

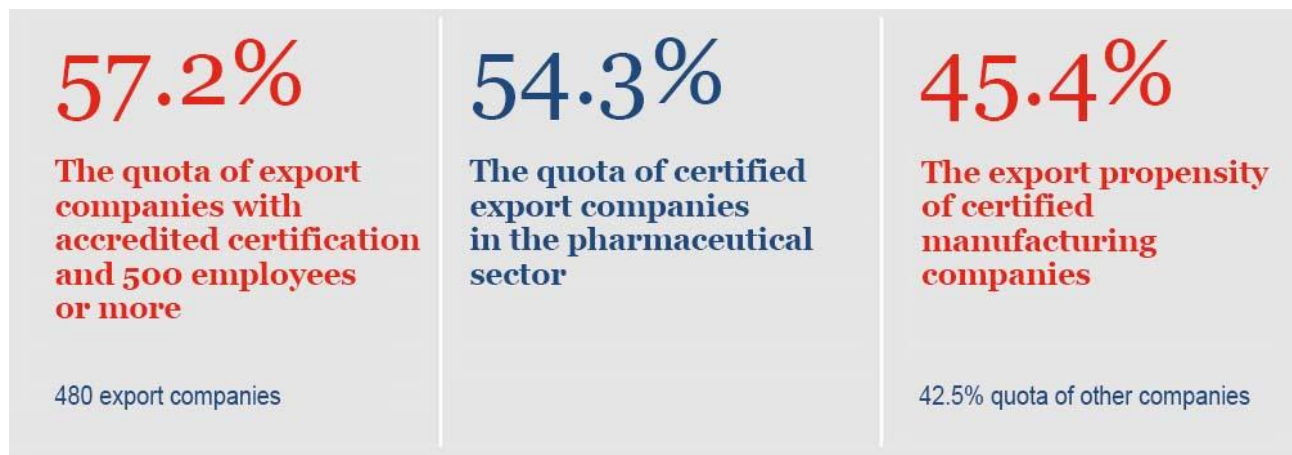
ACCREDITED CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AMONG EXPORT COMPANIES - 2019

In 2019, the number of certified companies among the total of export companies continued to grow.

There were 19,677 export companies holding a certified management system under accreditation, with a value of exported goods equal to 238.9 billion euro and a workforce of about 2 million employees.

In 2019, the quantity of certified companies out of the total number of export companies reached 16.0% from 15.1% in 2018 (15.3% in 2017).

The quantity of exports attributable to certified companies stands at 54.1%, rising from 53.5% in 2018 and 53.3% in 2017.



DIFFUSION AND EFFECTS OF ACCREDITED CERTIFICATION

The globalization of trade and the emergence of production systems organized along global chains of value - that is, based on the fragmentation of the production process into single phases, allocated in companies operating around the world - involves a high degree of coordination and cooperation also between independent companies and it encourages the adoption of shared technical and organizational standards at international level, both to ensure compatibility between products and processes in global chains of production and to ensure the quality characteristics of the products expected by the markets.

Technical and organizational standards transmit information, allow interoperability between products and processes and guarantee minimum levels of quality and safety. Their effectiveness and their ability to transmit trust in the markets is backed up by conformity assessments (certifications, inspections, laboratory tests, etc.) issued by certification bodies and laboratories, whose impartiality, independence and competence is ensured by Accredia, the Italian accreditation body.

This report presents the main results of the analysis of the diffusion among exporting companies of certified management systems, made possible thanks to the database on organizations and companies with a certified management system under accreditation provided by Accredia, in accordance with an agreement signed with ISTAT. The Accredia database, for the three-year period 2017-2019, was integrated with the micro data of TEC-Frame SBS, produced annually by ISTAT and updated to 2019 as reference year, resulting from the integration of the information in the archive of companies conducting trade with foreign countries (TEC) and the main economic variables available for all industry and service companies in the FrameSBS information system.

The reference areas of the management systems considered in this analysis are different and they concern the quality of processes, the environmental impact, the health and safety of workers, safety information, etc. (see the methodology note). Accredited certification of such systems can represent a tool for monitoring the functionality of all stages of production. In general, all management systems set out the procedures that a company must follow to ensure the constant quality of its products and services. For this reason, they facilitate the participation of companies, as suppliers, in production chains covering many countries.

Increased accredited certification among large-scale organizations

In 2019 the number of export companies with accredited certification for management systems stood at 19,677, equal to 16.0% of the total, corresponding to an overall export value of 238.9 billion euros (54.1% of the total) and about 2 million employees (equal to 49.6%). Compared to 2017 there was a slight increase in the use of accredited certification of management systems for all sizes of organization.



TABLE 1. CERTIFIED EXPORT COMPANIES, KEY FIGURES

2019, percentages, productivity, average values

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	Industry and services (a)			Manufacturing				
	Number of organizations of the total	Export rates of the total	Export propensity	Number of organizations of the total	Export rates of the total	Export propensity	Productivity (in thousands of euro)	Average number of export countries
0-9	3.7	7.2	20.5	5.1	10.5	26.6	67.2	5.1
10-19	19.5	21.6	20.3	21.0	24.3	26.4	73.0	12.8
20-49	35.3	38.0	27.5	38.4	41.3	33.0		
50-99	48.8	48.8	23.4	53.6	53.1	39.3	83.8	28.1
100-249	54.1	60.4	37.7	60.2	61.9	47.3		
250-499	57.7	54.3	38.7	62.3	57.1	52.2		
500 and more	57.2	68.2	32.1	67.0	73.7	48.1	92.0	47.9
Total	16.0	54.1	31.7	23.5	60.2	45.4		

(a) Certain activities such as financial services, insurance, etc. are excluded. See methodology note.

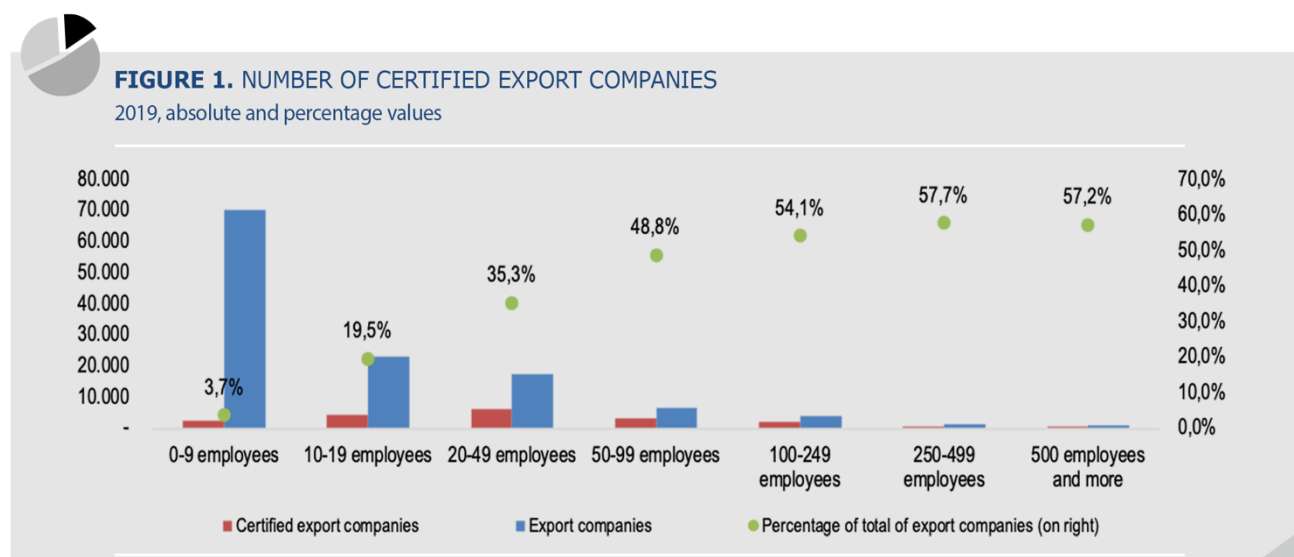
The diffusion of accredited certification of management systems rises as the size of the company increases, in terms of number of employees: it is therefore less frequent among small businesses (only 3.7% of export companies with up to 9 employees) which are less involved in global value chains (Figure 1). On the other hand, it is high for medium and large companies (over 54% of exporting companies with 100-249 employees and more than 57% of those with at least 250 employees), in particular for those which export to a greater extent: certified companies with at least 500 employees account for more than 68% of the exports of the organization size category, those with 250-499 employees: 54.3% and 60.4% of the export of certified companies with 100-249 employees (Table 1, attached).

With reference to the manufacturing sector, the use of accredited certification of management systems of companies with at least 100 employees affects more than 60% of export companies and reaches a peak of 67.0% for those with at least 500 employees, constituting 73.7% of exports of the size category.

Manufacturing companies with certification show a greater tendency to export

In terms of propensity to export (measured by the ratio of export turnover to total turnover of the company), the comparison between export companies with a certified management system and other exporters shows, on the whole, a positive differential for certified organizations: they export 31.7% of their turnover whilst the other exporting companies have sales of 25.8% in foreign markets.

This data underlies different results for the two sectors of manufacturing and trade. In manufacturing, the propensity to export is greater for certified export companies than for non-certified ones (45.4% and 42.5% respectively). In commerce, however, the propensity to export is higher for non-certified export companies (14.4%, against 9.7% of certified companies) (Table 2).



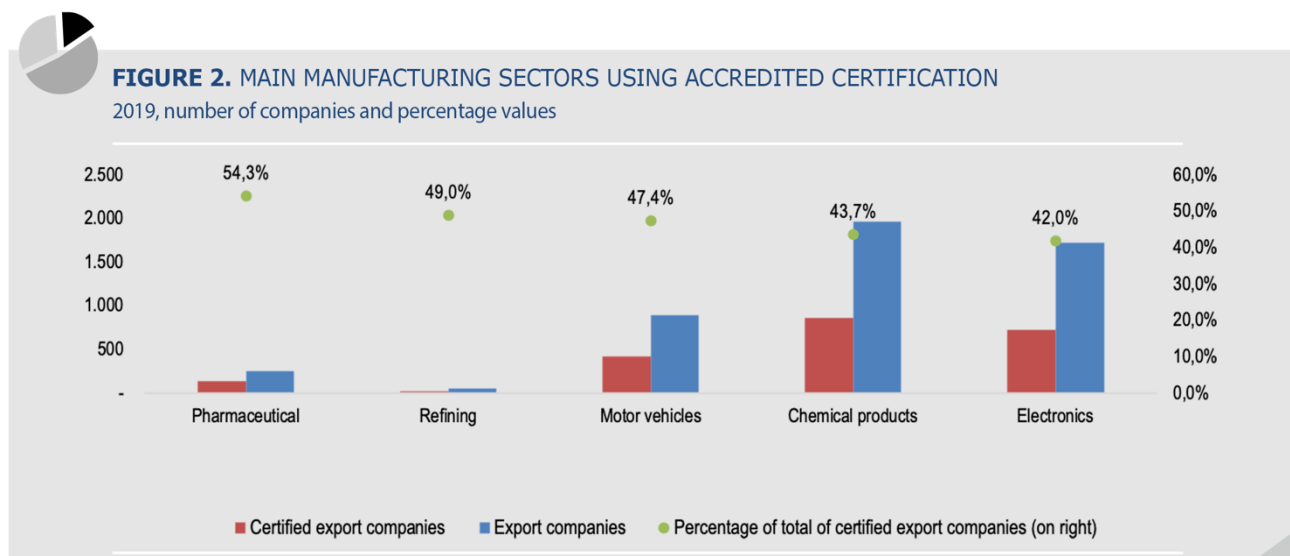
Greater use of accredited certification among pharmaceutical companies

In 2019, 72.8% of export companies with accredited certification (14,319 units out of 19,677 analyzed) operate in the manufacturing sector, where quality and safety in the various phases of production are more important. They represent 23.5% of the total of exporter manufacturing companies (61,059 units). Certified manufacturing companies export goods for a value of 60.2% of the total for exports made by companies in the sector and 49.1% of national exports.

The manufacturing sectors in which accredited certification of a management system is most used, with percentages between 42.0% and 54.3%, are characterized by a high level of standardization (Figure 2). The ISO 9000 certifications are, in fact, more widespread in the sectors where there is both higher fragmentation of the production phases and also integration in the value chains and where, therefore, the quality and safety of the various production phases are major factors of importance.

The highest share of certified exporting companies is recorded in the pharmaceutical sector (54.3% of the total number) which account for 87.5% of the sector's exports.

The diffusion of accredited certification is also high in the refining sectors (49.0% of exporting companies), automobile manufacturing (47.4% of the total), chemicals (43.7%) and electronics (42.0%). In these sectors, with the exception of refining, the certified companies constitute over 60% of the total exports of the respective sector, with the highest incidence in the manufacture of motor vehicles where companies with accredited certification account for 84.1% of the sector's exports (Table 3, attached).



Europe is the main export market for certified companies

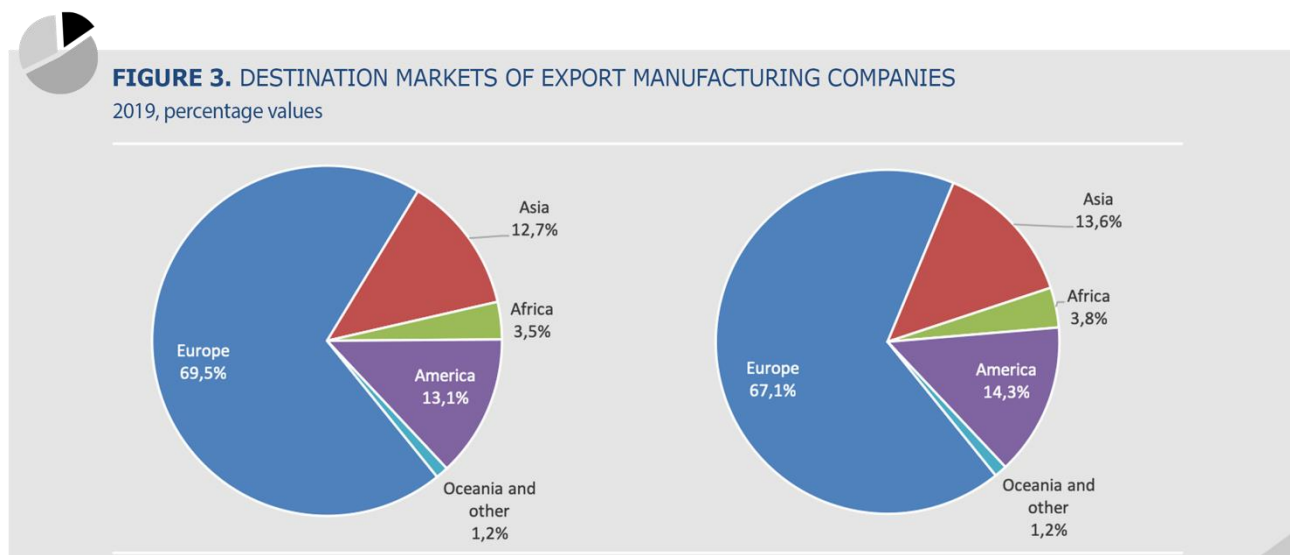
Europe is the main export market for the manufacturing companies with accredited certification of a management system. In 2019, sales destined for the European market of these companies amounted to 150.8 billion euro, 61.1% of exports of the whole sector towards the European market and 34.2% of national exports.

Among the main sales areas, the Americas and Asia rank second and third, with Africa and Oceania following them and, finally, all other territories. In all areas, the share of sales made by certified businesses is higher than those of other export companies: between 58 and 60% (Table 5, attached).

In Europe, the certification system and its procedures are defined by Regulation (EU) 765/2008. The Regulation provides that each EU Member State appoints its own body in charge of providing the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies (in Italy, Accredia) and defines an overall framework of rules, in order to facilitate trade in goods and services between Member States, ensuring a minimum level of health and safety. It provides for a strictly uniform approach in all Member States; therefore, the benefit of the accreditation system in Europe is linked to the fact that once a certificate of conformity is issued, this must be recognized by the authorities of the Member States on the basis of the agreements of mutual recognition signed by the national accreditation body.

From the comparison of the export destination areas of certified companies with those of non-certified companies, it emerges that 69.5% of the total exports made by certified manufacturing companies is for the European market and the share for non-certified manufacturing companies is 67.1% (Figure 3).

On the sectoral level, certified export companies of metallurgy and manufacturers of machinery and equipment n.e.c. account for almost a third of exports to the European market produced by certified companies, for a value of approximately 28 and 22 billion euros respectively. Certified companies in the machinery and equipment manufacturing sector n.e.c. export more than certified companies in other sectors in all the remaining main markets (Table 5, attached). When compared with non-certified ones, certified companies in both sectors achieve higher export values regarding all the main markets.



Accredited certification, as evidence of conformity with international production standards, qualifies companies as reliable suppliers. This is especially true in advanced markets where such certification is a qualification which is normally required for suppliers, whether domestic or international. The advantage of accredited certification in participation in global value chains is evident judging by the typology of exported goods (main groupings of industries).

The manufacturing export companies with a certified management system realize about 60% of the total value of exports of intermediate goods (which enter the production processes of companies located in international markets) and 61.0% of the total export value of capital goods (Table 8, attached).

Certified businesses are more productive than non-certified ones

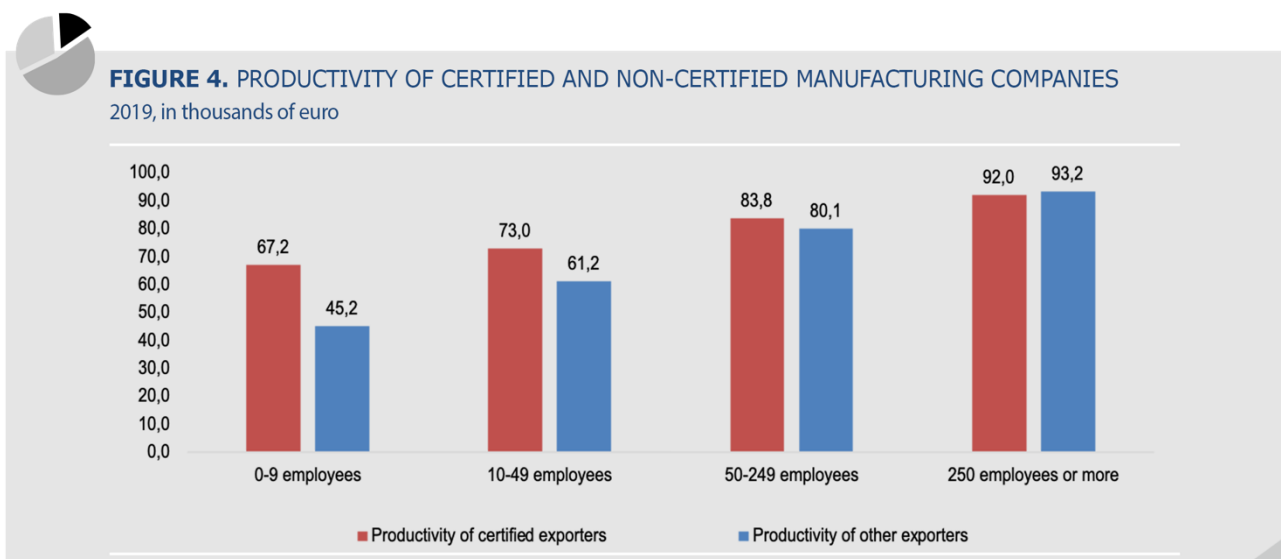
A further comparative study between certified and non-certified export companies can be undertaken by considering the productivity differential, calculated as the ratio between added value and the number of employees.

In manufacturing, certified exporters are more productive than non-certified ones, with differences which, however, are only significant for smaller companies (Figure 4).

In 2019, micro enterprises (up to 9 employees), with accredited management system certification, recorded productivity of 67,200 euro, higher than that of non-certified companies in the same size class (45,200 euro), with a positive productivity differential of 22,000 euro. This figure increased between 2017 and 2019 (21,900 euro in 2018 and 18,800 in 2017) (Table 9, attached).

For small certified organizations (10-49 employees), the productivity is always greater than that of non-certified ones (73,000 euro against 61,200), with a constant differential over the three years of 11,800 euros. The same is true for certified exporters with 50-249 employees but the gap is smaller: in 2019, for the former, productivity was 83,800 euro, for those not certified it was 80,100 euro. In the period 2017-2019, the differential falls – from 4,500 to 3,700 euro.

With regard to large companies, however, (with at least 250 employees), in 2019 the productivity of certified companies was lower than that of non-certified ones (92,000 euro compared with 93,200 euro). In 2017 the differential was positive, at 1.4 thousand euro while in 2018 it was almost zero (0.1 thousand euro).



Small certified enterprises – the most productive are in central and southern Italy

The analysis by geographical distribution of the productivity differences between certified and non-certified manufacturing exporters shows the largest gaps for small businesses (up to 9 employees) in the Center, the South and Sicily/Sardinia: for this size class, the highest productivity is 47,000 euro in the Center and 29,900 euro in the South and in the Islands (Figure 5).

Also, for the size classes of 10-49 employees and 50-249 employees, certified export manufacturing companies from the Center and the South and the Islands show larger positive differences from those recorded by certified companies in the North, belonging to the same size classes.

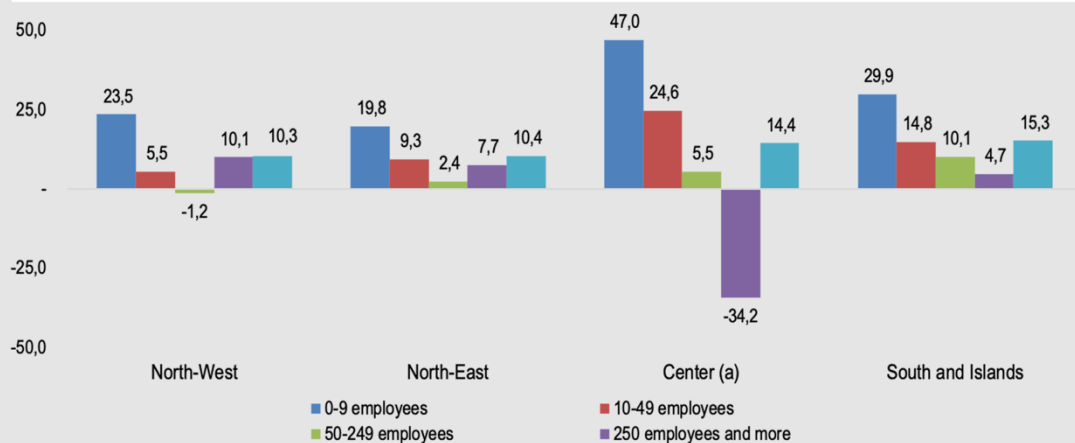
The situation is reversed if we consider companies with 250 employees or more; in this case, the certified companies in the North have the highest positive spreads.

In general, in all the geographical areas to which they belong, the certified exporting companies are more productive than other exporting firms: the only exceptions concern firms with 50-249 employees in the North-West and those with 250 employees or more in the Center. For the latter, the high negative differential is conditioned by the presence, among non-certified exporting companies, of a small number of companies with very high added value. Without considering these companies, the differential of productivity becomes positive in favor of certified export companies (16.2 thousand euro).



FIGURE 5. PRODUCTIVITY DIFFERENTIALS OF MANUFACTURING COMPANIES BY MACROAREA AND NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

2019, values in thousands of euro



(a) For the class of 250 employees and more, the result is affected by the presence of a small number of non-certified exporting companies with high added value.

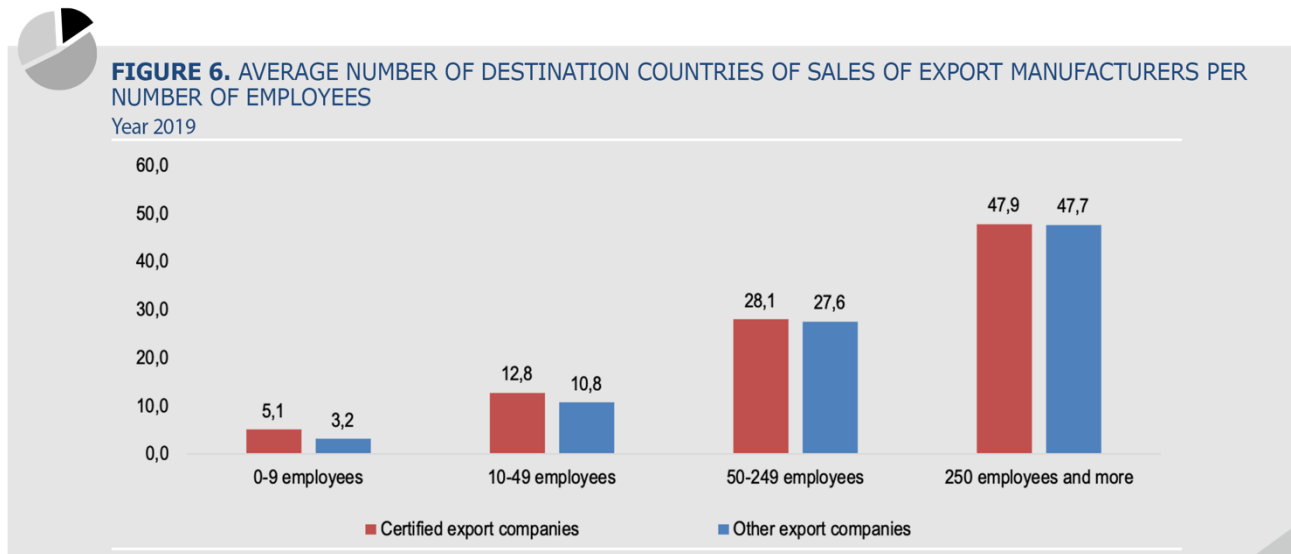
Certified enterprises export to a greater number of countries

Also with regard to the geographical diversification of the destination markets of the goods of manufacturing exporters, those with accredited certification show an advantage over those without.

The former export to a greater number of countries than the latter, again with differences larger in smaller companies (up to 49 employees), confirming the certification is a competitive tool which is useful for integration into global value chains, especially for small and medium-sized businesses (Figure 6).

The geographical breakdown confirms this evidence for all areas: in general, the certified exporters, regardless of their location, export to a greater number of countries than non-certified ones (Table 14, attached). The positive differential is larger for companies with 0-9 employees in the North-West and North-East (+ 87.1% and + 84.1% respectively) and the South and the Islands (+78.1%).

Also in the South and the Islands, certified companies export to more countries than other exporters. For the companies in central Italy, the differentials are more contained for almost all size categories.



GLOSSARY

Accredia: the body nominated by the Italian government to certify the competence, independence and impartiality of the bodies and laboratories that verify the conformity of goods and services to the standards. Each European country has its own single accreditation body, which operates in line with the provisions of EC Regulation 765/2008 and the international standard ISO/IEC 17011.

Accreditation: certification by a national accreditation body that certifies that a given conformity assessment body fulfils the criteria established by harmonized standards and, where appropriate, any other additional requirements, including those defined in the relevant sectoral programs, for carrying out specific conformity assessment activities.

Added value: the increase in value that the business activity brings to the value of the goods and services received from other companies through the use of their own production factors (labor, capital and entrepreneurial activity). This aggregate is obtained by subtracting the amount of costs from total revenues: the former includes costs for gross purchases, for various services and for the use of third party services, changes in inventories of materials and goods purchased without processing and various management payments; the latter contains the value of gross turnover, changes in stocks of finished, semi-finished and work-in-progress products, increases in fixed assets for internal work and additional management revenues.

ASIA (Statistical Registry of Active Enterprises): established in compliance with the provisions of European Regulations n.177/2008 and n.696/1993 according to a harmonized methodology approved by Eurostat. The ASIA registry is the official source on the structure of the business population and its demography which identifies the set of companies, and the related statistical characteristics, integrating information that can be obtained both from administrative sources managed by public bodies or private companies, and from statistical sources. The main administrative sources are the archives managed by the Revenue Agency for the Ministry of Economy and Finance (tax register, annual indirect tax returns, regional tax returns on production activities, sector studies); the business registers of the Chambers of Commerce, industry, artisanal activities and agriculture and the related archives of shareholders of joint stock companies and of persons with social assistance positions; the archives of the National Institute of Social Security, relating to the contribution situations of company employees and those of artisans and traders; the archive of telephone users; the archive of consolidated and financial statements; the archive of credit institutions managed by the Bank of Italy and the archive of insurance companies managed by ISVAP. The statistical sources, on the other hand, include the survey on local units of large enterprises (IULGI) and the structural and economic surveys that ISTAT carries out on businesses.

Capital goods: goods used for the production of other goods (machines, means of transport, etc.), intended to be used for a period of over one year. They include the manufacture of machines and engines, the manufacture of measuring and control instruments and the manufacture of motor vehicles.

Conformity assessment: the procedure to demonstrate whether specific requirements relating to a product, process, service, system, person or body have been fulfilled. Management systems certifications are part of this.

Consumer goods: goods used to directly satisfy human needs. They are divided into: durable (household appliances, radios and televisions, optical and photographic instruments, watches, motorcycles and bicycles, other means of transport, furniture, jewelry and musical instruments) and non-durables (food, tobacco, articles in fabric, other textile industries, clothing, leather and footwear, publishing, printing and recorded media, pharmaceuticals, detergents, sporting goods, games and toys).

Country of destination: the last known country, at the time of export, to which the goods will be delivered.

Economic activity: combination of resources - such as equipment, labor, manufacturing techniques, information or product networks - leading to the creation of specific goods or services. For the purposes of producing statistical information, companies are classified by their prevalent economic activity, according to the Ateco2007 classification in force since January 1, 2008, which constitutes the national version of the European classification of economic activities Nace Rev.2. If several economic activities are carried out within the same unit, the prevalence is identified on the basis of the added value or, in the absence of this data, on the basis of the turnover, the average annual number of employees, personnel expenses or gross wages.

Employee: person employed in a legal-economic entity as an independent worker or employee (full-time, part-time or with a job training contract), even if temporarily absent (for service, holidays, sickness, suspension from work, furlough, etc.). It includes the owner(s) of the company(ies) participating directly in the management, the cooperators (members of cooperatives who, as consideration for their service, receive a remuneration in proportion to the work performed and a share of the company's profits), family assistants (relatives or kin of the owner who perform manual labor without a fixed contractual remuneration), managers, executives, employees, workers and apprentices.

Energy: includes energy raw materials (oil, natural gas, lignite), refining products and electricity.

Export company: industrial or services company which, on the basis of the integration between the statistical archive of active companies (ASIA) and that of economic operators in foreign trade, has made sales of goods abroad in the year in question.

Export propensity: ratio between foreign turnover in the sale of goods (exports) and the overall turnover of the exporting company.

Exports: transfers of goods (commodities) and services from resident operators to non-resident operators (rest of the world). The export of goods includes all goods (national and nationalized, new and used) which, either with payment or free of charge, leave the country's economic territory to be destined for use abroad. They are valued at FOB (free on board) rates which correspond to the market price at the border of the exporting country. This price includes: the ex-works price, trade margins, international transport costs and any export rights. Exports of services include all services (transport, insurance, others) performed by resident entities to non-resident entities.

Geographical areas: geographical subdivisions including North-West, North-East, Center, South and Islands. North-East: includes Trentino-Alto Adige (Bolzano-Bozen, Trento), Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Emilia-Romagna. North-West: includes Piedmont, Valle d'Aosta / Vallée d'Aoste, Liguria, Lombardy. Center: includes Tuscany, Lazio, Marche, Umbria. South and Islands: includes Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria, Sicily and Sardinia.

Goods: movable goods, i.e. all concrete and tangible products subject to a commercial transaction. Although electricity is not a movable asset, it is considered a commodity for statistical purposes. Foreign trade statistics include all goods that are the subject of international trade, with the exception of those which, due to their particular nature or as a result of international agreements, are excluded from the analysis.

Intermediate goods: goods incorporated in the production of other goods. They include the manufacture of chemicals, the manufacture of metals and metal products, the manufacture of electrical appliances, the wood industry and the manufacture of textiles.

Main groupings of industries: groups and/or divisions of economic activity defined, according to the criterion of prevalence.

Productivity: relationship between added value and employees of the exporting company.

Turnover: the amount of all invoices issued in the reference period for domestic and foreign sales. The value of the turnover is understood to be net of VAT invoiced to customers, and of the allowances and discounts shown on the invoice and gross of expenses (transport, packaging, etc.) and other taxes charged to customers (for example manufacturing tax). Turnover also includes sales of products not processed by the company and invoices for services and work performed on behalf of third parties on raw materials supplied by them; sales of the company's fixed assets are excluded.

Value added per employee: The ratio of value added per employee is a measure of nominal labor productivity.

METHODOLOGY NOTE

ISTAT – Accredia agreement

The agreement, signed in November 2018, governs the collaboration relationship aimed at enhancing the information assets held by Accredia and verifying its contribution to official statistical production. As part of the agreement, Accredia has provided ISTAT with the data communicated by the conformity assessment bodies and accredited laboratories on organizations/companies with a certified management system (identification/registry data and details of valid certifications held). The supply covers the three-year period 2017-2019. With regard to 2019, the database made available covers over 77,000 VAT numbers/fiscal code numbers of organizations/companies with a certified management system under accreditation. 19,677 of these could be found in the ISTAT database, called TEC-Frame SBS, which integrates the information present in the archive of companies that trade with foreign countries (TEC) with the main economic variables available for all companies of the industry and services in the FrameSBS information system.

Management systems

A management system (MS) is the set of management actions and operative procedures carried out thanks to an organizational structure in which roles, responsibilities and resources are clear and well defined.

There can be different management systems, depending on the sector to which they apply. A particular voluntary technical standard is applied to each management system, which defines the rules to be met by the MS. The standards are developed and issued by the standardization bodies that have national (for Italy, UNI), European (CEN) and international (ISO) value. These rules arise from the consensus of the interested parties and govern specific sectors of the economy and society. However, technical standards of management systems can also be defined by private individuals. The adoption of a management system is voluntary and the goal is generally to implement actions that allow the organization to keep its processes under control.

The technical standards on management systems define universally applicable requirements that the organization must follow. They do not define product but process criteria: an ISO 14001 certified organization is not synonymous with an ecological product, but indicates the particular attention that the organization pays to its environmental impacts and the commitment to minimize them.

The implementation of a management system, in conformity with a technical standard, within an organization can be proven by a third-party and independent conformity assessment body that certifies the conformity of the system with the reference standard, by issuing a document of conformity (certificate). The independence and impartiality of the conformity assessment body is guaranteed by accreditation, issued in Italy by the national accreditation body, Accredia. The certification, if issued by an accredited conformity assessment body, is said to be accredited. This has an intrinsic value of trust and recognition and constitutes a "title" recognized in international markets on the basis of specific agreements signed between accreditation bodies.

The reference context

The reference legislative framework is based on two acts introduced by the European Parliament in 2008 with which accreditation and market surveillance activities are promoted, both fundamental for the creation of the single market: Regulation 765/2008 and Decision 768/2008. Furthermore, the verification of conformity by Notified Bodies of specific products is strongly recommended, requiring rigorous action is to guarantee general interests such as the health and safety of European consumers. The two documents bring together a framework of global rules to operate effectively for the safety and conformity of industrial products, with the aim of protecting the public interest and for the proper functioning of the single market.

According to the requirements of Regulation 765/2008, Member States appoint a single national accreditation body that provides accreditation of conformity assessment bodies. In Italy, the Regulation was implemented with Law 99/2009, containing "Provisions for the development and internationalization of businesses, as well as in the field of energy", and with the two interministerial decrees of 22 December 2009 which led to the creation of Accredia as the single national accreditation body.

The use of harmonized standards at European level aims to create the necessary level of transparency, trust in the competence of conformity assessment bodies and to ensure that the European accreditation system is compatible with the international accreditation system through the international agreements of mutual recognition. (IAF - MLA, ILAC - MRA).

The Regulation provides for a uniformly rigorous approach to accreditation in all Member States. Therefore, the benefit of the accreditation system in Europe is tied to the fact that once a certificate has been issued, it has mandatory recognition on the part of the authorities of the Member States on the basis of the mutual recognition agreements signed by the national accreditation body.

Information regarding organizations/companies with a certified management system

Accredited conformity assessment bodies communicate information about organizations/companies with a certified management system to Accredia on a monthly basis. In particular, in addition to personal identification data, detailed data is collected on the type of certification held by the organization which must be valid or expired by no more than 40 days. Below is a list of standards as examples of the areas covered by the certification of the management systems included in the monthly survey:

Standard/Directive/Scheme	Description
UNI EN ISO 14001:2015	Certification of environmental management systems
UNI EN ISO 9001:2015	Certification of quality management systems
UNI EN ISO 22000:2005	Certification of food safety management systems
UNI CEI EN ISO 50001:2011	Certification of energy management systems
UNI CEI EN ISO 13485:2012	Certification of quality management systems for medical devices

UNI EN ISO 14001:2004	Certification of environmental management systems
UNI EN 9120:2010	Certification of quality management systems - Requirements for Aviation, Space and Defence Distributors
BS OHSAS 18001:2007	Certification of occupational H&S management systems
UNI EN 9100:2009	Certification of quality management systems - Requirements for Aviation, Space and Defense Organizations
UNI CEI EN ISO 13485:2016	Certification of quality management systems for medical devices
UNI ISO 37001:2016	Certification of anti-bribery management systems
UNI EN 9110:2016	Certification of quality management systems - Requirements for Aviation Maintenance Organizations
ISO 22301:2012	Certification of business continuity management systems
ISO 39001:2012	Certification of road traffic safety management systems
ISO/IEC 20000-1:2011	Certification of management systems information technology service management systems
ISO 27001:2013	Certification of information security management systems
EN 9110:2015	Certification of quality management systems - Requirements for Aviation Maintenance Organizations
EN ISO 3834:2005	Certification of management systems - Quality requirements for fusion welding of metallic materials
UNI EN ISO 3834:2006	Certification of management systems - Quality requirements for fusion welding of metallic materials
UNI EN ISO 9001:2008	Certification of quality management systems
UNI ISO 29990:2011	Certification of management systems for learning services for non-formal education and training - basic requirements for service providers
UNI CEI ISO/IEC 27001:2006	Certification of information security management systems
ISO 55001:2014	Certification of asset management systems
UNI ISO 20121:2013	Certification of event sustainability management systems
UNI CEI ISO/IEC 27001:2014	Certification of information security management systems
ISO 20121:2012	Certification of event sustainability management systems

The TEC-Frame SBS database

The micro TEC-Frame SBS database, produced annually by ISTAT starting from 2013 and updated to 2019 as the reference year of the data, integrates the information present in the archive of companies trading with foreign countries (TEC) with the main economic variables available for all companies operating in industry and in services (FrameSBS). This database derives from the integration of three distinct sources:

- the Registry of economic operators who trade with foreign countries (COE);
- the Statistical Registry of Active Enterprises (ASIA);
- the "Frame" information system for estimating the economic results of businesses (Structural Business Statistics, SBS) (FrameSBS).

The EU obligation to establish a register of economic operators (resident VAT subjects) who engaged in trade with foreign countries (COE) arises with the introduction of the Intrastat system, with regard to trade within the EU. ISTAT, in addition to implementing EU legislation, has integrated this archive with an updated and complete list of economic operators who trade with non-EU countries.

The integration of this registry with the statistical one of active companies (ASIA) requires the reclassification of the identifier of the economic operator, the VAT number/fiscal code. This reclassification is carried out through the database of the Tax Registry. Furthermore, the process of integrating the two COE and ASIA registries provides for ad hoc statistical processing for companies presenting anomalous data (e.g. high commercial exchange values with a small number of employees): on the basis of controls at the company group level (profiling activities on a selected sample of companies) the flows activated by these companies are attributed, where possible, to another company of the group, selecting the most suitable company to represent the production and/or marketing phases. In most cases, the reclassified entities refer to a Special Purpose Entity consisting of multinational companies.

The integration of the two registries, COE and ASIA, called TEC, makes it possible to identify all the companies that trade with foreign countries as well as to obtain basic information on their structural characteristics (number of employees, prevailing economic activity of company, location of the head office). The TEC integrated database is currently used by ISTAT for the production of statistics, harmonized at European level, on the foreign trade of goods based on the characteristics of the company (Trade by Enterprise Characteristics). It is also used for the production of statistical tables included in the Statistical Yearbook "Foreign trade and international business activities", drawn up in collaboration with the ICE (Agency for promotion abroad and internationalization of Italian companies).

The integration of the TEC database and the FrameSBS information system is carried out on the basis of the company identifier (ASIA Code). The SBS Frame is an integrated system of administrative and statistical data, created annually by ISTAT to estimate the economic results of companies, starting from the entities included in the statistical registry of companies (ASIA). It exploits in an integrated way the data from administrative sources and the data of the ISTAT structural surveys on companies and is currently used both for the production of estimates of structural business statistics (SBS), and as an important source in national accounting estimates.

The integration between the TEC database and the FrameSBS has the characteristics of a survey or census (registry-based approach) once the TEC observation field is aligned with that of the FrameSBS. In particular, the following types of economic entities previously considered in the TEC database are excluded: non-resident companies, companies resident in national territory whose main activity falls within the areas of "Ateco 64 Activities" of financial services (excluding insurance and pension funds), 65 Insurances, reinsurances and pension funds (except compulsory social insurance), 66 Activities which are auxiliary to financial services and insurance activities, 84 Public administration and defense; social insurance, 94 Activities of membership organizations. The following Ateco groups are also excluded: 062 Extraction of natural gas and 351 Production, transmission and distribution of electricity.

The survey/analytical nature of the data integration process makes it possible to obtain a broad set of variables and indicators for all companies that trade with foreign countries: added value, labor costs, purchases of goods and services, turnover, export value and imports (totals and values according to geographical areas and main groupings of goods), number of products and import/export sectors.

The update of the micro TEC-FrameSBS database is done every year in July in conjunction with or after the publication of the ISTAT-ICE Yearbook "Foreign trade and international business activities". Access to the database can be obtained through the ISTAT Laboratory for the Analysis of Elementary Data (ADELE) which is active at the headquarters in Rome and the ISTAT offices in the regional capitals. Information on the structure and information content is made available on the ISTAT website at <http://www.istat.it/adele/ListaRilevazioni>, Industry and services section - Structure and economic performance of exporting companies (TEC-FrameSBS).

The document "Accredited certification of management systems as a factor of competitiveness for Italian exporters" is a focus realized by ACCREDIA and ISTAT within the ISTAT Report on competitiveness of production sectors - Edition 2020, which demonstrates through data that management systems subjected to the certification of accredited companies facilitate the exchange between supplier and buyer, standardizing language and organizational practices, and represent an important competitive factor, especially for organizations that have to deal with international markets where cultural and economic contexts can be very distant from those of origin.
