of Input Imports	Lower production costs for exporters	Improve the treatment of production inputs used for export by enhancing access to existing duty relief and exemption mechanisms; clarify eligibility and procedures for exporters, including treatment of packaging and production related inputs; streamline administrative processes and guidance related to export oriented imports to reduce cost and uncertainty, particularly for SMEs.

4.4 High Port and Shipping Costs, Low Logistical Efficiency	Improve logistics competitiveness	Strengthen coordination with ports, customs, postal services, and transport stakeholders to improve export responsiveness of logistics processes; support operational improvements that reduce delays and uncertainty for exporters; improve conditions for small parcel and e-commerce exports through better workflow alignment, information sharing, and reliability of logistics services; prioritize low-cost, high-impact process improvements within existing infrastructure.
4.5 Weak Trade Facilitation and Regulatory Infrastructure	Streamline trade processes	Improve coherence and coordination across trade related institutions; enhance accessibility and clarity of export procedures and documentation; support modernization of administrative processes through better information flow, language accessibility, and increased use of digital tools; strengthen exporter experience without creating new institutions or duplicative regulatory structures.
4.6 Inadequate Export Awareness and Support for SMEs	Strengthen SME export capacity	Deliver targeted outreach and sector specific export awareness initiatives through Exprodesk; facilitate SME access to export coaching, advisory services, and Kingdom level financing instruments; embed export promotion within existing business development and urban revitalization ecosystems; prioritize inclusion of women led businesses, microenterprises, and first time exporters.
4.7 Standards and Technical Barriers	Enable compliance with international standards	Implement the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) through a phased and pragmatic approach; improve access to international standards, testing, and certification via regional and accredited providers; provide guidance and facilitation to help exporters meet SPS, TBT, and market specific requirements; progressively strengthen domestic quality infrastructure where demand and feasibility justify.
4.8 Market Access Barriers	Expand effective market access	Strengthen exporters' ability to utilize existing trade preferences through improved rules-of-origin guidance and advisory support; enhance Aruba's export identity through clearer origin frameworks and a credible "Made in Aruba" positioning; support targeted trade missions,

		matchmaking, and market intelligence activities aligned with priority sectors and markets.
4.9 Limited E-Commerce Infrastructure and Payment Integration	Enable digital trade and e-commerce exports	Improve regulatory clarity for digital trade by reviewing and aligning relevant legal frameworks; engage financial institutions and stakeholders to reduce friction in cross-border payment integration; leverage the Free Zone as a controlled environment for fintech and digital export activity; strengthen SME readiness for e-commerce through guidance on compliance, payments, and digital logistics.

4.1 Structural Economic Dependence on Tourism

Objective: Reduce Aruba’s reliance on tourism by diversifying the economy through new export sectors, expanding SME participation, and strengthening incentives and enabling conditions for international trade.

Objective	Actions by the Ministry	Timeline	Responsible Entities
Diversify Aruba’s economy beyond tourism	Implement a coordinated export led diversification approach targeting priority non-tourism sectors, including agriculture & agri-tech, renewable energy, fintech & digital entrepreneurship, creative industries, and professional services, in alignment with the Export Policy and Governance Plan priorities.	2026–2029 (phased implementation)	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Exprodesk, ARINA
Increase SME participation in exports	Facilitate structured export readiness pathways for SMEs, including awareness building, diagnostics, and access to export coaching and advisory support through national and Kingdom level instruments; prioritize women led enterprises and first time exporters.	From 2026 onward (continuous)	Exprodesk, Chamber of Commerce, SME Associations
Broaden market access and international exposure	Support targeted participation in trade missions, exhibitions, and matchmaking activities aligned with priority sectors and selected export markets; leverage regional and multilateral partnerships to improve international positioning of Aruban firms.	2026–2028 (targeted cycles)	Exprodesk, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sector Associations
Strengthen financial and fiscal enabling conditions for exporters	Align and operationalize existing fiscal and regulatory instruments that support export oriented activity, including export relevant duty relief mechanisms and facilitated access to export financing and risk mitigation instruments, without creating parallel regimes.	2026–2027 (alignment phase)	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance

Attract foreign investment into export oriented sectors	Collaborate with ARINA to promote Aruba’s priority export sectors and facilitate export oriented investment projects that strengthen local value chains and SME linkages.	2026–2029 (medium term)	ARINA, Ministry of Economic Affairs
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Performance Indicators

- At least 25 SMEs complete structured export readiness or coaching trajectories by 2029.
- At least 3 priority non-tourism sectors receive coordinated export promotion and investment facilitation support by 2029.
- At least 3 new export oriented or foreign investment projects established in priority sectors by 2029.
- A minimum of 1 targeted trade or matchmaking missions per year, with SME participation across multiple sectors.

4.2 Extremely Low Export Participation

Objective: Increase the number and diversity of Aruban companies engaged in export activity, with particular focus on SMEs, women-led enterprises, and first-time exporters.

Objective	Actions by the Ministry	Timeline	Responsible Entities
Increase the number of active exporters	Establish structured export readiness pathways that guide firms from awareness to market entry, including diagnostics, export potential assessments, and phased support for first time exporters.	2026–2029 (phased rollout)	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Exprodesk
Improve awareness of export opportunities	Deliver targeted export awareness campaigns and sector specific outreach initiatives highlighting export opportunities in goods and services, including digitally deliverable and service based exports.	From 2026 onward (continuous)	Exprodesk, Chamber of Commerce, Sector Associations
Strengthen access to export coaching and advisory support	Facilitate SME access to certified export coaching, mentoring, and advisory services through existing national and Kingdom level instruments, including export coaching vouchers and internationalization support schemes administered via RVO.	2026–2028 (scaling phase)	Exprodesk, RVO, SME Associations
Reduce entry barriers for underrepresented groups	Prioritize support for women led enterprises, microenterprises, and first time exporters by tailoring outreach, guidance, and coaching pathways to their specific needs and constraints.	From 2026 onward (targeted)	Exprodesk, Chamber of Commerce, Women Entrepreneur Networks

Improve access to export relevant finance and risk mitigation	Improve awareness and uptake of existing export financing and risk mitigation instruments, including guarantees and insurance mechanisms, through information sessions and advisory support.	2026–2027 (awareness & uptake phase)	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Exprodesk, Financial Institutions
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Performance Indicators

- At least 25 SMEs complete structured export readiness or coaching trajectories by 2029.
- At least 15 SMEs successfully enter new export markets by 2029.
- At least 10 new export oriented firms established in the Free Zone by 2029.
- At least 10 SMEs receive financial support through Kingdom level instruments by 2029.

4.3 Cost and Complexity of Input Imports

Objective: Improve the competitiveness of export-oriented firms by reducing the cost and administrative burden associated with importing production inputs used for export activities.

Objective	Actions by the Ministry	Timeline	Responsible Entities
Reduce input costs for export oriented production	Improve the treatment of raw materials, intermediate goods, and other inputs used exclusively for export production by strengthening access to existing duty relief and exemption mechanisms within the current legal framework.	2026–2027 (policy alignment phase)	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Customs Aruba
Improve treatment of packaging and production related inputs	Clarify and operationalize eligibility of packaging and packing materials essential for export production and compliance with international market requirements, ensuring consistent application across sectors.	2026–2027 (implementation phase)	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Customs Aruba
Simplify administrative procedures for exporters	Improve guidance, transparency, and predictability of customs procedures related to export oriented input imports, with particular focus on reducing administrative burden for SMEs.	From 2026 onward (continuous improvement)	Customs Aruba, Ministry of Economic Affairs
Increase SME accessibility to input duty relief	Develop clear, accessible information and support pathways to ensure SMEs are aware of and able to utilize existing input related duty relief measures without requiring specialized compliance capacity.	2026 onward (continuous)	Exprodesk, Customs Aruba

Monitor effectiveness of input-related measures	Establish a structured review mechanism, in coordination with the private sector, to assess the effectiveness and uptake of input duty relief measures and identify necessary adjustments.	2027–2029 (periodic review)	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Exprodesk
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Performance Indicators

- Reduced reported cost burden of imported inputs among supported export oriented SMEs by 2029.
- Increased number of export oriented firms utilizing existing duty relief or exemption mechanisms by 2029.
- Improved satisfaction among exporters regarding clarity and predictability of customs procedures related to input imports.
- Increased participation of SMEs in value added export production across priority sectors.

4.4 High Port and Shipping Costs, Low Logistical Efficiency

Objective: Improve the efficiency, predictability, and cost-effectiveness of Aruba’s logistics system to support export competitiveness and reliable market access.

Objective	Actions by the Ministry	Timeline	Responsible Entities
Reduce export related port and shipping costs	Coordinate with port, customs, and logistics stakeholders to identify and implement operational improvements that reduce cost burdens on exporters and better distinguish between import and export related processes.	2026–2027 (operational alignment phase)	Ministry of Economic Affairs, APA, ASTEC, Customs Aruba
Improve logistics conditions for SMEs and small parcel exports	Support improvements in parcel handling, processing times, and shipment reliability for SMEs and e-commerce exporters, particularly those using postal and low volume logistics channels.	From 2026 onward (continuous)	Post Aruba, Customs Aruba, Ministry of Economic Affairs
Increase predictability and reliability of export logistics	Improve coordination of scheduling, inspection, and clearance processes across port, customs, and transport services to reduce delays and uncertainty for exporters.	2026–2028 (process optimization)	APA, ASTEC, Customs Aruba
Strengthen export responsiveness of customs inspections	Support more export oriented inspection workflows by improving coordination, internal capacity, and use of existing operating hours to facilitate timely clearance of outbound goods.	2026–2027 (procedural improvements)	Customs Aruba, Ministry of Economic Affairs
Improve information flow and logistics transparency	Enhance availability and clarity of information related to export logistics procedures, timelines, and requirements to improve planning and compliance by exporters.	From 2026 onward (continuous)	Ministry of Economic Affairs, APA, Exprodesk

Performance Indicators

- Reduced average processing time for export shipments by 2029.
- Improved reliability and predictability of export logistics as reported by exporters.
- Increased number of SMEs utilizing formal logistics and parcel export channels.
- Improved coordination and consistency across port, customs, and logistics services supporting export activity.
- Implementation of tracking system for all small parcel exports by 2029.

4.5 Weak Trade Facilitation and Regulatory Infrastructure

Objective: Strengthen Aruba’s trade facilitation framework by improving institutional coordination, streamlining export procedures, and enhancing regulatory clarity for exporters.

Objective	Actions by the Ministry	Timeline	Responsible Entities
Improve coordination across trade related institutions	Strengthen coordination and information sharing among customs, ports, postal services, trade support institutions, and investment promotion bodies to ensure a more coherent exporter experience.	2026–2027 (coordination phase)	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Customs Aruba, APA, Post Aruba, Exprodesk
Improve accessibility and clarity of export procedures	Ensure that essential export related procedures, documentation requirements, and guidance are clearly communicated, up to date, and accessible to businesses operating in international markets.	From 2026 onward (continuous)	Customs Aruba, Ministry of Economic Affairs
Enhance language accessibility of trade information	Improve availability of export related information and guidance in both Dutch and English to reduce barriers for exporters and improve compliance.	2026–2027 (implementation phase)	Customs Aruba, Ministry of Economic Affairs
Streamline export related administrative processes	Review and improve existing administrative and regulatory procedures affecting exports to reduce duplication, delays, and unnecessary manual processing.	2026–2028 (phased modernization)	Customs Aruba, Ministry of Economic Affairs
Improve availability and use of export related data	Strengthen collection, coordination, and use of export related data to support policy monitoring, institutional coordination, and evidence based decision making.	2027–2029 (system strengthening)	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Customs Aruba, Central Bureau of Statistics

Performance Indicators

- Improved reported exporter satisfaction with clarity and accessibility of export procedures by 2029.
- Reduced administrative processing time for export documentation by 2029.
- Increased consistency in application of export related procedures across institutions.
- Improved availability and use of export data for monitoring policy implementation.
- All customs information translated into English and published online by 2029.

4.6 Inadequate Export Awareness and Support for SMEs

Objective: Strengthen export awareness, readiness, and practical capacity of SMEs to broaden participation in international trade and support inclusive export growth.

Objective	Actions by the Ministry	Timeline	Responsible Entities
Increase awareness of export opportunities among SMEs	Implement targeted export awareness campaigns highlighting goods and services export opportunities, including digital and service exports, relevant to the local business environment.	From 2026 onward (continuous)	Exprodesk, Chamber of Commerce, Sector Associations
Strengthen SME export readiness and capability	Deliver structured export readiness support, and phased guidance tailored to firms at different stages of internationalization.	2026–2029 (phased implementation)	Exprodesk
Facilitate access to export coaching vouchers	Actively guide eligible SMEs toward export coaching vouchers and internationalization support instruments available through the Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland (RVO), such as SIB-related programs.	2026–2028 (uptake and scaling)	Exprodesk, RVO
Improve access to export relevant financing and risk mitigation	Improve awareness and understanding of existing export financing, guarantees, and risk mitigation instruments through information sessions, advisory referrals, and coordination with financial institutions.	2026–2027 (awareness phase)	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Exprodesk, Financial Institutions

Strengthen inclusion of underrepresented groups	Prioritize women led enterprises, microenterprises, and first time exporters in outreach, coaching, and advisory pathways to ensure equitable access to export support mechanisms.	From 2026 onward (targeted)	Exprodesk, Women Entrepreneur Networks, SME Associations
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Performance Indicators

- At least 25 SMEs complete structured export readiness or coaching trajectories by 2029.
- At least 30% of supported SMEs are women led businesses or first time exporters.
- Increased uptake of RVO/SIB export coaching vouchers by Aruban SMEs by 2029.
- Improved SME awareness of export opportunities and available support mechanisms, as measured through program feedback and participation rates.

4.7 Standards and Technical Barriers

Objective: Strengthen exporters’ ability to comply with international quality, safety, and technical standards through a phased implementation of the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) and improved access to certification and compliance support.

Objective	Actions by the Ministry	Timeline	Responsible Entities
Implement the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) in a phased manner	Operationalize the National Quality Infrastructure, applying a phased and pragmatic approach that prioritizes exporter needs, institutional readiness, and cost effectiveness.	2026–2029 (phased rollout)	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Relevant Line Ministries
Improve access to standards and compliance guidance	Improve availability of information and guidance on international standards (e.g. ISO, HACCP, Codex Alimentarius, SPS, TBT) relevant to priority export sectors.	From 2026 onward (continuous)	Exprodesk, Standards Authorities
Facilitate access to accredited testing and certification services	Support exporters, particularly SMEs, in accessing accredited regional and international testing, inspection, and certification providers through facilitation, referrals, and coordination.	2026–2028 (access phase)	Exprodesk, Ministry of Economic Affairs
Reduce compliance barriers for SMEs	Encourage pooled, sector based, or collective approaches to standards compliance to reduce costs and administrative burden for SMEs and small producers.	2026–2029 (progressive implementation)	Exprodesk, Sector Associations
Develop domestic quality infrastructure where feasible	Assess and progressively develop domestic testing, calibration, or conformity assessment capacity where justified by demand, economic impact, and feasibility, including potential private sector or Free Zone based solutions.	2027–2029 (feasibility & development)	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Free Zone Authority, Private Providers

Performance Indicators

- Increased number of exporters able to demonstrate compliance with international standards in regulated markets by 2029.
- Improved SME access to accredited testing and certification services.
- Reduced average time and cost required for exporters to obtain required compliance documentation.
- Progressively operational components of the National Quality Infrastructure aligned with priority export sectors.

4.8 Market Access Barriers

Objective: Expand Aruba’s effective access to international markets by improving utilization of existing trade preferences, strengthening rules-of-origin support, and reinforcing a credible export identity.

Objective	Actions by the Ministry	Timeline	Responsible Entities
Improve utilization of existing trade preferences	Improve exporter awareness and understanding of existing preferential market access arrangements, including requirements and practical implications for goods and services exports.	From 2026 onward (continuous)	Exprodesk, Ministry of Economic Affairs
Strengthen rules-of-origin capacity	Provide practical guidance and advisory support to help exporters determine origin status, comply with rules of origin, and reduce uncertainty when accessing preferential markets.	2026–2028 (capacity building phase)	Exprodesk, Customs Aruba
Support development of a credible export identity	Strengthen the framework for non-preferential origin recognition and support the development of a coherent “Made in Aruba” export identity as part of a broader origin and branding approach.	2026–2029 (progressive development)	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Customs Aruba
Facilitate targeted market entry and exposure	Organize and support targeted trade missions, exhibitions, and business matchmaking activities aligned with priority sectors and identified export markets.	2026–2028 (targeted engagements)	Exprodesk, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sector Associations
Reduce market entry risk for exporters	Improve access to market intelligence and raise awareness of existing trade risk mitigation tools, including export credit insurance and advisory services.	2026–2027 (awareness & uptake)	Exprodesk, Financial Institutions

Performance Indicators

- Increased number of exporters utilizing preferential market access arrangements by 2029.
- Improved exporter understanding and correct application of rules of origin.
- Introduction and uptake of a recognizable “Made in Aruba” export identity framework.
- Increased SME participation in targeted trade missions and matchmaking activities.

4.9 Limited E-Commerce Infrastructure and Payment Integration

Objective: Enable e-commerce driven exports by improving regulatory clarity, reducing barriers to international payment integration, and strengthening SME readiness for digital trade

Objective	Actions by the Ministry	Timeline	Responsible Entities
Improve regulatory clarity for digital trade	Review and align existing legal and regulatory frameworks relevant to e-commerce, electronic transactions, consumer protection, data governance, and cybersecurity to reduce uncertainty for cross-border digital trade.	2026–2028 (phased review & alignment)	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Relevant Line Ministries
Reduce barriers to international payment integration	Engage financial institutions and relevant stakeholders to identify practical pathways that improve interoperability between domestic banking systems and internationally used payment and settlement mechanisms.	2026–2027 (engagement phase)	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Financial Institutions
Leverage the Free Zone for digital trade and fintech exports	Use the Free Zone as a controlled environment to support compliant digital, fintech, and platform based export activity, including coordination with regulators and financial institutions.	2026–2029 (progressive use)	Free Zone Authority, Ministry of Economic Affairs
Strengthen SME readiness for e-commerce exports	Provide guidance and facilitation to SMEs on digital trade requirements, online payment processes, and integration of logistics and compliance for e-commerce exports.	From 2026 onward (continuous)	Exprodesk
Improve compatibility of logistics with e-commerce	Support improvements in small parcel handling, documentation, and export processes to better accommodate e-commerce and digitally enabled export models.	2026–2028 (incremental improvements)	Post Aruba, Customs Aruba, Ministry of Economic Affairs

Performance Indicators

- Improved SME access to compliant pathways for receiving international online payments.
- Increased number of SMEs engaging in e-commerce driven export activity by 2029.
- Improved reported reliability and usability of logistics processes for small parcel exports.
- At least 25 SMEs trained in e-commerce, online marketing, and cybersecurity practices by 2029.

Annex

A.1 Governing Principles of the Export Policy

Exporting is an engine of economic growth in developing countries. Business internationalization expands a country's exports, which has a significant positive effect on economic growth, thereby contributing to an increase in the gross domestic product (GDP) of a country. Furthermore, exporting expands production capacity. This increased production of goods and services helps the economy generate foreign exchange reserves, which contributes to the import of technology, capital, and scarce raw materials, enhancing international competitiveness and strengthening the bargaining power of businesses.

A.1.1 Export Policy Goal, Objectives, Target Groups and Principles

Finding a starting point for exporting can be challenging for small business owners. To help businesses internationalize and capitalize on opportunities to diversify the economy by reducing dependence on tourism, the Department of Economic Affairs, Commerce, & Industry (DEACI), through its unit Exprodesk, conducted desk research (secondary research) and quantitative research using a structured questionnaire completed by 400 businesses through email, telephone, and in-person interviews. Moreover, three focus group studies were conducted to consult local businesses on how to better assist them and meet their needs.

The quantitative research, titled "Trade Barriers Impeding Export Readiness," centered on the question: "What prevents Aruban businesses from internationalizing, and what can facilitate their export process?" This research provided insights into why businesses are currently not exporting, which trade barriers exporters find most significant, how the government and export facilitators can assist in facilitating exports, and identified export-motivating factors that can support the export process. The three focus group researches were: Focus Group E-Commerce, Focus Group Logistics and Focus Group Imports. Additionally, Exprodesk conducts a survey after every workshop or webinar, where participants can complete an evaluation form and highlight the bottlenecks and barriers they encounter in their day-to-day business activities. Through this process, Exprodesk can gauge each participant's individual views and experiences and determine how the government can better assist them.

Based on the aforementioned results, the goal of this Export Policy will be:

“To cultivate an environment in which businesses are encouraged to contribute more to exports and assist in tailoring existing and new public and private initiatives aimed at growing the SME sector so that they can contribute more significantly to the diversification of the economy through an increase in the number of distinct export products and services, as this is a key element of economic development in which a country moves to a more diverse production and trade structure.”

The objectives of this Export Policy are as follows:

- Improve the business culture by fostering a supportive and trade-friendly environment for SMEs to increase their contribution to exports;
- Promote and strengthen the competitiveness of SMEs while supporting their export activities;
- Encourage the production and export of goods and services;
- Streamline and centralize the statistical monitoring system for exports of products and services;
- Assist sustainable organizations and programs that provide essential services and support to businesses;
- Improve financial support for exports (ensuring adequate resources for trade-related sectors);
- Foster innovation and technological competitiveness;
- Enhance education and consulting services related to business exports;
- Promote the use of information and communication technologies, including emerging technologies like blockchain and artificial intelligence;
- Explore opportunities for regional and hemispheric cooperation.

In pursuing the aforementioned objectives, the Government will be guided by the following key principles:

1. Foster an environment where entrepreneurs and family businesses can expand their exports of products and services (export interest).
2. Develop and adjust regulations with consideration for their impact on SMEs (institutional and regulatory framework).
3. Promote awareness of the responsiveness of public administrations to the export needs of SMEs (addressing trade barriers).
4. Tailor public policy tools to align with SMEs’ export needs throughout the value chain (business development, support services, and export facilitators).

5. Facilitate SMEs' access to e-commerce and create a legal and business environment that supports timely payments in commercial transactions.
6. Encourage and assist SMEs in capitalizing on market growth and embracing all forms of innovation.
7. Empower SMEs to transform environmental challenges into opportunities (internationalization of SMEs).

The export policy is designed to strategically support and engage several key target groups to bolster Aruba's global trade capabilities. The export policy target groups are as follows:

- **Local companies, especially SMEs, expanding into global markets:** The policy places a strong emphasis on assisting local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that aspire to extend their reach beyond national borders. By offering tailored resources and guidance, the policy aims to help these businesses overcome barriers to international trade, enabling them to compete effectively in global markets;
- **Companies that would like to use Aruba as a gateway between different continents:** The policy also targets companies and foreign investors looking to use Aruba as a strategic trade gateway. Given Aruba's strategic geographical position, it is well-suited to serve as a hub connecting different continents.

A.1.2 Life Cycle of the Policy

This export policy is valid for four years (2025–2028) and will go through several stages, known as the Policy Life Cycle. The Policy Life Cycle is a systematic process that guides the development, implementation, evaluation, and maintenance of public policies. This chapter explores each stage of the Policy Life Cycle, providing an overview of Policy Formulation, Policy Adoption, Policy Implementation, Policy Implementation Evaluation, and Policy Maintenance, see *Figure 1*. as shown in Figure 1. Special attention is given to the creation of an action plan during the implementation stage and the incorporation of a “sunset provision” during the evaluation process.

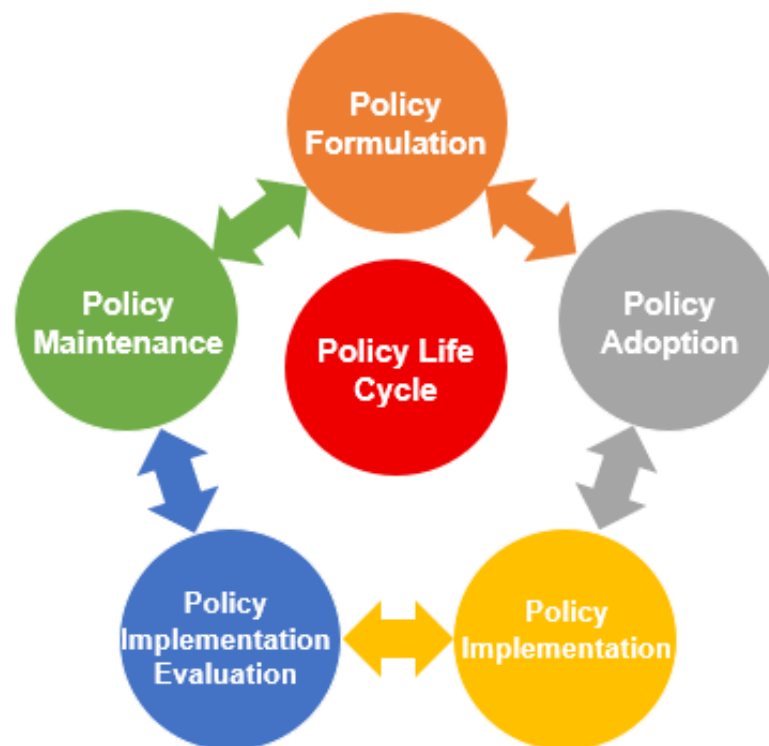


Figure 1. Policy Life Cycle

Policy Formulation

Policy Formulation is the initial stage of the Policy Life Cycle, where challenges are identified, and potential solutions are developed. This phase involves comprehensive research, stakeholder engagement, and the drafting of policy options. Key steps include:

- **Problem Identification:** Recognizing and defining the issue that requires intervention;
- **Stakeholder Analysis:** Identifying relevant stakeholders and understanding their interests and influence;
- **Evidence Gathering:** Collecting data, research findings, and expert opinions to inform the policy options;
- **Drafting Policy Options:** Developing a range of possible solutions, considering their feasibility, benefits, and drawbacks.

Policy Adoption

Policy Adoption is the process by which policymakers select and endorse a specific policy option. This stage involves:

- **Debate and Deliberation:** Policymakers discuss the proposed options, weighing the evidence and stakeholder opinions;
- **Decision-Making:** A formal decision is made, typically through voting or executive order, to adopt a particular policy;
- **Legitimization:** The policy gains official status after being approved by the Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and Primary Sector.

Policy Implementation

Policy Implementation is the phase where the adopted policy is put into action. This stage requires careful planning and coordination to ensure the policy is executed effectively. Key components of this stage include:

- **Action plan development:** Creating a detailed plan that outlines the steps required to implement the policy. The action plan should consider:
 1. **Relevant actors and their interests:** Identifying individuals, groups, and organizations involved in the implementation and understanding their motivations and concerns;
 2. **Required resources and providers:** Determining the necessary financial, human, and material resources and identifying who will provide them;
 3. **Facilitators and barriers:** Anticipating challenges and opportunities that may arise during implementation;
 4. **Reasonable time frame:** Establishing a realistic timeline for completing various implementation tasks.

Policy Implementation Evaluation

Policy Implementation Evaluation assesses the effectiveness and impact of the policy once it has been implemented. This stage focuses on whether the policy is achieving its intended outcomes and includes the use of a “sunset provision” to evaluate the policy’s efficacy. The evaluation process involves:

- **Sunset Provision:** A predetermined evaluation mechanism that assesses whether actions in the policy should continue, be modified, or be terminated. The evaluation is based on the following questions:
 1. **Problem identification:** Was the problem correctly identified?
 2. **Aspects overlooked:** Were any important aspects overlooked?
 3. **Data analysis:** Were any important data left out of the analysis? Did this influence the analysis?
 4. **Implementation of recommendations:** Were recommendations properly implemented?
 5. **Desired effect:** Is the policy having the desired effect?
 6. **Need for modification:** Is there any need for modification, change, or redesign? What should be done differently next time?

Policy Maintenance

Policy Maintenance ensures the continuity and effectiveness of the policy over time. This stage involves regular monitoring and adjustment based on ongoing data collection and feedback. Key aspects include:

- **Policy Monitoring:** Continuously tracking the policy's performance through various means such as:
 1. **Records and documents:** Reviewing records and documentation related to the policy.
 2. **Feedback from SMEs:** Gathering insights from subject matter experts (SMEs) involved in the policy’s domain.
 3. **Observations:** Conducting observations to assess the policy’s implementation in practice.
 4. **Stakeholder input:** Collecting feedback from stakeholders and relevant institutions.
- **Adjustment and Refinement:** Making necessary changes to the policy based on the data and feedback collected to ensure it remains effective and relevant.

The Policy Life Cycle is a dynamic and iterative process that requires careful planning, execution, and evaluation to ensure public policies achieve their intended goals. By following the stages of Policy Formulation, Policy Adoption, Policy Implementation, Policy Implementation Evaluation, and Policy Maintenance, policymakers can develop and sustain effective policies that address societal needs. The inclusion of an action plan during implementation and a “sunset provision” during evaluation ensures that policies are both actionable and adaptable, fostering continuous improvement and accountability.

A.2 Current Export Profile in Aruba and the Region

Aruba is a small Caribbean island that has historically exported various services and goods over different periods, such as phosphate, gold, aloe, oil, and tourism. In 1923, when the oil refinery was established in Aruba, the island became known as an exporter of oil products derived from imported crude. Since 1984, tourism has been a well-developed sector of the Aruban economy. Tourism service exports are the main driver of economic growth.

Since achieving Status Aparte, Aruba has experienced significant economic growth. Despite facing adverse external factors, Aruban society's collective resilience and creativity have consistently overcome economic setbacks. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that Aruba's current prosperity is not guaranteed indefinitely.

The Aruban economy was challenged after the oil refinery ceased its operations and terminated its work agreements on 30 January 2020, resulting in dependency on a single economic sector, namely tourism. This dependency on tourism has been steadily increasing since the 1990s, highlighting the need to diversify the Aruban economy. Excluding the export of primarily services related to the tourism industry and some exports through the Free Zone, Aruba is not currently known primarily as an export economy. The tourism exports outlook can be skewed to the downside as the deepening crisis in Venezuela is leading to large immigrant and refugee inflows that have put pressure on Aruba's infrastructure, labor markets, and tourism. Therefore, Aruba can no longer solely rely on tourism as an economic pillar for export, as the economy would miss out on the contribution of business exports, especially from SMEs, for economic diversification and growth.

This chapter aims to provide an overview of these aforementioned businesses by presenting their export business profiles, the Aruban export of goods by sector, Aruban exports in comparison with the region, and the impact of exports on the local economy.

A.2.1 Aruban Export Companies' Profile

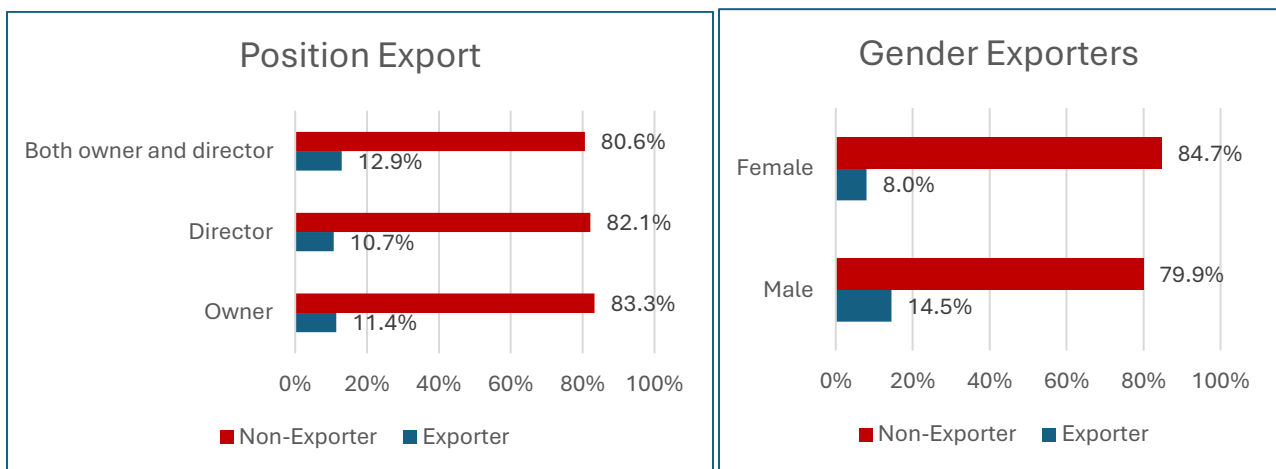
Aruban businesses are currently not exporting to their full potential, as only 4.5% of all Aruban companies are currently doing so. Besides the export of services, there is significant opportunity for Aruban companies to develop their expertise and production capacity for the export of goods, which could increase revenues, jobs, foreign currency reserves, and liquidity. However, before discussing these export opportunities, it is important to assess and understand the characteristics and environment of current Aruban export companies by examining their demographic and company profiles.

Demographics

Business demography statistics provide policy-relevant information on the economic contribution of Aruban companies. These data cover variables that explain the characteristics and demography of the business population. Therefore, to provide an overview of the current situation, the demographics of Aruban export businesses will be described in this paragraph based on the following factors of the exporter: position, gender, education, age, type of business, business stage, and company goods.

Position and Gender

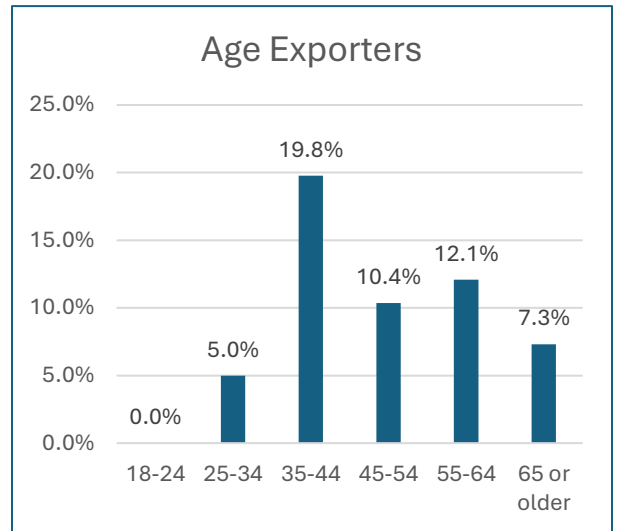
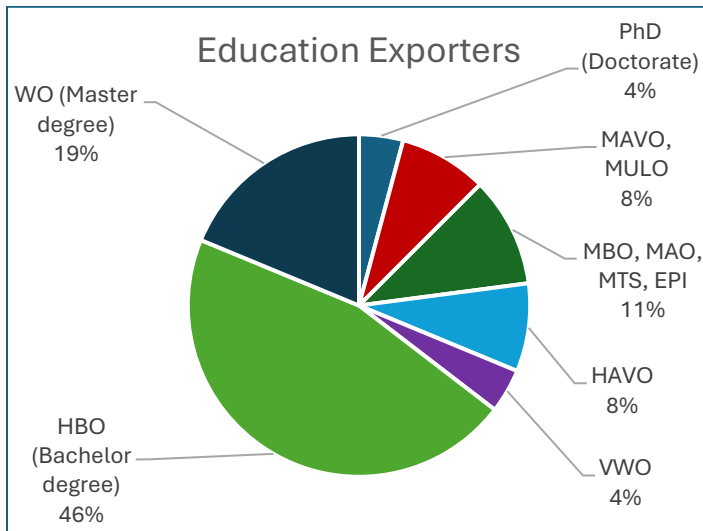
Aruban export businesses vary by position and gender. From the 4.5% of Aruban companies that are currently exporting, businesses founded by owners who were also directors (12.9%) were slightly more likely to export compared to founders who were only business owners and did not manage their businesses themselves (11.4%) and directors who were not business owners (10.7%). Women-owned businesses (37.6%) are still underrepresented compared to male business owners (62.4%). Women-owned businesses have lesser export activity (8.0%) compared to male business owners (14.5%).



Education and Age

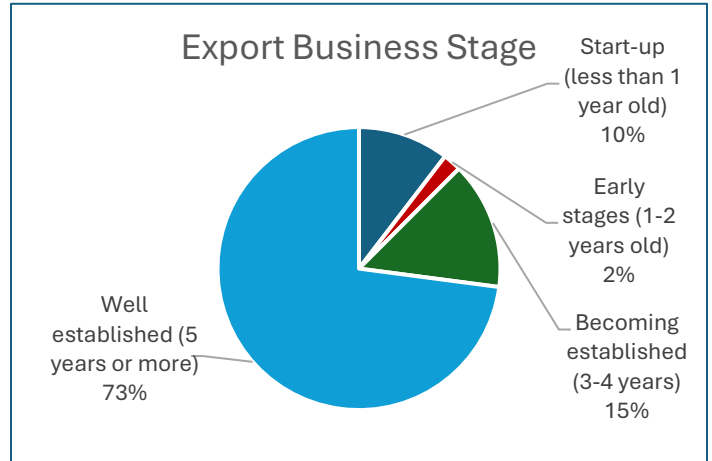
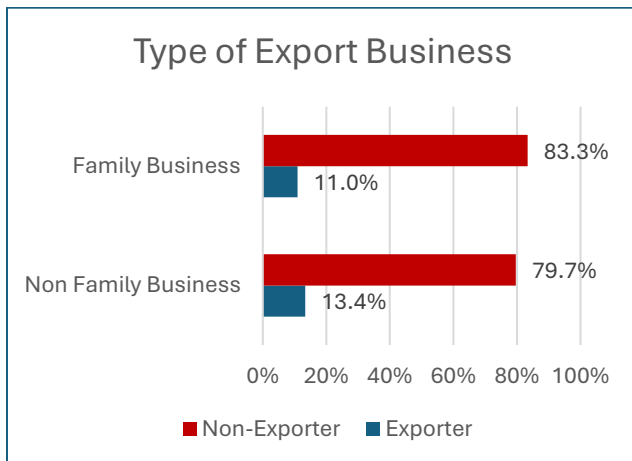
Education and age are also important characteristics of the demography of Aruban exporting firms. Owners with a bachelor's degree (46.0%) were more inclined to export, compared to founders with a master's degree (19%) or a PhD degree (4%). Export businesses among founders with a "MAVO" degree were 8%, with an "MBO/MAO/MTS/EPI" degree (11%), with a "HAVO" degree (8%), and with a "VWO" degree (4%). Firms with

founders in the age group of 35–44 years old are most likely to export, followed by founders in the age group of 55–64 years old.



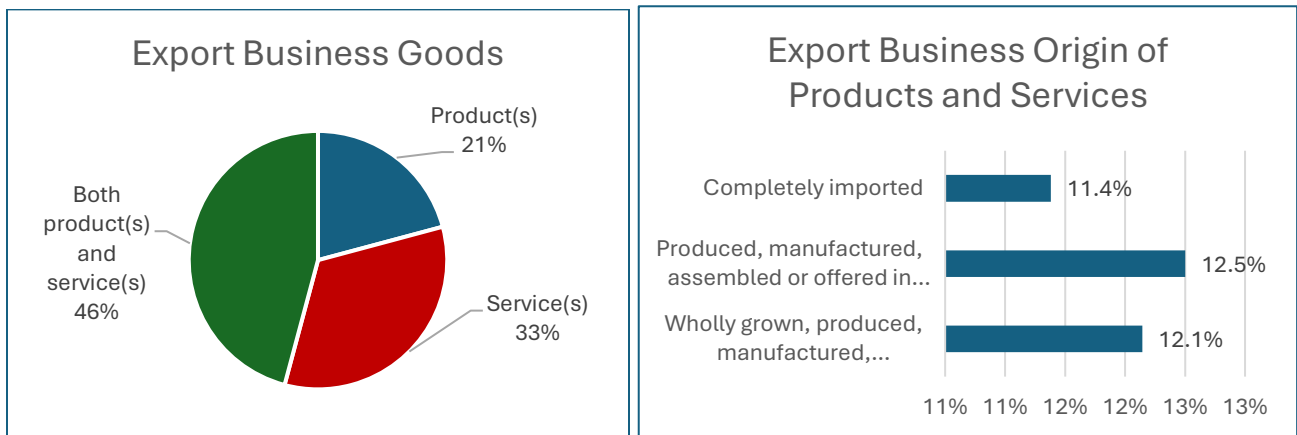
Type of Business and Business Stage

Aruban companies consist of businesses that are “family-owned” and “non-family-owned”. Non-family-owned businesses (13.4%) have more export activity than family-owned businesses (11%). Businesses that are well established (5 years or more) had the most export activity (73.0%), followed by 15% of businesses that are becoming established (3–4 years) and 10% of start-ups (less than 1 year old).



Company Goods

Exporting businesses that offered both products and services had more export activity (46%) compared to exporting businesses that offered only services (33%) or only products (21%). The origin of a company's export product(s) and/or service(s) is also an important characteristic of the demography of Aruban exporting firms, as the origin is derived from export product(s) and/or service(s) that are wholly made/produced in Aruba, partially made/produced in Aruba, or completely imported. Aruban businesses that “produced, manufactured, or assembled their export product(s) and/or service(s) in Aruba with imported components, parts, and/or ingredients or service(s) produced in Aruba with a significant element of another imported service or as a significant element of an imported tangible product” had more export activity (12.5%).

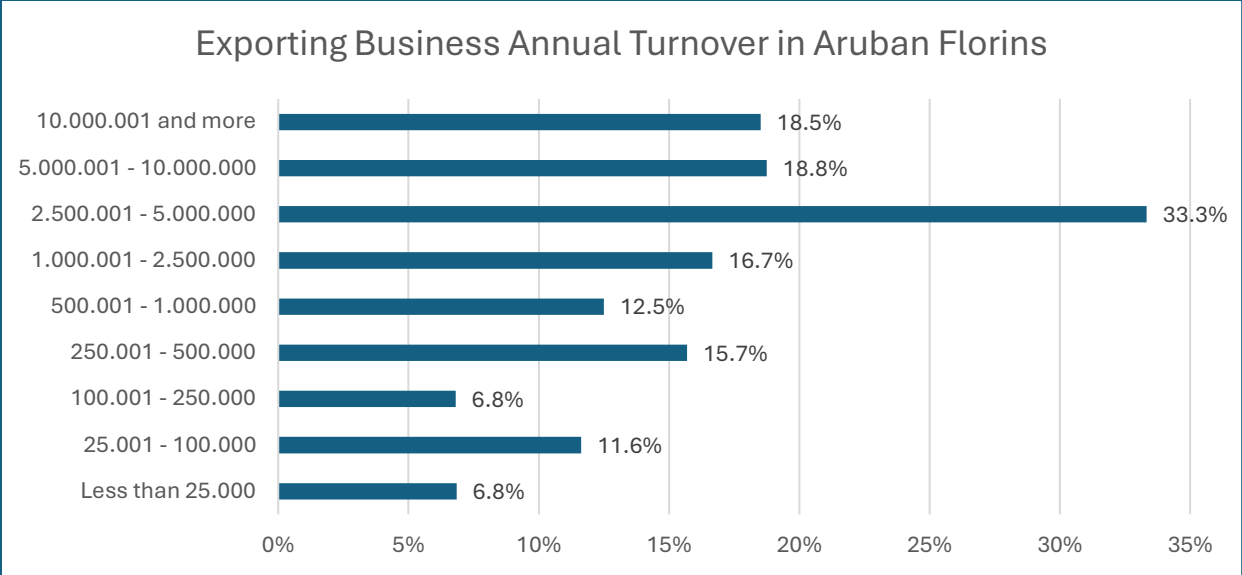


Company Profile

The company profile of the Aruban export businesses will be described in this paragraph based on the following factors: average annual turnover, exporting time and export countries.

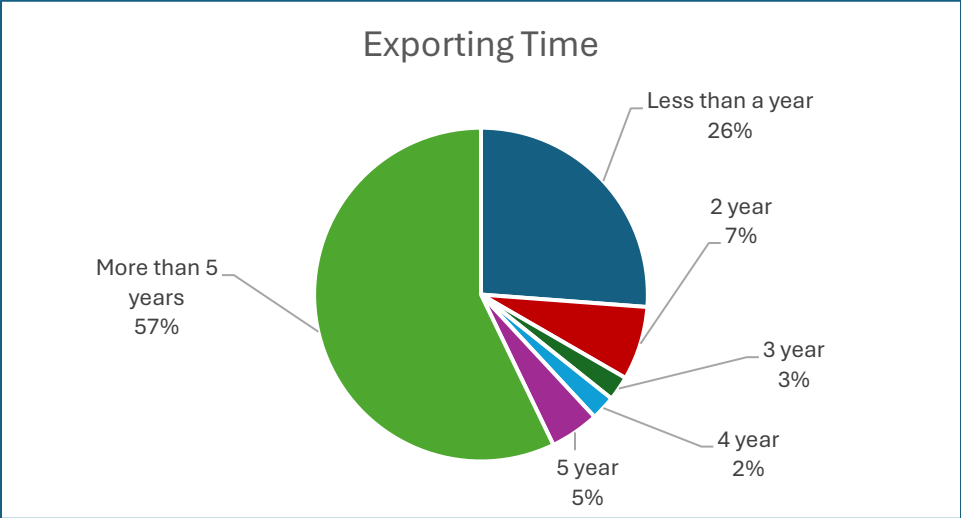
Average Annual Turnover

Exporting businesses with the highest export activities have an average annual turnover (the average annual total sales made by a business) of 2,500,001–5,000,000 Aruban Florins (33.3%) compared to a higher average annual turnover of 5,000,001–10,000,000 Aruban Florins (18.8%) or above 10,000,001 Aruban Florins (18.5%).



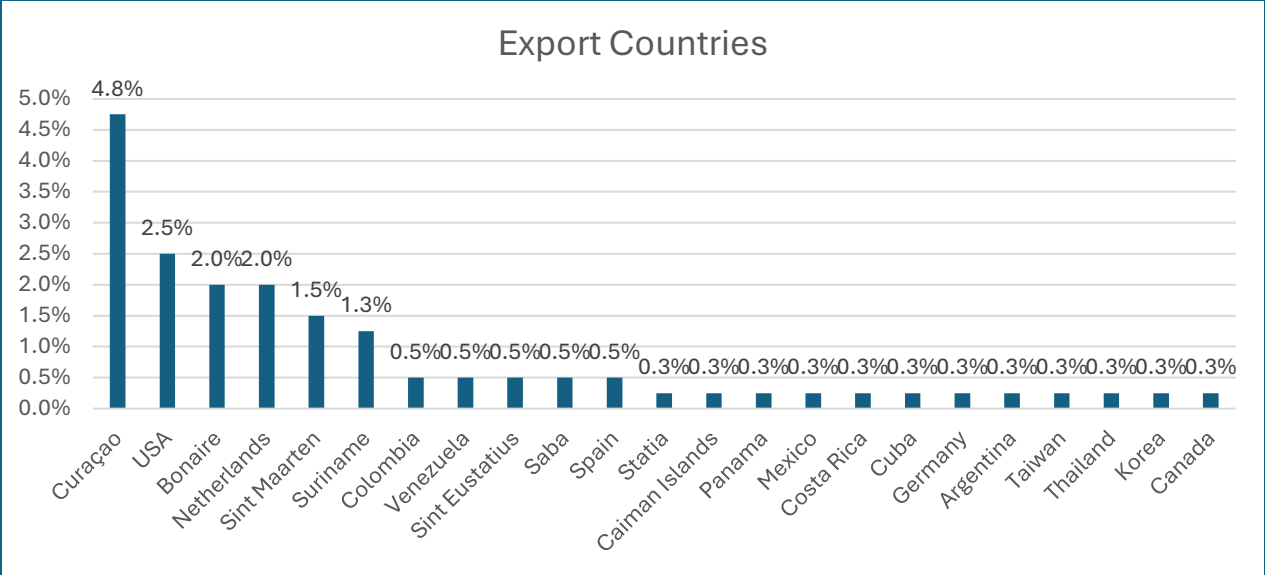
Exporting Time

The majority of Aruban businesses that are exporting have been exporting for a period of more than 5 years (57%), followed by businesses that have been exporting for less than a year (26.0%).



Export Countries

From the 4.5% of all Aruban companies that are currently exporting, the top export destinations are Curaçao (4.8%), the USA (2.5%), Bonaire (2.0%), the Netherlands (2.0%), St. Maarten (1.5%), and Suriname (1.3%).



A.2.2 Aruban Export Sector

This paragraph will illustrate both the Aruban exporting businesses (excluding Free Zone companies) per sector based on the Aruban Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) of All Economic Activities (Table a) and, separately, the turnover of Free Zone companies per business type (Table b).

The position of the current sectors of Aruban exporting businesses (excluding Free Zone companies) will be presented first (Table a) to provide a better overview of the local export environment pre- and post-COVID-19 pandemic. Economic activity comprises only the export of products from 2017 to 2021 per sector. The most significant economic activities of the Aruban exporting business sector are “Transport, Communications, Real Estate & Business Activities,” which fluctuated between 36.0% (the lowest export activity in 2021) and 50% (the highest export activity in 2020). The export sector most affected at the beginning of the pandemic was “Retail Trade/Repair of Goods,” which decreased from 16% in 2019 to 7% in 2020; however, this sector rebounded to 14% in 2021. In contrast, the export sector “Vehicle Repair & Sales” started export activities during the pandemic, reaching 1% in 2020 and increasing to 2% in 2021.

Table a: Export from the Economic territory of Aruba pre- and post-COVID-19 pandemic

Economic Activity	Value in Percentage of Export Products				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Accommodation & Food service activities	0%	5%	0%	0%	1%
Arts, Entertainment & Other service activities	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Construction	1%	1%	2%	1%	3%
Financial and insurance activities	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Human health and social work activities	0%	2%	0%	3%	2%
Manufacturing	9%	12%	19%	15%	15%
Mining, Quarrying & Utility Supply	1%	3%	1%	0%	1%
Other Sectors	1%	1%	2%	2%	3%
Retail Trade/Repair of Goods	17%	15%	16%	7%	14%
Transport, Communications, Real Estate & Business Activities	44%	37%	41%	50%	36%
Vehicle Repair & Sales	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%
Wholesale & Commission Trade	20%	11%	9%	10%	11%
Other Sectors consisting only of "Migrants' effects"	6%	11%	8%	8%	10%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table b illustrates the turnover of only Freezone companies per business type during the years 2017-2021.

Table b: Turnover Freezone companies (in AWG)

Type	Year 2017	Year 2018	Year 2019	Year 2020	Year 2021
Services	19,008,820.97	27,280,809.17	16,215,530.57	45,485,189.57	20,894,089.59
Trade	74,620,961.45	59,387,308.16	60,554,382.20	54,075,534.60	60,476,633.51
Trade & Light Industry	29,080,008.49	7,964,926.03	8,935,525.12	4,695,792.90	5,077,642.10
Trade & Service	68,313,306.95	124,360,556.48	34,048,369.25	25,251,874.13	28,680,784.26
Grand Total	191,023,097.86	218,993,599.84	119,753,807.14	129,508,391.20	115,129,149.46

Source: Free Zone Aruba

A.3 Programs, Services and Export Achievements to Date

In this chapter, the programs, services, activities, and achievements of Exprodesk and the Aruba Trade Board (ATB) will be presented.

Exprodesk conducts research and sends clients an Evaluation Form (an online survey) following the completion of each training, workshop, or program/project. This form allows them to rate various aspects, including the topic, quality, duration, and level of the presented material to:

- Measure the quality of products and services;
- Evaluate client satisfaction;
- Adapt and improve products and services when necessary;
- Provide better solutions for clients' needs.

A.3.1 Exprodesk's Programs, Services and Export Achievements to Date

Exprodesk opened its doors on September 11, 2017. Exprodesk's mission remains dedicated to contributing to economically sustainable development and innovation in Aruba by building export capacity among entrepreneurs. Therefore, Exprodesk's strategic objectives encompass several key areas: promoting trade and international business development to strengthen and diversify the economy of Aruba; fostering innovation and economic growth by stimulating new export sectors and business models; promoting Exprodesk as the export authority and central point of contact by providing trade and market intelligence; and supporting the strategic planning process while encouraging coordination and cooperation among the authorities involved.

To achieve the aforementioned, Exprodesk offers support, guidance, advice, training, workshops, and tailored projects to local entrepreneurs in order to:

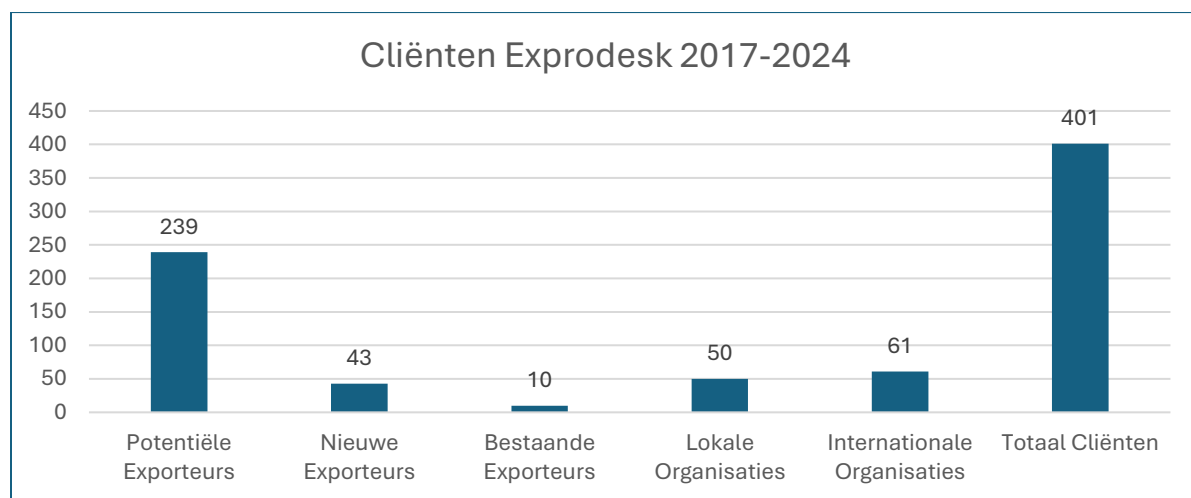
- Identify and penetrate potential foreign markets to stimulate entrepreneurship in areas such as market access, market exploration, access to capital, and access to knowledge;
- Stimulate foreign trade, including export policy;
- Stimulate and support the private sector, particularly in the field of export opportunities;
- Promote a sound national economy aimed at stimulating small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Aruba.

Moreover, Exprodesk offers the following services and activities:

1. Providing Trade and Market Information: Not only to potential, new, or existing exporters but also to other local stakeholders, such as government agencies or academia, regarding:
 - Market facts and trends: market size, distribution channels, trade statistics and prices;
 - Foreign trade rules: customs procedures, certification requirements and rules of origin;
 - Market access: trade agreements, tariffs and technical barriers to trade;
 - Business opportunities: alerts, trading benefits, business news and trends;
 - Trade contracts: company directories, forwarders and exchanges.

Between September 11, 2017, and 2024, Exprodesk provided customized information to a total of 401 clients, including walk-ins, online one-on-one sessions, and international organizations.

Table c: Total clients of Exprodesk from September 11, 2017 to 2024



2. Creation and provision of digital and/or non-digital documents containing single or combined types of information that meet clients' needs, including a printed or digital directory of foreign importers, an online guide or brochure on how to do business in a particular country, various reports, information regarding business opportunities, market studies, lists of upcoming trade shows for a particular industry, lists of potential buyers, or a new market news report.
3. Maintaining a customer database in order to monitor and evaluate the client management process structurally, resulting in the following actions:

- Developing an effective service portfolio capable of responding as quickly as possible to diverse and changing customer needs;
 - Targeting companies with the greatest export potential more effectively;
 - Ensuring that the companies' resources are used optimally;
 - Building stronger relationships with Exprodesk's key customers;
 - Measuring, and if necessary, adjusting and improving the quality of Exprodesk's products and services;
 - Achieving a high level of customer satisfaction.
4. Conduct studies and surveys on international markets to better understand customer needs and align them with the strategic objectives of organizations.
 5. Collaborate with organizations and establish partnerships with relevant national and international partners to support potential exporters with their products and/or services as well as to create new opportunities for existing exporters.
 6. Building and Maintaining Relationships with Existing and New Stakeholders: To realize envisioned plans, act as a support system for new projects, and assist potential exporters in realizing their business strategy.
 7. Organize various lectures and presentations with the aim of building the export capacity of exporters or potential exporters. Additionally, organizing various workshops and training courses to provide both theoretical and practical knowledge. Entrepreneurs gain tools and knowledge about the requirements needed to successfully establish a business outside of Aruba. Exprodesk organized a total of 202 workshops and presentations since September 11, 2017 to 2024.
 8. Conduct various projects to stimulate export activities which contribute to a sustainable and innovative economy. These projects also contribute to the competitiveness and diversification of the Aruban economy.
 - The Cultural and Creative Industry;
 - Music Market Ready Project;
 - Tech & Services without Borders Project;
 - Arts Without Borders Project;
 - The Aruban Professional Services Sector Project;
 - Empowered Women Exporters Project;
 - Arubaverse.io (Blockchain, Crypto, NFT and AI) Project.

1. Publishing on Exprodesk's website and social media platforms relevant and current information, events and documents.
2. Sustaining public relations (PR) through a range of marketing channels, including social media platforms, press releases, press conferences, featured appearances on prominent TV and radio shows, and promotional materials.
3. Exprodesk as the central contact point of the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), works closely with and supports RVO by:
 - Promoting RVO trade missions among Exprodesk's customers;
 - Providing tailored country information via RVO;
 - Providing requests from European entrepreneurs (from RVO) with personalized information about doing business in Aruba;
 - Promoting and assisting with the SIB vouchers among Aruban potential exporters (such as the coaching, mission, and knowledge vouchers).
4. Informing and/or promoting and/or organizing and/or leading relevant trade missions among the Aruban (potential) exporters and importers. As a result, Exprodesk works closely with Centro de Exportación e Inversión de la República Dominicana (CEI-RD), Latin American Association of Services Exporters (ALES), the Netherlands Enterprise Agency and other important stakeholders and partners. Exprodesk assisted 96 businesses that successfully attended various trade missions.
5. Exprodesk's Participation in the Aruba Trade Board (ATB): Exprodesk actively participates in the Aruba Trade Board (ATB) as a unit of the Department of Economic Affairs, Commerce, and Industry (DEACI). The ATB serves as a collaborative platform to advance Aruba's trade and economic objectives.

A.3.2 Aruba Trade Board

Established in October 2020, the Aruba Trade Board (ATB) serves as an important platform for aligning and promoting trade and investment between Aruba and global markets. This public-private partnership fosters collaboration among key stakeholders from government and private sectors, including the Department of Economic Affairs, Commerce, and Industry (DEACI), the Aruba Chamber of Commerce (CoC), the Aruba Trade and Industry Association (ATIA), Free Zone Aruba NV (FZA), the Aruba Investment Agency (ARINA), the Initiative for the Development of Aruban Enterprises (Iniciativa pa Desaroyo di Empresa Arubano, IDEA), and the Department of Foreign Relations (DBB). The ATB's collaborative structure is designed to address critical aspects of export development and to ensure that Aruba's businesses are well-positioned to compete on the international stage.

The primary mission of the ATB is to enhance Aruba's global trade footprint and to facilitate the growth of its export sector. By aligning government strategies with private sector needs, the ATB strengthens the overall business environment in Aruba. This is achieved through activities such as knowledge exchange, contribution to policy development, and joint initiatives aimed at boosting export growth and improving international trade relations.

In 2024, significant strides were made in reactivating and revitalizing the ATB, particularly through the leadership of DEACI (the Department of Economic Affairs, Commerce, and Industry). DEACI's proactive role included spearheading efforts to hold regular monthly ATB meetings, where key stakeholders could discuss and align on trade initiatives and policy directions. These meetings offered a platform to review strategic priorities and coordinate actions to achieve their objectives.

Key achievements during this period include:

1. **Enhanced Information Sharing and Collaboration:** A significant achievement has been the enhancement of information sharing among ATB members and stakeholders. By leveraging collaborative online platforms, the ATB has streamlined the exchange of critical reports, policies, and trade and investment updates. This improved information flow keeps members well-informed about key developments, bolstering their collective capacity to seize emerging trade opportunities and address challenges. Members promote and share each other's events with their client databases and on social media.
2. **Coordination of the Trade Mission to Suriname:** The ATB played a central role in organizing a successful trade mission to Suriname, facilitating opportunities for Aruban businesses to expand into new markets. This initiative aligned with the Export Policy's objective to diversify Aruba's export markets and strengthen its economic relations with neighboring countries.

3. Evaluation of the Entrepreneurs Policy Action Plan: To enhance local competitiveness, the ATB contributed to evaluating and refining the Entrepreneurs Policy, ensuring Aruban businesses have the necessary support mechanisms to succeed in the local market.
4. Exploratory Mission from Colombia: Another significant milestone was the ATB's collaboration with Holland House Colombia to organize two exploratory missions from Colombia to Aruba. These missions identified potential trade and investment opportunities, fostering new pathways for export and collaboration between the two countries.

These accomplishments reflect the ATB's growing influence and its role in advancing this Export Policy's overarching goal: to enhance the international competitiveness of Aruban businesses. ATB's efforts are helping to establish sustainable trade relationships with key international markets, ensuring that Aruba remains competitive and connected within the global trade landscape.

Looking ahead, the ATB will continue to serve as a vital player in the implementation of Aruba's Export Policy, focusing on strengthening export channels, facilitating international partnerships, and supporting Aruban businesses in their pursuit of global growth. Through its public-private partnerships, strategic initiatives, and consistent engagement, the ATB remains at the forefront of driving Aruba's international trade success.