



# **International Profile of Professional Competences**

**Internationalization Manager  
in agri-food SMEs**



## Synthesis of the occupation

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Internationalization Manager (IM)<sup>1</sup> promotes and supports internationalization processes in agri-food small and medium enterprises (SMEs). He/she assists, advise and participates in the initiation or expansion of international activities of the company, supports the coordination of proper implementation of its product/s on international markets and identifies and seizes new opportunities for company's international development.

## Description of the competence profile

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Internationalization Manager (IM) implements professional tasks related to internationalization activities in accordance with the international development objectives of the SME and national and international legislations and regulatory frameworks.

The person employed in this position works in a micro, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) of agri-food industry belonging to the sector of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) - food production.

IMs perform their work both in the office and in the open air within the enterprise and on field by attending to annual international fairs focused on specific products and markets. The nature of the work of IM requires availability for frequent business trips (usually abroad). IM should adjust working time to the preferences of clients or business partners.

In order to coordinate the work and to ensure the smooth implementation of international activities, IM collaborates closely with all organizational units of the company (for example, R&D, marketing, finance, logistics). His / her supervisor is often the owner of the company, the person responsible for company management or the person responsible for the internationalization process in the SME.

The professional has a good domain of computer and internet and communication tools. While performing tasks in offices, he/she uses a computer, internet network, internet communication tools, as well as software that enable organizing video conferencing, online meetings, creating multimedia presentations, and economic analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> Other possible names to be considered: Internationalization Animator, Assistant of Internationalization, Assistant of International Development, Internationalization Specialist, Internationalization Consultant.



IM is fluent in English -verbal and written - and/or other local languages relevant to a company's targeted markets.

To work as IM in the food industry, higher education in the field of agri-business is preferred. He/she can also be a person with university degree in another disciplines, especially related to economics, management, social sciences and marketing.

IM knows the main issues of international trade, selected internationalization theories and market entry modes. His/her role is very varied and depends on the level of responsibilities, profile of the company and its level of internationalization. He/she may be responsible for:

- facilitating the initiation or expansion of international business activities and supporting the owners or top management in its proper execution;
- supporting the commercialization and/or development of food products and services on international markets;
- identifying and seizing new opportunities for company's international development;
- establishing and maintaining good relationships with international partners.

IM has a full awareness of the agri-food value chain, from origin to destination, including production, processing, distribution, among others. The person has deep knowledge on international trade, market demands and local business practices. He/she has knowledge about market specificities, clients and competitors (business knowledge), as well as the institutions, processes, social values and corporate culture needed to execute international activities.

International manager knows and understands financial issues related to export processes, as well as regulations and legislations needed to open new markets, including methods of payment, exchange rates and insurances. He/she knows customs codes, international commercial terms (INCOTERMS) and procedures, taxations issues, common contractual practices and its rules in terms of tasks, costs, and risks associated with the global or international transportation and delivery of goods.

IM constantly performs market research, gathering market intelligence and evaluating possibilities of selling product/s in a potentially target country. This person also advises/supports his/her superiors on the need for adaptation, innovation and new product development and implementation of the right strategy to enter international new market.



He/she recommed his/her superiors possible sources of external funding for internationalization of company’s products and supports them in preparing the necessary documentation.

IM facilitates the establishment of new contacts with potential clients, suppliers, distributors and other key agent for company’s development and expansion to international markets. During the course of his/her work, IM negotiates (often in a foreign language) with a variety of people and supporting institutions, as well as with international customers.

IM is an employee who has the ability to deal with multiple tasks at once that take place in a dynamic work environment. Has an entrepreneurial vision of international development, thinks quickly, learns fast and is open to continuously acquire new knowledge in a short period of time.

He/she is updated on sector social activities focused on internationalization. IM follows or attends annual international fairs and other events focused on export promotion. He/she also has knowledge about alliance processes and existing network organizations, such as clusters, cooperatives, innovation networks, chamber of commerce and other organizations that foster international development.

IM has excellent communication & interpersonal skills with sensitivity to negotiate with different cultures. The person knows how to approach new customers from potential new markets. He/she also has superb customer service skills in dealing with customers, the ability to see things from the other's point of view and positive attitude towards them with a good appreciation of international cultures. IM feels comfortable working with foreigners, demonstrating openness and sensitivity to foreign cultures. He/she is constantly developing knowledge related to cultural, business and political background of the foreign countries he/she is responsible for.

**Descriptors defining levels of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)<sup>1</sup>**

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	COMPETENCES
<b>Level 6 —Efficient learning corresponding with level 6</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision making</li> </ul>



	in a specialized field of work or study	in unpredictable work or study contexts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups</li> </ul>
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<sup>2</sup> Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning

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### Professional tasks

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- PT 1 Promoting and boosting internationalization in agri-food SME.
- PT 2 Analyzing foreign markets and identifying development opportunities for internationalization of agri-food SME.
- PT3 Establishing cooperation with private, public, scientific and business institutions at national level and abroad.
- PT4 Implementing daily activities for the internationalization of agri-food SME.
- PT5 Building and maintaining long-term relations with international partners.

### List of Professional Competences

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- PC Supporting the promotion and development of internationalization of agri-food SME.
- SC Social competences (PT1-PT5)

### Description of Professional Competences

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<b>PC Supporting the promotion and development of internationalization of SME</b>	
<b>PT 1 Promoting and boosting internationalization in agri-food SME.</b>	
<b>KNOWLEDGE</b> – <i>knows and understands</i>	<b>SKILLS</b> - <i>can</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main issues of international business, trade and management;</li> <li>• Motives, scope and forms of internationalization of agri-food SMEs;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain international business, trade and management principles;</li> <li>• Analyze international environment of business activities;</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modes of firms' internationalization;</li> <li>• Business strategies in international markets;</li> <li>• Sources and methods of building the competitive advantage in international markets;</li> <li>• Company's market, production and surplus, its value and ways of commercialization;</li> <li>• Company's internal structures, processes and organizational practices and culture in the company.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the design of business models for international markets (value proposition);</li> <li>• Select models of international business strategies that can be applied to SMEs in the agri-food industry;</li> <li>• Recommend the management on the possible modes of firms' internationalization;</li> <li>• Support the building of an export-oriented culture in the company;</li> <li>• Collaborate with other company departments.</li> </ul>
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**PT 2 Analyzing foreign markets and identifying development opportunities for internationalization of agri-food SME.**

<b>KNOWLEDGE</b> – <i>knows and understands</i>	<b>SKILLS</b> - <i>can</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trends and sector needs;</li> <li>• Phases and sources of market research;</li> <li>• Distribution channels;</li> <li>• Market structures and specificities, company's clients and competitors (business knowledge);</li> <li>• New product development processes and modes of adaptation of existing ones to other markets;</li> <li>• Innovations and new solutions for agri-food industry development;</li> <li>• Agri-food industry specificities and demands on the target market;</li> <li>• The agri-food value chain of their product;</li> <li>• The position of their product on the target market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify market niches and relevant conditions (including barriers) for starting commercializing products on target foreign markets;</li> <li>• Analyze international markets for SMEs development;</li> <li>• Identify company's strengths and opportunities to compete on international markets;</li> <li>• Use public databases and sector reports;</li> <li>• Gather information on the needs of clients of potential markets (including market trends and size);</li> <li>• Analyze the specifics of potential foreign markets, clients and competitors with its strengths and weaknesses;</li> <li>• Suggest to the superiors the use of an appropriate model of managing the value chain of the agri-food industry, from the place of origin to the destination, including, but not limited to production, processing, distribution</li> <li>• Identify partners in the supply chain;</li> <li>• Monitor innovations development in agri-food industry, including those related to ICT and smart solutions;</li> <li>• Advise superiors on adapting existing products and their sales model or developing new products for export markets.</li> </ul>



<b>PT3 Establishing cooperation with private, public, scientific and business at national level and abroad</b>	
<b>KNOWLEDGE</b> – <i>knows and understands</i>	<b>SKILLS</b> - <i>can</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance and specificity of the company's promotion in marketing communication in a cross-cultural environment;</li> <li>• Processes of building and maintaining international contacts;</li> <li>• Business communication processes and techniques;</li> <li>• Schedule of events focused on the export promotion of agri-food industry internationally.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create cooperation and collaboration agreements with stakeholders and facilitators of internationalization. Participate in international trade fairs and presentations of the company and its products;</li> <li>• Apply communication techniques on potential clients, suppliers, distributors and other entities involved in internationalization activities;</li> <li>• Respond to partners and customers for all telephone and e-mail inquiries as well as to provide necessary information;</li> <li>• Organize videoconferences, online meetings with the option of screen sharing;</li> <li>• Analyze, select and actively participate in events related to export promotion, for example B2B/B2C meetings, fairs, study visits.</li> </ul>
<b>PT4 Implementing activities for the internationalization of agri-food SMEs.</b>	
<b>KNOWLEDGE</b> – <i>knows and understands</i>	<b>SKILLS</b> - <i>can</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies and negotiation techniques used in international business;</li> <li>• Main issues of international contracting;</li> <li>• Legislation, regulations and certifications necessary to open new markets;</li> <li>• Commercial practices related to contracts and their rules;</li> <li>• Administrative procedures in an international context;</li> <li>• Main issues in the field of transport and logistics in the international context;</li> <li>• Main issues of international marketing and communication;</li> <li>• Available national schemes for financing internationalization of their products</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participate in the negotiations of trade terms;</li> <li>▪ Support the organization on distribution and sale processes of SME products and / or services;</li> <li>▪ Support the process of preparing legal agreements to establish the basis for international negotiations and their implementation;</li> <li>▪ Search and apply tariffs for industrial and agricultural products;</li> <li>▪ Apply the international commercial terms (INCOTERMS);</li> <li>▪ Search for financing and advise on the most appropriate payment methods;</li> <li>▪ Carefully select form of transport and its insurance;</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supervise the preparation of documents necessary for the implementation of export activities (for example, invoices, waybills, certificates of origin, etc.);</li> <li>▪ Monitor the transport process and identify and inform management about the tasks, costs and risks associated with global or international transport and delivery of goods;</li> <li>▪ Supervise the process of contract implementation;</li> <li>▪ Search for additional sources of international financing.</li> </ul>
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**PT5 Building and maintaining long-term relations with local and international partners involved on internationalization purposes.**

<b>KNOWLEDGE</b> – <i>knows and understands</i>	<b>SKILLS</b> - <i>can</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operating principles of institutions supporting the internationalization of SMEs and their offer;</li> <li>• Sectoral activities and events focused on internationalization;</li> <li>• Processes of alliances development;</li> <li>• Role of network organizations (clusters, cooperatives, producer groups, sales groups, etc.) and business support institutions that facilitates export development;</li> <li>• Role of advertising in promotional activities on international markets;</li> <li>• Types and principles of preparing promotional materials;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop and establish cooperation with entities supporting the internationalization of SMEs in the agri-food sector;</li> <li>▪ Prepare/supervise the preparation of SMEs to participate in international fairs and exhibitions;</li> <li>▪ Build alliances and partnerships with entities from various sectors and industries;</li> <li>▪ Disseminate the brand of the company's products on the international market using various forms of communication with potential clients of the firm;</li> <li>▪ Build a positive image of the company and its reputation on the domestic and international market;</li> <li>▪ Elaborate / supervise the elaboration of promotional and information materials related to SMEs and its products.</li> </ul>

<b>KOMPETENCJE SPOŁECZNE</b> – <i>he is ready for</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create international opportunities for the SME development and implement internationalization activities in selected markets.</li> <li>▪ Analyze the sources of international competitiveness of the firm.</li> <li>▪ Implement the right tools for analysis and evaluation of company's conditions in the international markets.</li> <li>▪ Make proposals for the owners/management based on gathered market intelligence.</li> <li>▪ Initiate or expand international business activities of the SME.</li> </ul>

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- Interact and cooperate collectively across departments/ organizational units of the company (R&D, marketing, finance and organization, etc.).
  - Organize cooperation and communication processes inside and outside the company.
  - Managing manufacturing operations, marketing and finance in an international context.
  - Take advantage of industry events, fairs and other business meetings to support the development of the internationalization of SMEs in the agri-food industry.
  - Negotiating with representatives of different countries, taking into account cultural and social conditions.
  - Build long-term relationships with new customers and partners from potential new markets.
  - Taking responsibility for the actions related to the internationalization of SMEs in the agri-food sector.
  - Identify and seize new market opportunities to expand to international markets.
  - Continuously improve competences in the field of internationalization of agri-food products.
  - Knowledge on exports regulation/certifications - origin/destination of goods, safety control, food security authorities and public authorities paperwork
  - To be aware of exchange rates on destination and have a full knowledge of insurances covering exchange rate changes at the payment time.
  - To be aware of their own company production and surplus > to be aware of its value and how to commercialize it

## **KEY COMPETENCES**

- Business management
- Initiative and entrepreneurship
- Creativity and cross-cultural skills
- Communication and negotiation skills
- Ability to work with computer and internet
- Mathematical, scientific and technical competences
- Ability to understand and create information
- Motility
- Planning and organizing work
- Influence / leadership
- Verbal communication (mother and foreign language)
- Teamwork
- Problem solving