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# Requirements and barriers in the process of food export from Brazil to Europe

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**Abstract.** Export has been a good way to leverage the agroindustry. However, the small Brazilian companies have been facing difficulties with the European Union, considering the requirements for the import of food. This work aims to clarify the requirements and barriers to food exportation from Brazil to Europe. The study presents a review of the internationalization, regulatory, normative requirements, and difficulties in this process. Aiming to understand the industry's difficulties, four small companies from Brazil were interviewed. In addition, the study also interviewed some professionals in the exportation area. Finally, the study followed the export process of a small food industry that was beginning an export to Europe, to understand all the requirements and procedures involved. The results show the requirements to export food from Brazil to Europe and note the consistency between the theoretical and practical data on the barriers and difficulties found in this process.

**Keywords:** Export Process, Food Industry, Support for Export.

## 1 Introduction

Many studies highlight the importance of exports in the growth of world trade and one of the sectors that stands out most is the agribusiness [1,2].

The agribusiness exports are divided into basic and industrialized products. The basic products are known as commodities (raw materials) and the industrialized products are processed foods, whose have higher added value and contributing to the Brazilian economy [1].

The exporting companies have considerable growth, which means, they have financial gains, the company improves competitiveness in the internal market, increases sales, profits, and market share. In addition, the company reduces its dependency on the internal market, decreases its idle capacity, dilutes fixed production costs, and benefits from seasonality and new technologies. Other export benefits highlighted by [3], and [4] are the partnerships, benefiting from government incentives, the trade of surplus production, and the process improvement to adjust to external demands. Consequently, the enterprises search for improvements, transforming their process, reach a high level of quality, maturity, efficiency, and becoming more sustainable [5,6].

However, it is important to highlight, that firms exhibiting higher productivity tend to export a higher percentage, then, it is important that firms and governments need to direct their policies towards increased productivity in order to improve competitiveness in foreign markets. Furthermore, once industry export orientation is positively associated with a firm's export intensity, export promotion policies should be directed towards the industries with greater export orientation [3]. However, all stages of the export process present certain difficulties [7-10].

Some barriers vary depending on the importing country [11,12,13]. The studies show some export difficulties related to the company's marketing and communication aspects, national export administration, production technology, and position in the market [8,14].

According to [15], large-sized companies can export with greater ease because they are already export and have the infrastructure to support all the procedures involved. The micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) demand support because they have difficulties in obtaining credit to support the high cost of exports, besides the lack of knowledge about the exporting process and the requirements of the buying countries [4]. They have no knowledge of business opportunities abroad [9,16,4], nor know to deal with the bureaucracy involved. In addition, there are language differences, difficulty in defining export prices, the best trading channels, taxes, rates, exchange and customs procedures [7] and [8].

Considering that European countries are among the largest importers of food products from Brazil and that they have many import requirements [17,1,2,18], this research addresses, in particular, the European Union (EU) requirements and barriers.

There are studies that address export requirements for specific food products and studies about the requirements of the product export process. Also, there are agencies that provide support to exporting companies such as: "*Aprendendo a Exportar*" (Learning to Export), Invest Export Brazil and the website of the National Institute of Metrology, Quality, and Technology (INMETRO). INMETRO supports Brazilian exporters, especially the MSMEs. Among the international agencies that assist in the export process, there are the Small Business Administration (SBA) –UNZCO, Canada Border Services Agency, the Canadian Trade Commissioner, GOV-UK, Export Start Guide, Australian Government, MATRADE - Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation, Trade and Enterprise New Zealand, and others.

However, it was not found studies about "the industrialized food export process", including "the necessary requirements, documents, and legislations of the Brazil-Europe export process focusing on MSMEs". Considering the lack of centralized and complete information addressing the various levels of requirement, this study aims to clarify the requirements and barriers in the process of food exports from Brazil to Europe. To this end, the work presents a literature review on internationalization of companies, regulatory and normative requirements and the difficulties in the Brazil-Europe export process. In order to complement the literature review, the study conducted a survey with four Brazilian food industries (MSMEs), aiming to "identify the operational difficulties of companies in the export process". The work also carried out interviews with seven export specialists from five sectors of activity. Finally, the study followed the export process of a small food industry that was beginning to export to Europe, aiming

to understand better all the requirements and procedures involved during a complete export process.

## 2 Material and methods

In order to complete the general objective, the study conducted a bibliographic search, aiming to understand the general scenario of exports of food products from Brazil to the European Union. The work also carried out a survey of the fundamental requirements for food entry into the European Union, including standards, documentation, regulations and agreements, focusing on MSMEs.

Subsequently, the research sought to identify the main difficulties faced by companies, found during the export process. In addition to a bibliographic survey, the study also sought information in the field through a survey. The research selected 227 MSMEs, which were food-exporting industries from the Register of Industries of the State of Paraná - Brazil/2015 - FIEP. From this selection, only 192 industries had an email registered, enabling to send a questionnaire. This questionnaire contained six open-ended questions, in order to identify the difficulties of these companies during the export process. Among the 192 emails sent, 67 presented registration errors and, among the remaining 125 industries, only four delivered the questionnaire answered. The questionnaire was also available on social networks such as Facebook and LinkedIn, through the Google Form tool (elaboration of online form), but there were no answers. Therefore, only the four companies' answers were analyzed.

In order to widen the scope of the difficulties faced by MSMEs food industries, the study also conducted interviews with seven export specialists, located in five different sectors. They are: Innovation Manager and Business Analyst at the FIEP Internationalization Department, Commercial Representative from a food industry, two customs brokers, an international business consultant and a consulting company in the area of foreign trade. The work conducted face-to-face semi-structured interviews, lasting approximately one and a half hours, in order to take advantage of each interviewee's level of knowledge. Thus, the interviews had variations regarding the focus on the "export" theme, as shown below:

- (1) Manager of the Innovation Sector, FIEP Internationalization Department - the objective was to identify the situation of MSMEs regarding exports, research on the growth of exports of higher value-added (industrialized) products and identify trends in food exports;
- (2) Business Analyst, FIEP Internationalization Department - the objective was to collect the main difficulties of MSMEs in the export process, identify documents and processes necessary for the export process;
- (3) Commercial area in a food industry - the objective was to understand how the company's export process occurs, detailing the step-by-step process, and describing the main difficulties and the most critical steps;

- (4) Customs Brokers - the objective was to map the processes required for export and collect the difficulties that a small company faces when executing this process;
- (5) Consulting Companies - the objective was to collect data on the international requirements for the entry of food products into the European Union and the main difficulties of MSMEs in the export process.

Finally, the study followed the export process of a small food industry that was beginning an export to Europe, in order to understand all the requirements and procedures involved. The company is located in Curitiba, State of Paraná, Brazil, and the study followed the steps below, as [19] proposed for a Case Study:

- (1) Choice of the theoretical framework: the study delimited the theme “Exports; Barriers and Export Models”;
- (2) Case selection: The study took place in an industry that started an export process to Europe, carried out between April and September 2016;
- (3) Data collection protocol design: Data survey through interviews, documentary analysis and direct observations in order to collect the following information: company history, size, product lines, if there is a methodology for product development, if the company has any kind of certification, if it exports its products or want to export them, if the company knows any methodology to assist in the exportation of food products, which ways would it seek to help in exporting and especially identify if the company use any methodology to develop the products for export and finally, identify whether it would be interested in a model that helps in food exports;
- (4) Conduct of Case Study: the authors of this work conducted the study, accompanied by the company owner and some employees who assisted in the visits and data collection;
- (5) Report development: the data was organized and analyzed in order to provide an overview of the requirements and barriers that a small company finds when it exports its food products from Brazil to a European country for the first time, without the support of a specialized company;
- (6) Standardization and Theoretical Modification: Due to the collections and analyzes, the study offered some suggestions about the implementation of procedures.

With the collected data mentioned above, the study concludes with the list of “Documents for the export process”, the “Technical and normative requirements needed to export food from Brazil to Europe”, the “Most cited barriers in the export-related literature”, the “Main difficulties found in an export process, according to experts in the field” and, finally, “Reports of a real Brazil-Europe food export experience”.

### **3 Export motivations, requirements, and restrictions**

Export is the way for a country to increase its economy by selling goods and services in international markets [20] and it is a key activity for the economic health of nations [18,21,3,22].

Export operations may be carried out directly or indirectly. In the direct operations, the manufacturing company ships its products without external intervention and in the indirect operation, the manufacturing companies sell their products on the domestic market to Trade Companies export them [23].

In spite of these initiatives, there are requirements and barriers such as standards, documentation, regulations and agreements needed to be met during this process. The geographical barriers, for instance, make international trade be slightly difficult. In order to expand this access, the Commercial or Free Trade Agreements are used. The main treaties clause is the reduction of import tariffs. The main economic blocks of which Brazil is part and has trade agreements are: Southern Common Market (Mercosur); Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries (GSTP); Generalized System of preferences (GSP) and Latin American Integration Association (ALADI).

### **3.1 Export process and associated requirements**

According to [1] and [2], the export process involves 22 steps described below:

- (1) Planning: step to identify new markets, verify scale production and sales, talk with partners, enable the company for the export process and perform necessary training;
- (2) Market Research: evaluate competitors, check technical barriers, perform research and know the chosen country as the destination for the product;
- (3) Negotiation with the Importer: classify the goods by the harmonized system;
- (4) Preparation of the Proforma Invoice: similar to the commercial invoice, in which all the negotiated items are written down, but it has no commercial value yet;
- (5) Sending the Proforma Invoice to the Importer: the invoice is sent to generate the purchase order;
- (6) Request for credit opening at the bank: the importer goes to his bank abroad and delivers the letter of credit to the bank manager;
- (7) Exporter analyzes letter of credit: the exporter verifies if the information is correct: descriptions, values and deadlines;
- (8) Preparation of Commercial Invoice: international document issued by the exporter that, in the external level, is equivalent to the Invoice;
- (9) Preparation of Goods: the exporter prepares the goods as requested in the letter of credit and requests the start of the Export Record (RE) in SISCOMEX;
- (10) Preparation of Packing List: document required for clearance of goods and for guidance of the importer upon arrival of the products in the destination country;
- (11) Issue of invoice: used in transit of exported goods, accompanying it to the point of clearance abroad;
- (12) Transport to port: transport of goods to the port or border of destination;
- (13) Customs Clearance: fiscal procedure by which the customs clearance of goods destined abroad is processed;
- (14) Freight and Insurance Payment: payment required if agreed with the importer;

- (15) Receipt of Bill of Lading (B/L) or Air Way Bill (AWB): document of the transport company certifying the receipt of the cargo, the transport conditions and the obligation to deliver the goods to the importer;
- (16) Clearance at Federal Revenue: the Tax Auditor of Revenue Service (AFRF) registers the customs clearance in SISCOMEX. The registration is the final act of the export clearance and consists in the confirmation, by the customs supervision, of the shipment of the goods and the carrier's data recording;
- (17) Issuance of Proof of Export: after the export operation, the exporter, upon request, is provided with the documentary evidence of export, issued by SISCOMEX in the Goods Clearance Unit;
- (18) Documentation Consolidation: the exporter consolidates all documentation and sends a copy to the importer: Invoice, Export Registration, Commercial Invoice, Letter of Credit, Bill of Lading, Insurance Policy and Export Proof;
- (19) Exchange Contract: the exchange closing is when the exporter sells the foreign currency resulting from the export operation to the Bank;
- (20) Documentation delivery to the bank: the negotiated way for the delivery of foreign currency is the fulfillment of the obligations detailed in the Letter of Credit;
- (21) Exchange settlement and receipt: delivery procedure of foreign currency to the authorized Bank which, in turn, pays the equivalent amount in national currency, considering the rate agreed on the exchange date;
- (22) Sending Thank-you Letter: Send a thank-you email as you close deals and maintain regular correspondence with the client, strengthening trade links. If possible, visit the client to know the market and their local needs.

There are some documents employed during the process described below, according to the Brazilian Foreign Trade Association [24]:

1. Proforma Invoice - in which the conditions of purchase and sale of the goods are stipulated.
2. Commercial Invoice - this document consolidates all information about the negotiation of purchase and sale of goods, containing all the points inherent in this process.
3. Packing List – it is a list of the volumes to be exported and their contents.
4. Bill of lading - this document is a guarantee that the goods have been shipped abroad or the border has been crossed
5. Certification of Origin - to certify that the product is effectively originated from the exporting country and grant tariff preferences.
6. Export Registration - The SISCOMEX is a set of commercial, financial, exchange and tax information and defines its legal framework.
7. Export Clearance Declaration (DDE) - presented to the competent Federal Revenue unit where the clearance and/or shipment is taking place.
8. Credit Operation Register (RC) - information with exchange and financial nature related to exports with a payment term of over 180.
9. Sales Register (RV) - completed in the case of products traded on international commodity exchanges or in case of primary products (commodities).
10. Invoice - this document must accompany the goods and contain all operations and party information.



In addition to documentation, some standards are required for the export process of products, mainly to the European Union.

### Legislation and standards

According to [13], the awareness raising for food safety issues culminated in sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and quality-related regulations and standards, imposing demands on exporting countries around the world. However, recent studies have shown that food safety standards have significantly affected exports of agricultural commodities from developing to developed countries [12]. To minimize this impact, it is important to understand the rules.

The requests, regulations and requirements can be classified into national and international and include food safety certifications that can facilitate the product entry into the European Union [18]. [25] presents the certifications in the food area and the regulations and requirements from their production to the customs clearance of the product at national and international agencies. These are basic requirements, intended to any kind of food. Depending on the product, it could contain more requirements, especially if they are of animal origin. Considering the limited space, the data did not present in this document, but they were indicated through a link in the bibliographic reference. In addition to the abovementioned requirements that hamper the export process, there are some barriers, especially for MSMEs.

### Barriers to the export process

According to several authors and considering the MSMEs, the main difficulties/barriers found in order to meet these requirements are: limited information regarding the localization and analysis of foreign markets, untrained employees to execute the processes, knowledge of how to obtain the necessary financing to export operations, the lack of experienced staff to devote time to export activities, and banks willing to support the international business activities [22,26]. Table 1 presents the barriers mentioned by several authors in the literature, classified into thirteen aspects involved in the export process. This study's source includes the following references: [27,28,8,22,7,14,29,30-33].

**Table 1.** Barriers mentioned in the literature.

Categories	Barriers
1. Customer	Different habits of foreign customers.
2. Costs	Risks and excessive costs due to the large geographical and psychological distances that separate nations; Cost management; High labor costs; Risk of losing money in the process; Lack of financial resources.
3. Documents	Bureaucracy and documentation.
4. Financing	Lack of banks willing to support the companies international activities; Credit and financing difficulties; Need to honor letters of credit; Banks prepared to promote the companies international activities or local trading companies that allow indirect export operations.
5. Information	Lack of information, knowledge, communication process, formal public education, knowledge of how to obtain the necessary financing to export

	operations and about the export process, and limited information regarding the target market.
6. Legislation	Rules and regulations of the international trade Lack of knowledge in the commercial practices; non-tariff barriers; Quality control and safety standards that involve product adaptations to the requirements of different foreign markets.
7. Marketing	Inappropriate marketing strategy; Difficulty when conducting promotional activities for foreign markets.
8. Market Research	Differences between business environments; Difficulty in gathering information about potential markets and identifying opportunities; Competition faced in the foreign market; Lack of business opportunities; Political instability in foreign markets.
9. Planning	Limited human, organizational and management resources; Inefficiency in resource allocation; Activity planning; Export management principles; Lack of experience to export; Lack of training.
10. Customs Procedure	Logistics obstacles; Customs bureaucracy; Release time of loads; Customs clearance; Choice of sales channels; Slow customs clearance; Transport and distribution difficulties in the foreign market; Difficulty in finding a reliable distributor in the destination country.
11. Product and Development	Adequacy of products and production processes; Lack of production capacity.
12. Tax Treatment	Lack of awareness of the economic and non-economic benefits of export markets; Risk of exchange rate variation; Import tariffs; Brazilian exchange-rate policy; Exchange rate.
13. Government	Government policy of incentives; Government barriers.

As can be seen in Table 1, the categories that most present barriers are related to Planning, Market Research, and Information. Planning becomes compromised due to the lack of staff prepared for this procedure type. Market Research and Information report similar problems, related to the difficulty in obtaining information from the destination country, as well as other factors.

Added to these barriers, recently, [34] showed that EU set out an agenda for responsible trade and investment in its "Trade for all strategy". They promise greater economic value to smaller enterprises, transparency in negotiations, but call for the European Commission to adopt a negotiating approach that "involves using trade agreements and trade preference programs as levers to promote values like sustainable development human rights, fair and ethical trade and the fight against corruption", extending the interest across the production chain [35-39]. The Mercosur agreement, for example, includes commitments to fight deforestation, that is, the private sector must avoid buying meat from farms in recently deforested areas. According to [40], the Global Trade Analysis (GTAP) framework is used to simulate the implementation of the June 2019 "EU-Mercosur Agreement in Principle".

#### **4 Export: the view of the industry and its representatives**

In order to understand the reality of the food export process, this study carried out a survey of the main difficulties during the process, through questionnaires in four food

MSMEs that export their products, and seven interviews with specialists from the foreign trade area, as previously mentioned. The study also followed the first export process of a company located in the south of Brazil, aiming to understand the practical difficulties of this industry.

#### 4.1 Difficulties mentioned by exporting companies

The survey aimed to identify: the difficulties that exporting companies have or once had, if they have already used the support of any agency, how did they carry out a survey about the requirements of the destination country, how did the use of the transport and the International Commercial Terms (INCOTERM) occur and what are the main demands of export support. The answers showed that there are difficulties because the companies:

- (1) Do not know the complete export process;
- (2) Do not understand and are unable to organize the documentation to take the process forward;
- (3) Do not understand the foreign market demand to identify potential customers, consumers and potential countries.

Despite this, sometimes the importer informs the company about these local market requirements, facilitating the process. However, all exporters would like to have a list of requirements on the exported product.

#### 4.2 Difficulties mentioned by export specialists

Seven interviews were conducted with experts in the field and were considered in this work, aiming to identify the main difficulties of the food export process, but only two were described in detail in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Main difficulties found in an export process.

<b>Professionals from food internationalization sectors at FIEP</b>	<b>Difficulties reported in the interview</b>
Manager of the International Innovation Center of FIEP-PR. (March/2016).	<u>To understand the general situation about food industries exportation:</u> Lack of process knowledge, qualified person to perform the activity, excessive documents, price formation, target market identification and cultural differences. The manager informed the contact of a company for case study of research and monitoring of an export process in practice.
Business Analysts at the International Business Center (CNI) of FIEP-PR (2). (March/2016).	<u>To identify the main difficulties that the industries find:</u> Difficulties related to the fluency in another language, qualified staff to conduct the process, as well as better understand the support activities that FIEP offers.

According to the experts, the fact of not having the complete process control and a qualified person to carry it out impacts on the lack of knowledge of the target market, on the correct identification of the final consumer's needs, on the correct choice of

transport and freight, on the preparation of the correct documents, pricing and others. As a result, many companies are afraid to export products for due to the lack of knowledge or damage caused by sloppy negotiations. They also mention that the obstacles to conduct exports make the start-up companies reluctant to export, and the more experienced companies suffer from the performance of the export process, which threatens the international market. Another obstacle is related to the difficulty of conducting a market study to place properly products in the destination country.

Analyzing 13 categories of difficulties and some barriers that some professionals mentioned, categorized similarly to those found in the literature, there the follow synthesis:

- (1) Market and target audience identification: Perceptions and needs of the consumer and target market and cultural differences; international market research; identification of products in the portfolio that are of interest to world consumption, not just regional and typical products; identification of the product concept that could be well regarded in the market; identification of methods for placing the product on the new market; correct identification of demand for numbered lists;
- (2) Lack of relationship network in the exporting country;
- (3) Excess of Documentation: Preparation of documents required for export, such as: Certificate of Origin and Packing List;
- (4) Qualified staff: process and required steps understanding;
- (5) Fluency in another language: understanding of the language and culture of the place;
- (6) Pricing: Pricing of goods; Payment methods and financing tools; currency definition;
- (7) Correct packaging suitability: Storage of goods so as not to spoil the products or expire the shelf life;
- (8) Product classification: classify the product according to the tariff nomenclature; bureaucratic process; importance in defining the product classification (INCOTERM) for the process. Reported doubts in performing the steps, preferring to pay someone to do the process;
- (9) Logistics: Define the transport type, if it will be necessary to have a cargo agent to bring the goods to the port or not; Customs processes; container loading/stuffing, container transport to the port taking into consideration the product type that, because it is food product, has its shelf life controlled and often must be under controlled conditions;
- (10) Country's legislative and regulatory context: The main requirements for the entry of food products into the European Union and area certifications. (Additional information: Some professionals or exporting companies commented that the customers are those who inform about the requirements to be met by the products for the entry in the foreign market; however, they confirm that having a standard procedure of the requirements would help in the process. The phase of surveying the requirements are uncomplicated as it is the importer's responsibility, but the importer does not always provide the information properly. They use FIEP and AMCHAM - they would like to understand better the support activities offered by FIEP and other agencies).

### 4.3 Requirements and barriers identified in an export experience

In order to understand the actual export process, this work conducted a case study in a company in Southern Brazil. For commercial confidentiality reasons, the company will not be identified without compromising the relevant information.

The study began by visiting the company to learn about the products, processes and export goals. First, the company's director and founder was interviewed to establish a partnership for this study. After this interview, the authors had monthly meetings with the company and importers. At first, the export target was Portugal. One of this study's authors participated in all this company's export-related activities, including meetings with other potential clients, participation in fairs and business missions.

The Planning of activities took place through an export project, developed through the following steps:

- Meeting with the importer: presentation of the company's products, characteristics, differentials and results of research carried out in the national market;
- Organization of the bureaucratic aspects necessary for exportation: Sanitary Surveillance (ANVISA) authorization to operate and Federal Revenue release of the System for Tracking of Customs Agents' Activities (Commercial Radar). Product identification related to the Mercosur Common Nomenclature (NCM) which, despite being several products, all have the same classification in the harmonized system. Definition of INCOTERM to be used in the process (Ex-Work – EXW - goods delivered to the buyer at the seller's establishment). Decision taken due to safety reasons for the exporting company, and due to the most competitive price for the importer; therefore, the importer assumes the responsibilities from the output of the exporting company's products;
- Survey of requirements for the product entry into the European Union: use of the Mercosur Common Nomenclature (NCM) as a reference. Activity performed by one of this study's authors;
- Participation in the International Business Meeting promoted by CIN/FIEP: Business roundtables with potential importers of the products. This activity was relevant to identify the product impact on potential customers and to exchange information with companies in the same sector. Discussions of some subjects such as types of packaging, product adaptations and pricing. The study verified that these are common doubts among the participating companies;
- Product pricing using INCOTERM EXW as the basis, sent to interested importers;
- Second meeting with the importer interested in transporting the product to Portugal: Presentation of similar products sold in the region of Portugal, including comparisons with the company's products: packaging, price, taste, appearance, ingredients, among others. The company found that some raw materials were not well regarded in the target market and therefore the product would have to undergo adjustments and changes in packaging;
- Meeting with trademark and patent company to request brand safety in the foreign market: the product formulation is patented and has no similar in the national or international market;

- The company's director and founder visit the target markets, Portugal and Argentina: In Portugal, there was a need to obtain an organic product certificate, for organic products are a trend in this market. In the Argentinean market, there was greater difficulty in placing the product in the region. It would require a gradual entry, with market research and promotion strategies in order to obtain public acceptance. At this point, the company found that the prior market research is essential before starting an export process.

Until this study's completion, the company had not completed the export process. Therefore, it was not possible to follow the complete process within the company, but rather the initial procedures of market verification and product suitability to external requirements. With this study, it was possible to identify the following difficulties faced by the company until that moment:

- The proper way of placing the product on the market;
- Perceptions about the needs of the target audience;
- The correct demand identification;
- The survey of regulatory matters in the destination country.

This field survey corroborates the findings of [28] and [14]. They mention that the main difficulties of start-up companies in the export process are the lack of information about potential markets, information for the adequacy of products and production processes, implementation of promotional activities for foreign markets and knowledge of the target countries legislation abroad.

## 5 Conclusion

This study verified that, despite the economic motivations that promote the export of food products, there are excessive standards, documentation and many procedures that tend to intimidate some companies. The study identified 22 steps that constitute an export process, requiring at least 10 documents, including national and international regulations and standards, mainly for food safety reasons. These documents are: Proforma and Commercial Invoice, Packing List, Bill of Lading, Certificates of Origin, Export Registration, Export Clearance Declaration, Credit Operation Register, Sale Registration and Invoice. In addition, the research conducted a survey of the requirements in the theoretical and practical field, identifying difficulties during the export process, classifying them into 13 categories: Customer, Costs, Documents, Financing, Information, Legislation, Marketing, Market Research, Planning, Customs Process, Product and Development, Tax Treatment and Government. Several barriers identified in the academic material and in the interviews with experts in the field were similar. These barriers are: perceptions of the target audience and cultural differences, lack of networking in the destination country, excessive documents for export and financing, lack of complete process control, product classification and certification, getting qualified staff for export, logistics and customs, pricing, mastery of the country's legislative and regulatory context.

In order to complement this study, the authors followed a first export process of a medium-sized Brazilian company, aiming to export food products to Portugal and Argentina. The first difficulties found were the lack of knowledge of the process and the necessary documentation for its referral. Other difficulties were related to foreign trade practices, such as the correct identification of the final consumer's needs, the correct choice of transport and freight, the preparation of documents, the pricing, as well as the differences between business environments and the excessive risks and costs, due to the great geographical and psychological distances that separate nations. The study verified that the process knowledge and understanding are extremely important for companies to address this procedure and minimize its obstacles. Although the importers help the companies with the destination country's requirements, all companies would like to have a list of the basic requirements of the exported product. The obstacles to conducting exports make start-up companies fearful of exporting and the experienced companies suffer from the performance of the export process, which threatens the international market. Considering the demands of various professionals in the area, mentioned in the academic studies analyzed, the authors suggest, as a future work, the proposition of an export guide that addresses the procedures and requirements demanded in an export process, depending on the destination market.

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