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PRIORITIES AND DIRECTIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT OF EXPORT ACTIVITIES OF UKRAINE

Summary

Prospects for the implementation of the Export Strategy of Ukraine are analysed. Specific features of institutional support of export activities, which are carried out by state institutions and public and non-governmental organizations, are studied. The activity of the State Institution «Export Promotion Office of Ukraine» is examined. The Office is designed to strengthen the export potential of Ukrainian enterprises, promote Ukrainian goods and services abroad, establish cooperation and partnership between domestic and foreign businesses. The paper investigates the work of the institutions aimed at promoting the export activities of domestic enterprises, including the Exporters and Investors Council under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Venture Capital and Private Equity Association, the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Development Office, the Investment Promotion Office, the State Finance Institution for Innovations, Ukrainian Startup Fund, etc.

A set of measures to stimulate domestic exports has been developed. A characteristic of innovation activity in Ukraine is presented and its influence on the formation of export potential is revealed. The priority directions of export stimulation are outlined, which envisage the application of technological platforms by Ukrainian exporters, establishment of a system of institutional support as a complex of interaction for consulting, information, marketing and technical support of exports, use of economic incentives for innovative enterprises.

Introduction

In the light of Ukraine's new global and technological challenges, a new model of interaction with the external environment should be created. Today's commodity structure of exports, low share of high-tech exports, dependence on external factors and market conditions in the supply of the main range of exports do not give grounds for optimism in the future trajectory of the country's involvement in world economic processes. The export strategy requires adjustment of the production structure and technological renewal, because as long as the economy remains diversified and shifted towards the technological paradigms of modes 3 and 4, the export structure will reflect its shortcomings.

Qualitative geographical and technological diversification of exports remains an important task for Ukraine. Institutional support for exports also plays an important role in the process of its consolidation in highly productive world markets. This is revealed primarily in the active work of specialized institutions designed to help exporters to strengthen their positions in traditional world markets and win new ones. At the present stage there is a need to develop a set of organizational and economic measures to support the export activities of domestic enterprises.

According to the general world practice, the process of effective interaction of business structures and state or public institutions aimed at implementing the country's export strategy contributes to strengthening the competitiveness of domestic products in the global market and ensuring the country's economic growth.

The tasks of implementing the provisions of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU should be consistent with the need to increase the competitive national economy, which is focused primarily on exports of products with a high degree of added value. This requires building a platform for institutional support and support of domestic exporters.

Part 1. Analysis of institutional support of export activities in Ukraine

Considerable attention is paid to the development of priority areas and measures for the formation, strengthening and use of competitive advantages of the regions of Ukraine at both the national and regional levels. Thus, the purpose of the Export Strategy of Ukraine (the «road map» of strategic trade development) for 2017–2021 is to determine the country's transition to the export of knowledge-intensive innovative products for sustainable development and access to global markets. One of the strategic goals of Ukraine's trade development is to create favourable conditions for trade stimulation and innovation to diversify exports. The importance of innovations for diversification of production, increase of productivity, and increase of added value is emphasized. The most important sectors of the economy for export development are the following [1]:

- sectors aimed at ensuring high added value and development on an innovative basis, which is currently in decline or slowed down, concentrated in the aerospace industry and related to it (software development, information and communication technologies, production of spare parts, components and maintenance services for the aviation industry and mechanical engineering);
- sectors that are promising in terms of improving the image of Ukraine abroad, those in the process of formation (tourism sectors and creative industries) to attract tourists and promote the country's image on the world market by holding a number of relevant events by the country;
- sectors considered strategic from the point of view of processing in Ukraine of raw materials for the production of high value-added products, which are in the growth stage and depend on the agro-industrial complex (food, processing industry and related industries, providing positive results in the near future).

All these sectors need appropriate comprehensive institutional support aimed at their development in order to strengthen competitiveness in global markets, which involves intensifying the development of the innovation component in export-oriented industries. Even when talking about the agro-industrial sector, it should be noted that this sector is able to take full advantage of all the benefits of scientific and technological progress, including artificial intelligence, robotics and more. Today, Ukrainian agricultural enterprises mainly import new technologies, although they are already seeking to develop their own innovations and obtain patents for them. This direction of development of the agricultural sector will ensure the inflow of investment into the industry and the development of related industries, in particular, such as mechanical engineering.

Institutional support for export activities in Ukraine is provided by a number of government agencies, including the State Institution «Export Promotion Office», the Council of Exporters and Investors under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, the Innovation Development Council, the International Trade Council, the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Development Office under the Ministry of Development of Economy, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine, the Investment Promotion Office under the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the State Finance Institution for Innovations, the Ukrainian Startup Fund. In modern conditions, it is necessary to intensify the activities of these institutions, in particular the Council of Exporters and Investors and the Export Promotion Office.

The Council of Exporters and Investors was established in 2013 under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. It includes representatives of industry unions, associations, Ukrainian enterprises and companies of export-oriented sectors of the Ukrainian economy. The main tasks of the Council are [2]:

- to assist Ukrainian exporters in strengthening their positions in traditional markets and in entering new markets;

- to contribute to the participation of Ukrainian enterprises and companies in tenders and competitions, implementation of infrastructure and investment projects abroad;
- to attract financial resources for the production of competitive and export-oriented products in Ukraine;
- to support national producers in the sale of high-tech products abroad and the introduction of foreign innovative technologies;
- to attract foreign investment for the implementation of priority projects in Ukraine;
- to promote Ukraine’s economic interests abroad at the bilateral and multilateral levels.

In turn, the State Institution «Export Promotion Office» initially acted as an international project and began its independent work to support Ukrainian business and promote Ukrainian exports in December 2018. In March 2019, the Office joined the European Trade Promotion Organizations’ (ETPO) Working Group of Information Professionals, which promotes the exchange and dissemination of information on best practices and experiences in the field of information and consulting services.

In June 2019, the Export Promotion Office became an official member of the EEN-Ukraine consortium. The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) brings together more than 60,000 companies from 17 industries in 65 countries, including 28 EU countries. With the EEN network, small and medium-sized businesses can easily find buyers and sellers of goods and services in international markets, find investors and partners for cooperation in manufacturing, as well as attract the latest technologies or implement their own technologies in the international market.

The range of services provided includes export consulting, education for exporters, information and analysis, business opportunities, B2G platform and implementation of a number of priority projects: «Consolidation of SME export potential and facilitation of access to foreign markets», SheExports Program [3].

According to the Office’s Annual Report for 2019, the institution managed to reach a target audience of 3,449 individual entrepreneurs and exporters, 1,677 companies and 16 associations and business unions. Entrepreneurs and exporters from each region of Ukraine used the services of the institution. At the same time, the so-called «key regions» can be identified, the entrepreneurs of which took the most active part in the events organized by the Office. Thus, 50% of all service users were enterprises from Kyiv and Kyiv region, 7% were exporters from Dnipro and Dnipropetrovsk region, Lviv and Lviv region, another 6% were subjects of foreign economic activity from Kharkiv and Kharkiv region (Figure 1).

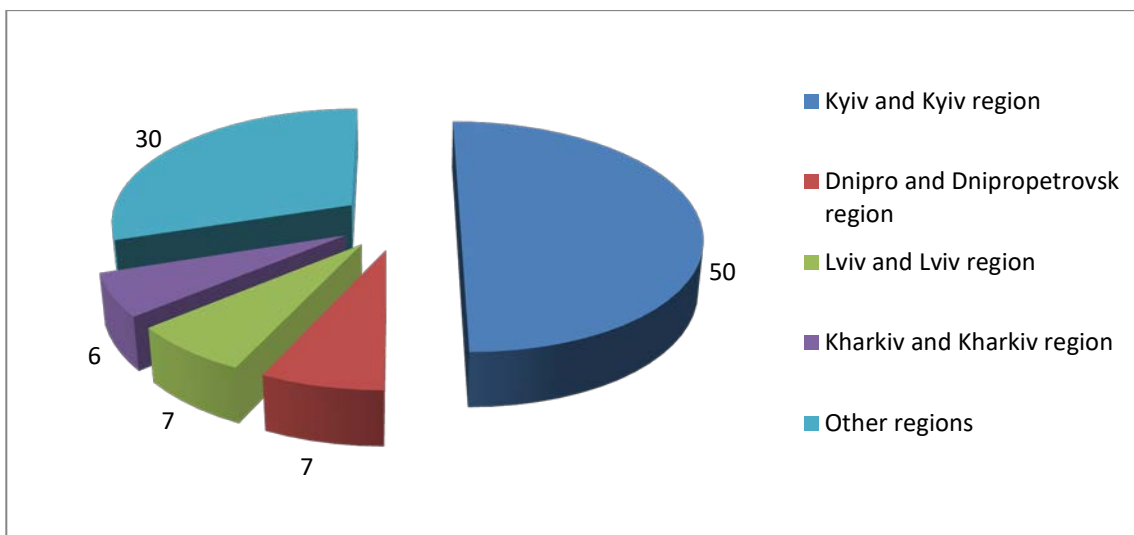


Figure 1. Regional structure of clients of the Export Promotion Office in 2019

Source: compiled on the basis of [4]

According to the report, the most active clients of the office were micro-enterprises (37%), small enterprises (29%), and medium-sized enterprises (19%). The share of large enterprises was 15% (Figure 2).

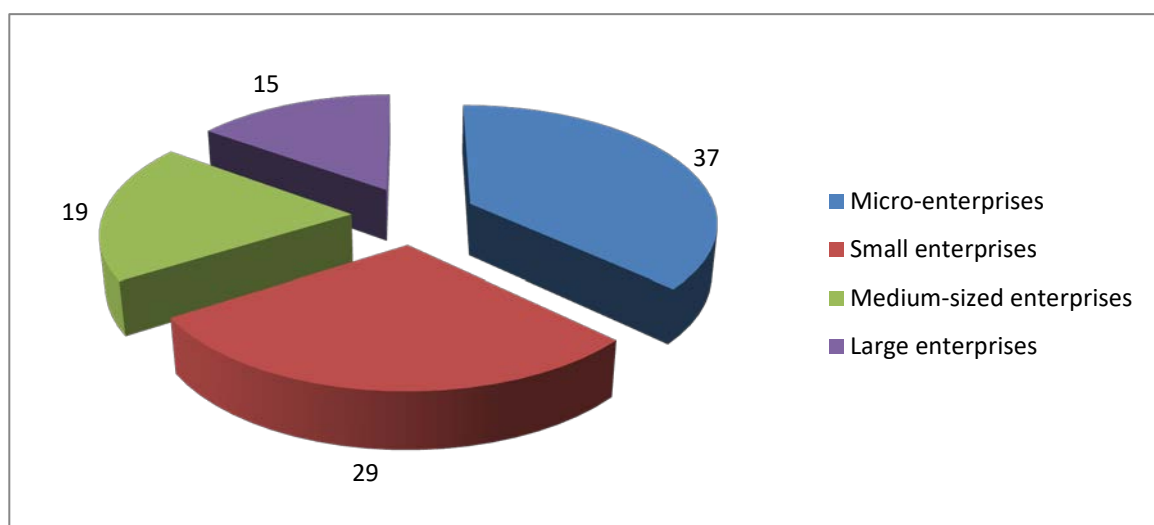


Figure 2. Clients of the Export Promotion Office in 2019

Source: compiled on the basis of [4]

Despite the fact that the predominant share of Ukrainian exporters is occupied by large enterprises (67.7% in 2018), which have stable established patterns of their export activities, it is possible to estimate very positively the activity of small and medium enterprises that show significant interest in expanding their presence in foreign markets and rely on the help of the Office.

In addition, it can be noted that the indicator of the region's exports per enterprise is the highest for such regions as Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiv, Zaporizhzhia, Poltava, i.e. again the leaders are the regions that specialize in coal, metallurgy and agro-industry, which for a long time have been providing the largest part of domestic exports.

It should be noted that the level of awareness of exporters about the Office of Export Promotion increased from 27.8% in 2018 to 34.1% in 2020, and the average assessment score of the institution is 3.4 points (in 2018 – 3.3 points) [5].

In Ukraine, there is a number of cross-sectoral strategies with relevant strategic goals, in particular [6]:

- «Trade information and export promotion» (creation of institutions in accordance with the needs of export-oriented small and medium-sized business; formation of an international network of institutions for export promotion and supply of trade information; strengthening the image of Ukraine as a supplier of quality products to the world market);

- «Innovation for export» (strengthening the innovation ecosystem of Ukraine and the business environment to promote innovation and entrepreneurial activity and increase exports; development of financial and support services for enterprises and innovators to develop and promote innovative products (services) with added value and export potential; development of skills and competencies of domestic entrepreneurs, managers, scientists, innovators and business entities required for the development and commercialization of innovations in world markets);

- for the creative industries sector (organization and consolidation of the creative industries sector; adaptation and modernization of the offer of domestic goods and services through building sectoral ties, improving skills and increasing investment; promoting internationalization and export orientation to expand market opportunities and ensure sustainable growth);

- «Transportation and simplification of trade conditions» (strengthening of coordination and cooperation between relevant bodies; creating conditions for providing services to companies to improve their foreign economic opportunities; updating and introducing a favourable legal and regulatory framework in the field of international trade);

- «Improving skills» (stimulating entrepreneurial spirit in young people and developing management skills of small and medium-sized businesses; matching the offer of the education system with business needs; creating a program of national clusters for cooperation to improve skills and abilities to grow exports and competitiveness).

Total exports of goods and services from Ukraine in 2019 reached 63.7 billion US dollars and increased compared to the previous year by 11.2% (in the structure of this indicator 78.6% is accounted for by goods). Domestic export deliveries show a high level of geographical differentiation, the total

number of partner countries exceeds 200, and 37.7% of the total volume of goods and services goes to the EU member states.

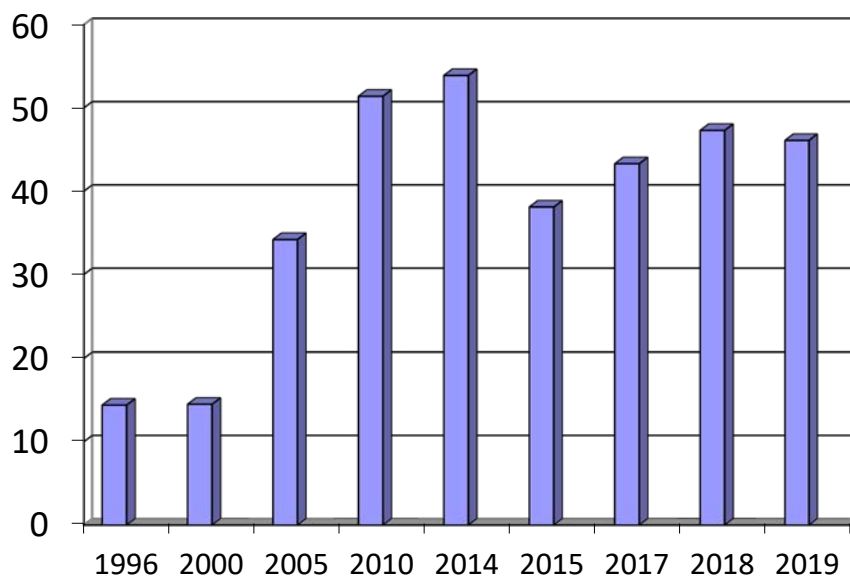


Figure 3. Dynamics of exports of goods in 1996–2019

Source: compiled on the basis of [7]

The largest partners of Ukraine in the export of goods are Poland (15.8% of exports to the EU), Italy (11.6%), Germany (11.4%), the Netherlands (8.9%), Hungary (7.5%), Spain (7.2%), and Romania (4.8%). In the end of 2019, fifteen regions of Ukraine showed an increase in exports of goods to the EU countries (the largest positive contribution was observed in Kyiv, Lviv, Cherkasy, Kirovohrad, Sumy, Vinnytsia and Chernihiv regions).

Taking into account the orientation of the above-mentioned program documents, at the regional level it is also expedient to develop regional export strategies aimed at the following: stimulation of the export production of high value-added goods on the basis of attracting investment and modern innovative solutions; organizational assistance in finding and expanding markets for local businesses and including them in global value chains; strengthening and development of the main industries that reflect the export specialization and related to them on the basis of substantiation of criteria of expediency and increase of the level of manufacturability.

It is important to take into account regional specifics given the presence of regional disparities in the structure of Ukrainian exports. As one can see, Kyiv and Kyiv region (in total), as well as Dnipropetrovsk region, in 2019 were leaders in regional exports of goods: their share was 28.9% and 15.8%, respectively, while the share of «outsider» regions was less than one percent.

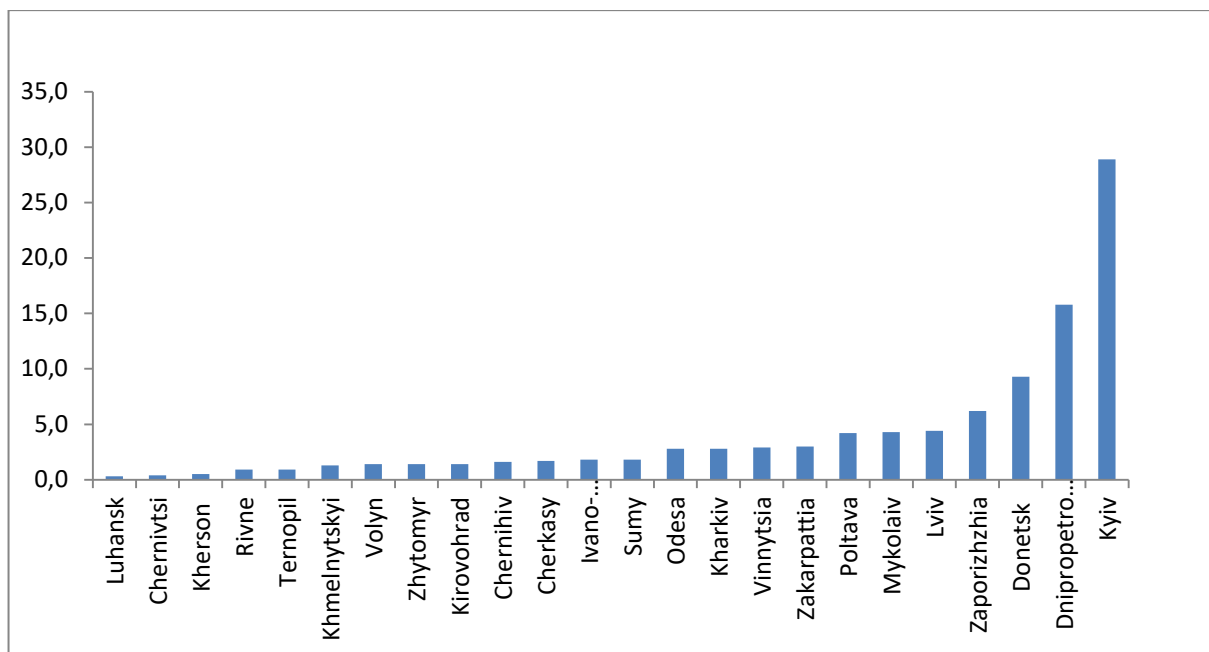


Figure 4. The share of regions of Ukraine in exports of goods in 2019, %

Source: compiled on the basis of [7]

Part 2. Development of export promotion measures in Ukraine

During the years of independence in Ukraine a lot of work has been done in the direction of development of institutional support of export and development of national normative and program documents regulating the activity of exporters. At the same time, the effective enactment and performance of the export strategy requires the implementation of a set of measures for export development. Some priority measures are given below.

Firstly, the removal of obstacles to the development of exports and the successful implementation of export strategies. Awareness of foreign economic activity is an integral part of the success of enterprises and regions in the implementation of foreign trade strategies, which allows to achieve the goals. In this aspect, the functioning of a kind of platform of interaction between exporters and government or public institutions becomes relevant. For exporters, as practice shows, engaging in dialogue with the authorities is more important than for importers, most of whom do not need to communicate.

The Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting identified in a survey the following obstacles for exporters: insufficient quality of transport infrastructure, unpredictability of Ukraine's trade policy, high level of bureaucratization at customs, large number of export permits. For example, only one third of the surveyed exporters are aware of the activities of the Export Promotion Office. More than a half of the respondents did not know about the activities of the Public Council at the Ministry of Development of Economy, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine [8]. The regional dimension

shows differences in the assessment of the impact of barriers to exports, which are reported most often by exporters from Rivne, Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions, with the least obstacles encountered by exporters from Vinnytsia region. Therefore, the activities of institutions and the created business environment should help to eliminate the problems that arise in the practice of foreign economic activity by domestic businesses and prevent their recurrence.

Secondly, the development of information and consulting support for export activities. For the effective implementation of foreign economic, in particular, export operations, enterprises need to use a variety of reliable sources of information. In Ukraine, the main sources of such information are the Internet, customs brokers and the media. There is a dependence of sources of information on the size of the enterprise (with the increase in the size of enterprises, they often receive information about the conditions of doing business from chambers of commerce and business associations). Only 28% of employees of export enterprises are trained in foreign economic activity [8, p. 153].

Domestic exporters also note a lack of sources to obtain information on the situation in partner countries; incomplete compliance of the list of services provided by business associations with their needs; lack of significant changes in the activities of individual export promotion institutions; giving preference to domestic sources of information over foreign ones; limited use of up-to-date export information on the websites of official institutions.

According to a survey conducted by the Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting in 2020, almost a third (30.9%) of enterprises participating in foreign economic activity were members of at least one business association. However, the share of enterprises that are members of business associations from 2016 to 2020 decreased by 15.9% (Figure 3).

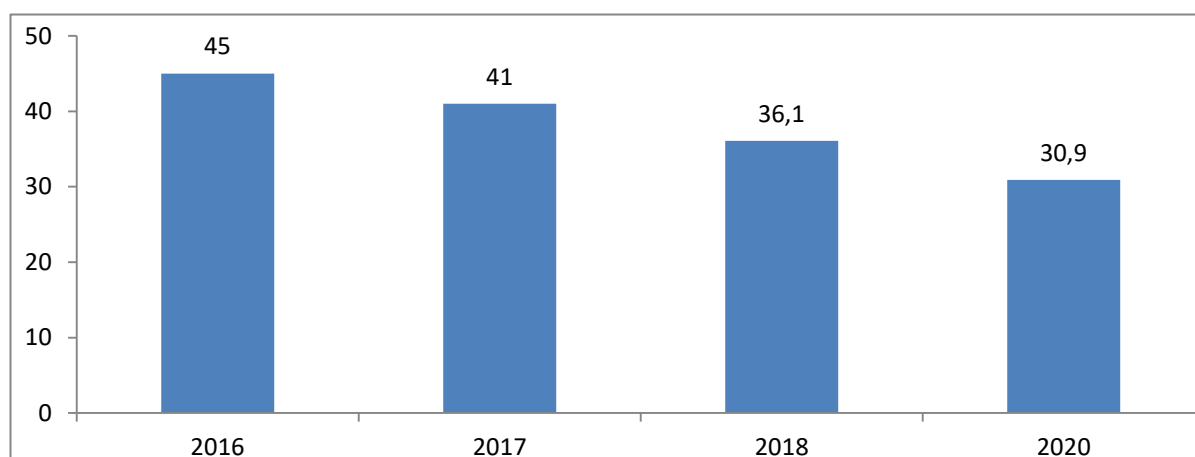


Figure 3. Share of surveyed enterprises which are participants of foreign economic activity and members of business associations, %

Source: compiled on the basis of [5]

Thirdly, the intensification of export activities on an innovative basis. Priority areas of innovation are legislatively and scientifically sound areas of innovation aimed at meeting the needs of society in high-tech competitive products, high-quality services and increase the country's export potential.

It should be noted that competitive positions in profitable sectors of the economy with high productivity, the latest methods of organization of production, innovative and technological equipment of production are becoming defining characteristics of the implementation of international corporations' global development strategies. Prospects for Ukraine's international specialization should be viewed through the prism of achieving technological competitiveness.

The share of raw materials exports of Ukraine since 2015 increased from 69.6% to 72.1% in 2019. Ukraine's economy lags far behind in technological development. The share of enterprises implementing new technologies decreased from 14.8% in 2001 to 13.8% in 2019. The average value of this indicator in the European Union is 51% [9].

The dynamics of the share of sold innovative products in the total output of industrial enterprises of Ukraine is declining; it decreased from 9.4% in 2000 to 1.3% in 2019. In the EU, this figure is 17% (Table 1).

As for the export of knowledge-intensive and innovative products, during 2016–2019 it decreased from 12.7% to 10.5% of total exports of goods [10].

Among the obstacles hindering the development of exports based on innovations, the cross-sectoral export strategy «Innovation for Export» mentions [6]: the differences between innovations created by business and current market demand; insufficient access to information on available resources and business opportunities for innovation and research; lack of strategic vision and clearly defined priorities in the innovation sphere; imperfect national innovation system; a small number of organizations capable of quickly creating innovative products ready for export through financial instruments and technical infrastructure.

The development of export activities on the basis of innovations should be based on the current cross-sectoral strategy «Innovation for Export» and include the existing barriers of internal and external origin, justification of sectors and industries, search for promising markets, identifying opportunities to stimulate exports through a number of measures and tools.

Among the priority areas of export promotion the following should be outlined:

- 1) participation of Ukrainian entities in European innovation projects, in particular technological platforms;
- 2) creation of a system of institutional support as a platform of interaction for consulting, information, marketing and technical support of exports;
- 3) introduction of economic incentives for modernization of production, which has export prospects.

Table 1

**Introduction of innovations at industrial enterprises of Ukraine
in 2000–2019**

Year	Share of the number of industrial enterprises that implemented innovations in the total number of industrial enterprises, %	Number of types of innovative products introduced in the reporting year, units	Share of the volume of sold innovative products in the total volume of sold products by industrial enterprises, %
2000	14.8	15323	9.4
2001	14.3	19484	6.8
2002	14.6	22847	7.0
2003	11.5	7416	5.6
2004	10.0	3978	5.8
2005	8.2	3152	6.5
2006	10.0	2408	6.7
2007	11.5	2526	6.7
2008	10.8	2446	5.9
2009	10.7	2685	4.8
2010	11.5	2408	3.8
2011	12.8	3238	3.8
2012	13.6	3403	3.3
2013	13.6	3138	3.3
2014	12.1	3661	2.5
2015	15.2	3136	1.4
2016	16.6	4139	... ¹
2017	14.3	2387	0.7
2018	15.6	3843	0.8
2019	13.8	2148	1.3

¹ The indicator was not calculated

Source: compiled on the basis of [7]

Regarding the participation of domestic enterprises in European technology platforms, it should be emphasized that the latter function as a form of business partnership and a tool of communication in areas that reflect scientific and technological progress and contribute to the competitiveness of strategic industries. Research priorities and needs of industrial development are their key integration determinants. An important feature of technology platforms is the combination of the efforts of academia and research institutes, financial and government agencies, industry, big business and industry associations, and the inclusion of representatives of international associations or other countries.

Incentives for the modernization of the existing production structure include tax and customs benefits for the import of modern equipment used for the production of export products; reducing the cost of export credits,

insurance and simplifying the requirements for documenting export transactions.

The development of exports on an innovative basis involves attracting risky investments, cooperation with venture companies, including the Ukrainian Venture Capital and Private Equity Association (UVCA), which was created to boost the investment market and investment opportunities, strengthen cooperation with government and foreign participants, build up an environment of transparent rules behaviour within the innovation and investment ecosystem, improve the investment and business climate in the country through the development of the venture and direct investment industry [11]. Among other institutions established and operating in Ukraine that can provide investment or advisory support to domestic enterprises in the direction of intensifying innovation and developing exports on this basis are the following:

- Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise Support Office (performs the mission of forming a system of support for SMEs by improving access to information, financing, infrastructure development and promotion of business culture in Ukraine) [12];

- Investment Promotion Office, which specializes in providing investors with relevant information and recommendations on the specifics of doing business in the country, as well as on activities in major sectors of the economy (agribusiness, manufacturing, energy, infrastructure, innovative technologies). The main activities of the Office: the formation of a favourable investment climate; assistance to investors in doing business in Ukraine; generating opportunities to increase investment in the economy of Ukraine [13];

- State Finance Institution for Innovations provides financial support for innovation activities of economic entities of various forms of ownership, as well as assists in attracting domestic and foreign investment for the development of the real sector of the economy, and in increasing domestic potential for export of products produced at domestic enterprises, protection and support of national commodity manufacturer [14];

- Ukrainian Startup Fund (USF) is a state fund, the mission of which is to support innovative projects and help talented Ukrainian entrepreneurs to create successful global companies [15];

- UAngel is a platform for finding promising investment projects for joint financing, which will help reduce risks and increase the level of success of start-ups by integrating the experience and knowledge of business angels [16].

Fourthly, the inclusion of domestic manufacturers in international chains of added value.

The mobilization of the efforts of the interested parties on the innovative development in a certain branch direction, the formation of scientific and industrial cooperation relations will allow the domestic subjects to enter into new chains of creation of added value and export activity.

In modern conditions, the competitiveness of the economy becomes more dependent on transnationalization processes, so export-oriented domestic enterprises should apply strategies to join the export programs of transnational companies to start exporting semi-finished products, already having experience in international activities and being familiar with technical regulations. The strategy of cooperation with leading global companies that have research institutions in Ukraine and use «export platforms», such as Amazon, Huawei, Microsoft, Samsung, Siemens, is also successful.

Fifthly, the use of international multilateral and bilateral agreements, in particular, free trade agreements. Another important step to make qualitative changes in the structure of exports is the use of the opportunities that arise in the light of the signing and implementation of interstate free trade agreements. During the years of independence, Ukraine has concluded 16 free trade agreements covering 45 countries.

The intensification of export activities will also be facilitated by the further conclusion of new and analysis of the existing free trade agreements with countries that are promising markets, and the implementation of measures to eliminate or reduce the negative impact of barriers to trade (this implies institutional support of the existing agreements).

An example is the Canada-Ukrainian Trade and Investment Support Project (CUTIS), which operates in partnership with the Export Promotion Office and provides Ukrainian business with the information and technical assistance needed to export Ukrainian goods to Canada and attract Canadian investment to Ukraine [17]. Particular attention is paid to the five priority groups of goods and services that have the greatest potential in the Canadian market (clothing, footwear, furniture, confectionery, IT services). The project includes information work to explain the specifics of exports to Canada and the benefits of the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and Ukraine, providing business advice on assessing export readiness, finding business partners in Canada, consulting on Canadian standards and legal requirements, conducting practical training, seminars, webinars and other events in the regions of Ukraine.

Conclusions

Institutional support for exports should play an important role in the process of consolidating in highly productive world markets. Ukraine has established a number of institutions (governmental and non-governmental) that provide support for export activities, help exporters obtain the necessary information, and provide consulting services. Government agencies include the Export Promotion Office of Ukraine, the Exporters and Investors Council under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, the Council for Innovation Development, the Council for International Trade, the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Development Office under the Ministry of Development of Economy, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine, the Office for Investment

Attraction and Support under the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the State Finance Institution for Innovations, the Ukrainian Start-up Fund.

Among the public and non-governmental organizations established and operating in Ukraine that can provide investment or advisory support to domestic enterprises in the direction of intensifying export activities, the Public Council at the Ministry of Development of Economy, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine, business associations, chambers of commerce, Ukrainian Venture Capital and Private Equity Association (UVCA), UAngel (Ukrainian Union of Business Angels).

Among the priority areas of export development are the removal of obstacles to export flows; development of information and consulting support for export activities; intensification of export deliveries on an innovative basis; inclusion of domestic manufacturers in international chains of added value; institutional support of international trade agreements.

In modern realities, export activity is closely linked to the structural transformations of the economy; innovations play an important role in realizing the export potential. The analysis of foreign economic activity of Ukraine and the regions shows mainly low technological component of exports and dominance of industries with low added value. Therefore, an important task in the direction of effective implementation of the export strategy is to increase the share of high-tech exports and the active development of innovative entrepreneurship.

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