2015 was a challenging year for us here at CBI. We thought that in 2014 we had fully prepared ourselves for our final integration in the Netherlands Enterprise Agency, RVO. But as it turned out, we still had a lot of internal work to do. However, despite difficulties and unforeseen operational problems, we actually reached our goals in 2015. In fact, we far exceeded them.

Our mission at CBI is to contribute measurably to sustainable economic development in developing countries by helping them to increase their exports. Well, we did that in a big way in 2015: we more than tripled our target in terms of increased export turnover for businesses participating in our programmes, while in many cases also taking greater social and environmental responsibility. The chapters and infographics in this report tell an encouraging story.

If you’re an entrepreneur, you know difficulties and disappointments happen. We all make mistakes. If we don’t, someone else will – and if they don’t, the economy or life itself will knock us up. What matters is how we respond. Having only taken the CBI director’s office in mid-2014, I was amazed last year by how our staff rose above all the back-office turmoil to deliver absolute world-class results.

Our staff are not the only ones. Many more people did their part in 2015 to make all those new orders and jobs happen. Including our external experts and partners – as well as you and your colleagues and staff. The right people in the right places doing the right things. Working together, succeeding together.

Our integration with RVO is ongoing. We’ve resolved the toughest issues and, as you will see in this report, we’re beginning to reap the benefits. Increased visibility. New synergies. A fresh resolve to get out there and do the job only we ourselves can do – better and more sustainably than ever. So whether you’re an entrepreneur, an export advisor or a government representative, let me encourage you to join us: whatever 2016 brings, let’s get up every day with an indestructible resolve to do what it takes. To surpass even our own ambitions. Believe me, it will be worth the trouble.

Max Timmerman
Managing Director CBI
An overview of our activities in 2015

Africa & the Middle East
- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Mali
- Senegal
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Zambia

Asia & Eastern Europe
- Afghanistan
- Albania
- Armenia
- Bangladesh
- Bhutan
- Georgia
- Indonesia
- Macedonia
- Moldova
- Mongolia
- Myanmar
- Nepal
- Pakistan
- Philippines
- Sri Lanka
- Vietnam

Latin America
- Bolivia
- Colombia
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Nicaragua
- Peru
- Suriname

Sectoral Focus Areas
- Agriculture
- Fresh flowers & vegetables
- Timber
- Wine
- Garments
- Home decoration & textiles
- Natural ingredients
- Tourism
- Fisheries
- Electronics components
- Paints & coatings
- Coffee, tea, cacao
- Automotive
- Metals
- Medical
- Food ingredients
- Outsourcing
- IT/BPO
- Engineering
- Processed fruits and vegetables
- Motion control
- Flowers
Our main target for 2015 was to help entrepreneurs participating in our programmes worldwide to add 60 million euros to their export turnover. By year’s end the total export increase was not 60 million, but 183 million euros. With that massive burst of new exports from developing countries came no less than 90,000 jobs. That means an income for 90,000 people – more than half of them women, many with families – in developing countries. A ray of hope in tens of thousands of communities. With a budget of 25 million euros, that means the creation of each of those jobs cost just €277 (it also means we multiplied every euro we received by more than seven). Everything else in this report revolves around these few driving facts.
Fewer countries, deeper penetration

For some years the Dutch government has been narrowing down the number of developing countries in which it operates. At CBI we are following that path. Our aim is to target a smaller number of countries with a broader range of services in order to have maximum impact. With that in mind, we sharpened our focus in 2015 on the least developed countries (LDCs). Says CBI’s Managing Director, Max Timmerman: ‘We’re moving deeper out into the field. The tougher the country in economic terms, the more eager our minister is to lead in planning and organising their business. The outcomes of this and other PRIME research will strongly influence our future programmes. In our report on 2016 we expect to present further results.’

Sharing knowledge, giving power

Because knowledge gives power to change, we constantly invest in developing market information and making it available to developing country exporters and business support organisations. In 2015, our Market Information Team published 568 brand-new market information studies in 29 sectors (for more facts and figures, check the infographic on page 12). ‘The overall trend is towards more accessible studies and more users,’ says Team Coordinator Janneke Vereijken. Highlights in this important field, in which CBI ranks as one of the world’s leading centres of expertise:

• The number of users of our Market Information platform (www.cbi.eu/market-information) went up by about 25%. The reason, we think: we started to simplify the platform, so that entrepreneurs from developing countries can find the right information more easily than ever. We also serve the other end of the value chain analysis studies being done by other RVO teams.
• Researching the impact of our market information on actual export growth. We drew several key conclusions: beginning exporters use our studies most; further integration of the studies in CBI’s programmes is vital to increasing their effectiveness.
• A higher international profile
CBI operates within a broad, international network of organisations and government agencies. In that playing field, we’re the hands-on people. The experts in export. The ones getting out into the towns and villages of this world’s least developed countries to strengthen economies by helping entreprenising people do more business. But without the many partners we’re connected with, our work

Making results more measurable

With increasing precision we are measuring our results and presenting them to stakeholders. This annual report is an example. Another one is the PRIME project: Pioneering Real-time Impact Monitoring and Evaluation in small and medium enterprises (www.primepartnership.nl). PRIME’s objective is to design methods for monitoring and evaluating the impact of our interventions on behalf of small to medium-sized enterprises in developing countries. Our partners in PRIME are the Foundation Netherlands Senior Experts (PUM), the Agricultural Economics Research Institute (LEI Wageningen UR) and Rotterdam’s Erasmus School of Economics (ESE). In 2015, ITC also joined the initiative by bringing in two of the programmes under the Netherlands Trust Fund. PRIME’s main activity in 2015 was research. The first results have been encouraging. For instance, in an initial survey among small to medium-sized enterprises in our programmes, almost two thirds of the responding firms said CBI intervention helped them improve their business practices. More than two thirds of these firms mentioned CBI has a strong contributory factor in this improvement. Our greatest effectiveness, this survey showed, lay in helping exporters get aligned with the quality requirements of international buyers, helping them ensure product or service quality and helping them take the lead in planning and organising their business. The outcomes of this and other PRIME research will strongly influence our future programmes. In our report on 2016 we expect to present further results.

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Export increase realised to EU/EFTA vs. Non-EU/EFTA markets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU/EFTA markets (34.8% increase)</th>
<th>Non-EU/EFTA markets (25.2% increase)</th>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>€426 mln</td>
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would be utterly impossible. That’s why we actively invest in this network. Some 2015 highlights:

- We contributed to several key World Trade Organisation (WTO) events, such as side events of the 5th Global Review of Aid for Trade and the Public Forum in Geneva, and the Trade and Development Symposium during the 10th Ministerial Conference in Nairobi.
- For UNCTAD, we contributed to a training on Rules of Origin for policy makers in LDCs.
- In February, we welcomed Arancha González, Executive Director of International Trade Centre (ITC) to our office in The Hague. Both Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Lilianne Ploumen, and González expressed their satisfaction at the way the CBI/ITC partnership is evolving. ITC and CBI are long-time partners in fighting poverty by helping small to medium-sized enterprises in low- and middle-income countries connect to global value chains.
- Our integration with RVO has increased our visibility. We encourage this.
- Also, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had us subjected to a major evaluation of the period 2005-2012. It was concluded that CBI is an effective organisation with an excellent international reputation and plays an important role in the Netherlands’ aid, trade and investment policy. There were also recommendations, for instance to sharpen the criteria we apply in selecting countries and companies and to apply a more solid monitoring and evaluation methodology.

- We joined the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). Its aim is to make information about aid spending easier to access, use, and understand. Why? A higher international profile, more partners and synergies, more opportunities for outsiders to recognise and join us in the vital work we do.
- We produced 5 market information studies for Germany’s Import Promotion Desk (IPD), one of our partners in the TRIC network (Trade Related Instruments Connected). CBI is recognised within TRIC as a guiding light in market research.
- Together with the Dutch Association of World Shops (DAWS) we supported the World Fair Trade Organisation in launching a Fairtrade label for home decoration and home textiles products. We’re also supporting exporters in developing countries in acquiring fair trade status. The goal: generate more business for these exporters by tapping into European demand and making their products available to European wholesalers and retailers.
- With several Dutch branch organisations we co-organised successful trade missions to...
developing countries (for more details, check the following chapters).

- Mashood Khan, Senior Vice Chairman of the Pakistan Association of Automotive Parts & Accessories Manufacturers (PAAPAM) visited us to celebrate the success of PAAPAM and its members have enjoyed on the back of 10 years of CBI support.
- In December, Pakistan’s Federal Minister for Commerce H.E. Engineer Khurram Dastgir Khan visited us and witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Pakistan Embassy and CBI.
- In June we held the TOPIX Conference Africa & Middle East in The Hague. The event brought together the CEOs of selected export promotion organisations from 21 of the least developed countries in Africa and the Middle East (see also Chapter 2).

- Under the Netherlands Trust Fund (NTF III), CBI financed – and ITC implemented – six Export Sector Competitiveness projects in four countries. While the programme does not end until June 2017, its effectiveness is already evident. In the IT&ITeS sector in Bangladesh and in the tourism sector in Myanmar’s Kayah State, ITC and CBI have jointly partnered with the government, local stakeholders and the donor community. Since connecting with the programme, the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) has seen its membership more than double, to over 1,000 companies. In the IT&ITeS sector in Kenya and Uganda, our efforts to coach sector associations and enterprises is also showing results, with enterprises launching regional exports and associations expanding their memberships. In the Kenya avocado sector, exporters are linked to farmer groups in formal contractual arrangements signed in 2015, resulting in price levels which are 2-3 times higher in 2016 for the 11 participating farmers. In the Uganda coffee sector, 10 coffee farmer associations gained access to finance, totalling US$ 150,000. This has increased their turnover and value addition, resulting in a price increase of 20-30%.

Our main role in all of these meetings and partnerships is simple: deliver expertise on export and represent the interests of small- to medium-sized enterprises based in developing countries.

**A two-prong approach**

In 2015 we had a budget of just over € 25 million for implementing our programmes. Within these programmes we had a two-prong approach: carrying out specific export coaching programmes (ECPs) for small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and producer groups, on the one hand; and, on the other, strengthening the related business support organisations and increasing the competitiveness of entire sectors.

CBI is active in four main sectors: Agriculture, Fishery & Forestry; Consumer Products; Industrial Products; and Services. In the chart below you can see how our programmes are divided among these sectors. Please note that there are more programmes than countries, as some country programmes cover multiple sectors.
In Africa and the Middle East we began to intensify our activities in the least developed countries (LDCs) and in our partner countries in 2015. Working with micro-enterprises along with the small to medium-sized enterprises we are familiar with is a whole new ball game. Often poorly equipped, these businesses have to navigate the weakest of economies and the most ragged of infrastructures. To give these aspiring exporters a fair chance at making money and creating jobs for their communities, we changed our game plan.
Connecting with least developed countries

CBI’s mandate covers all the countries on the Dutch Good Growth Fund list (english.dggf.nl). However, our minister has encouraged CBI to focus increasingly on LDCs, because this is where the greatest contribution to poverty reduction can be achieved. With this in mind, we invited the leadership of export promotion organisations representing 21 LDCs in Africa and the Middle East to a TOPIX Conference Africa & Middle East in The Hague in June. ‘Many of these countries, such as Sierra Leone, Angola, Malawi, Zimbabwe and others, are new to us,’ says Regional Coordinator Peter van Gilst. The purpose of the conference was threefold:

1. Strengthen the CBI network among LDCs in Africa and the Middle East;
2. Familiarise key agents in these countries with CBI’s possibilities;
3. Explore possible CBI involvement.

‘Following the conference, we invited the participants to submit project proposals. CBI will then look for the countries and sectors with the most export growth potential,’ explains Van Gilst. ‘We expect a lot of new initiatives and economic growth to result from this.’

Micro-businesses, not only SME’s

Moving deeper into the least developed countries has a lot of consequences. One is that we have to do more work with the same budget, as the entrepreneurs we’re working with need more intensive training and coaching to get export-ready. ‘We’ve had to reformulate our strategy and come up with new methodologies to succeed in boosting exports in African and Middle Eastern LDCs,’ says Peter van Gilst. ‘And it’s working.’ Here are some examples:

- We’ve stepped up collaboration with other specialists, as many of the obstacles existing in LDCs are often outside CBI’s means or field of expertise. Among these partners are RVO’s Private Sector Development (PSD) Coaches – an example of new synergies resulting from the CBI-RVO integration.
- We’re involving more local experts with influence at grassroots level. For instance, micro-enterprises often lack basic skills, such as human resources management, purchasing or planning. However, expertise in these areas often exists locally. So we hire local experts, giving them additional training if necessary. A spinoff effect of this is more knowledge development and retention in our target markets.
- We’re working with smaller numbers of entrepreneurs in order to give more intensive support. The successes of these frontrunners, we know from experience, will trickle down to others in time.

Helping businesses access finance

Access to finance – or the lack of it – is a major obstacle for growth-seeking entrepreneurs, especially in the least developed countries. Thus far, CBI has conducted studies on access to finance, but not integrated this issue in our programmes. In Africa and the Middle East we made a decision in 2015 to proactively look for funding solutions. Our initial goals:

- Identify the players offering finance in a given country;
- Map out their requirements;
- Match entrepreneurs and funders.

We started in Senegal and plan to take this service into other least developed countries next.

Creating an enabling environment in Uganda

At CBI we have learned that success in exports depends on the people engaged in it and on their access to an enabling environment. This is why we run integrated programmes aimed at strengthening entire sectors and countries. A great example of this is our Specialty Coffee Programme in Uganda. The programme began in 2012; the goal for 2015 was to work on an enabling environment for this sector. Here are some of the steps we took:
We coached several institutes in delivering more and better export and financing services to coffee businesses, including the African Coffee Academy (ACA), the Uganda Coffee Federation (UCF), the National Union of Coffee Agribusinesses and Farm Enterprises (NOSCAFE) and the Uganda Coffee Farmers Alliance (UCFA).

We helped the Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) draw up a specialty coffee sector strategy and a sector export marketing plan.

We co-developed and launched brochures at the SCAE World of Coffee trade fair in Gothenburg, Sweden.

"The results of these efforts are very promising," says Van Gilst. "The goal of securing a position for Uganda on the European market as a supplier of great specialty coffees is coming within reach."

Gender awareness is good for business

Gender awareness is a central theme at CBI and we worked hard on promoting it in Africa and the Middle East in 2015. Here's why:

- Gender equality in development interventions contributes to economic productivity and human development.
- Gender equality within companies means more human resources.
- Companies that comply with social (gender) standards stand a better chance on more highly developed markets, such as Europe.

In 2015 we gave businesses and business support organisations gender awareness training. We also included gender equality in our export audits.

"At CBI we have learned that success in exports depends on the people engaged in it and on their access to an enabling environment. A great example of this is our Specialty Coffee Programme in Uganda. As a result of our efforts in this area, the goal of securing a position for Uganda on the European market as a supplier of great specialty coffees is coming within reach."

Peter van Gilst, Regional Coordinator

Uganda
We witnessed remarkable export and development successes in almost all of our programmes across Latin America in 2015. Perhaps most encouraging of all was the growing robustness and impact of our integrated approach in this region. As an unbiased Dutch government agency, we are enjoying considerable success in bringing together the needs and ambitions of exporters and importers, trade associations, government agencies, standards institutes, international platforms and other stakeholders in order to remove constraints in the export value chain and co-create new business.
A running start in Colombia and Peru

Two very promising integrated country programmes we prepared in 2014 took off to a flying start in 2015: Peru and Colombia. The Colombian programme covers six sectors: Tropical and Exotic Fresh Fruit; Processed Speciality Coffees; Natural Ingredients for Food, Cosmetics and Pharmaceuticals; Exotic Flowers and Foliage; Garments; and IT Outsourcing Services. In Peru the focus is on four sectors: Natural Ingredients for Food, Cosmetics and Pharmaceuticals; Grains, Pulses and Nuts & Processed Food; Specialty Coffee and Cocoa; Garments; and Aquaculture. In all of these sectors the emphasis is on adding value rather than on commodity exports – thus creating more economic muscle.

Synergism at its best

Our integrated approach is very pronounced in these programmes. Each programme includes export coaching for businesses, capacity building for business support organisations, sector branding, and involvement in national export strategies. ‘It’s exciting to see that in each sector virtually every stakeholder is participating,’ says Renee Boelaars, our Regional Coordinator for Latin America. ‘The synergies are amazing. For example, the problems exporters run into at micro-level are fed back to players at meso-level so they can be structurally resolved. Conversely, the government and sector ambitions and strategies formulated at meso-level are passed down the line to branch organisations and individual businesses, becoming embedded there, too. The CBI programmes have provided a platform and fuelled this team spirit.’

Connecting the dots

In Latin America CBI’s integrated approach is currently at its most advanced. The region is rich in natural, cultural and professional resources. What is needed most of all is an environment that will enable further development – and even more importantly, an equal distribution – of this wealth, specifically through exports. Numerous countries here over the years have developed strong, competent business support organisations – often in collaboration with CBI. Our task is to integrate it all to help fill the gaps, connect the dots, develop the bigger picture. For the benefit of the country, the sector, the entrepreneurs – and, above all, the workers and their families at the very bottom of the economic ladder. This is what integrated programmes are all about. Our decision in 2014 to no longer run any programmes at all in Latin America provided only export coaching, training or business support organisation development modules, already bore fruit in 2015. Says Boelaars, ‘In Latin America the time is ripe for investing in the creation of well-functioning enabling environments that are truly connected with entrepreneurs who have export aspirations.’

Case in point: Latin American chocolate

It is common knowledge that cocoa and chocolate consumption originated on this continent. Working with exporters and stakeholders from no less than four Central American countries – Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras – we have placed this tasty historic tidbit at the centre of a unique export project set to make a major contribution to local economies in the four countries. Here are some of the results we have achieved with our partners there so far:

• The founding of a regional sector association called AMACACAO, the Meso-American Association of Fine Cacao and Chocolate;
• The development of a regional export marketing strategy, along with promotional materials geared to European buyers (who are always keen on new cocoa and chocolate concepts);
• The development of a shared brand and quality mark, Cunakakaw (cunakakaw.com);
• New quality, social responsibility and environmental standards being implemented by all the exporters involved;
• The launching of Cunakakaw at the prestigious Salon du Chocolat trade fair in France in 2015.

For an overview of countries and companies we worked with in 2015 in Latin America, check the infographic on page 22.

**FACTS & FIGURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Total export increase</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong> 7,159</td>
<td><strong>€329 million</strong> increase</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Female</strong> 6,641</td>
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**Increased employment**

| Employment Total | **13,802** |

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Latin America
Another case in point: 
Wines of Bolivia

Another mouth-watering illustration of how inclusive business can grow in Latin America is our ‘Wines of Bolivia’ (winesofbolivia.com) programme. Wines of Bolivia is also a perfect illustration of our hands-on approach to development, as we literally travel into the backwaters of the world to uncover hidden economic treasures and help the owners and local governments realise that their products do have a place in European and global markets – thereby transforming companies, sectors and rural economies.

In 2015, for the first time in history, we facilitated the presentation of a selection of high-end Bolivian wines at ProWein, the world’s leading annual trade fair for the wine business. “The altitude and unique climate conditions of Bolivia’s main winemaking region, Tarija, combined with fact that local winemakers have some of the world’s oldest vines and build on several centuries of experience, makes for an outstanding product. This is a story worth telling. Yet until recently these wines never went further than the domestic market,” says Boelaars. “Our involvement is enabling Bolivia’s winemakers to share their secret with the world. It is helping them to learn more, to invest wisely, to generate more revenues and to create more jobs. We also initiated the founding of a sector association that represents the various export needs and interests of these companies: quality, certification, promotion and so on.”

“In Latin America the time is ripe for investing in the creation of well-functioning enabling environments that are truly connected with entrepreneurs who have export aspirations.”

Renee Boelaars, Regional Coordinator Latin America
Small to medium-sized enterprises in Asian countries face exciting opportunities on the export market. While Chinese growth slowed down in 2015, we helped many exporters in less prominent Asian countries to move forward, both regionally and in Europe. In Asia we are shifting our focus to a number of high-potential sectors in some of the smaller, least developed countries, while sustaining strong programmes in countries such as Indonesia and Vietnam. The emphasis is on adding value rather than volume. In East Europe there are also numerous sectors with potential for value addition and exports.
Asia

Ambitious least-developed countries
In Asia we have been reshuffling the cards. India now has numerous sectors playing a strong supplier role on the European market and many Indian businesses have their own success stories to tell. Reducing our long-time presence there, we invested more heavily in several smaller countries. Such as Myanmar and Bangladesh. Both are least developed countries. And both are showing robust ambition and growth.

Myanmar: new in the game
Myanmar began to embrace economic liberalisation and more openness to foreign markets in 2011. CBI and our partner the International Trade Centre, ITC, were among the first players to step forward and offer their services to this fledgling export country. Our rapid response to changes in the country is now paying off, says Anne Kempers, our Regional Coordinator for Asia and East Europe. ‘We are right in the middle of things in Myanmar. Having supported the government in developing its National Export Strategy, for instance, means we quickly gained a clear overview of the country’s potential, particularly its export sectors. It has also brought us broad recognition within those sectors. The result is that the doors have swung open to us.’ The government of Myanmar even presented CBI with an export development award in 2015. ‘It was a very special moment of publicly expressed appreciation for our efforts,’ says Kempers.

In the meantime, we are boosting exports in several high-potential sectors, including seafood, tourism, garments and food ingredients. The country’s official tourism slogan, ‘Let the journey begin’, expresses nicely how we feel about our involvement in this promising country.

Bangladesh: a new take on garments
Anyone who knows anything about fashion, knows that Bangladesh already has a large garment industry. As much as 80% of the country’s exports are garments. The problem is that almost all of these exports go to low-end markets. This means the producers and their labourers get very little money for their exports. We started a programme in 2015 aiming to help a group of front runners to reach higher market segments by adding more value to their products. For example, by working on design, quality and collection development. ‘We believe their success will inspire the wider sector,’ says Anne Kempers, ‘and other companies will also begin to add more value to their products. That way the garment industry will contribute to more sustainable economic growth in Bangladesh.’

Other Asian countries
• Pakistan, a fragile state, is also keen to develop more exports. Several visits to CBI from leading export authorities in Pakistan and a new Memorandum of Cooperation between the Pakistan Embassy and CBI confirmed this in 2015. • Our long-time presence in countries such as Vietnam and Indonesia continues to yield good results. In both countries, our experience and network offers European buyers unique advantages. In Vietnam, we are active in the garments, food ingredients, home decoration and home textiles and engineering sectors. In Indonesia, we cover these sectors as well as tourism and seafood.

• In Afghanistan, political instability has temporarily forced us out of the game, however we continue to stay in touch with key players in this fragile state, so that any opportunities that do emerge can be seized successfully.

• Our shift towards least-developed countries led us also to explore opportunities in other Asian countries, such as Laos, Cambodia, Bhutan and Nepal.

Nepal Now: disaster to opportunity
Tourism is one of Nepal’s high-potential export sectors. While we were busy drawing up an integrated tourism programme for Asia, in the spring of 2015, Nepal suffered a devastating earthquake that took more than 8,000 lives. Much property and heritage was lost in the disaster and tourism – a vital source of income for many people in rural areas – collapsed. When the Nepal government called on CBI for help, we knew we had the tools to step in and make a difference. So joining forces with national

FACTS & FIGURES
For an overview of countries and companies we worked with in 2015 in Asia and Eastern Europe, check the infographic on page 38

Increased employment
Female 27,592
Male 28,845
Employment Total 56,497
+0% +9%
Total export increase
€522 million
€34 million
+7%
and international tourism experts and the Nepal Tourism Board, we launched Nepal NOW. The campaign seeks to give potential travellers honest information on conditions in Nepal, thereby encouraging tourism at a time when it is needed most. ‘We wanted to reassure tourists that Nepal and its people remain strong and standing,’ says Anne Kempers. ‘Two regions suffered, but most of the country’s age-old monuments, hiking trails, mountains, hills and rivers remained perfectly accessible.’

The campaign includes a website (nepalnow.org) and social media to spread news, blogs and interviews. One of its items is called ‘I’m in Nepal now’ and features celebrities and other travellers sharing experiences of visits to this struggling, but beautiful country. Nepal NOW is an exciting example of rapid response to an economically threatening situation,’ says Kempers. The campaign will continue on in 2016.

**East Europe: available on call**

CBI has been involved in Eastern Europe over the years in several sectors, such as garments, ICT and business process outsourcing. In 2015 we made a decision to reduce our activities in this region. ‘If our principal, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or partners or governments in the region request our involvement, we will make that a priority, but we are not proactively initiating new programmes here ourselves,’ says Anne Kempers. We did continue to work with wine exporters from Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Macedonia under the umbrella of our SEEWINE project. Many of these winemakers have now established a foothold on the European market.

“There are so many exciting things going on. When CBI started working with Vietnam’s home decoration and home textiles sector, it was a small and unknown sector; the change we have seen in four years is astonishing. Our Nepal NOW campaign received such positive media coverage, it has hugely impacted Nepali people dependent on tourism for their incomes. In Bhutan, our first attempts to develop tourism organisations are generating a new burst of confidence and growth. Results like these are incredibly motivating to us at CBI. They tell us that what we do really matters.”

Anne Kempers, Regional Coordinator Asia and East Europe
Corporate Social Responsibility

Incorporating CSR to reduce risks and create market opportunities

Corporate social responsibility has been at the heart of our activities ever since we started helping exporters in developing countries to gain a foothold on the European market. Over the years we have developed numerous tools for helping export companies, branch associations, trade promotion organisations and government agencies to make a real difference in this area. In 2015, we took another big step forward: we started using a tool for analysing CSR risks in every programme we run.
Each of the 14 CBI programmes launched during the last two years was subjected to a ‘Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Risk Analysis’. With this exercise we want to monitor the CSR risks in the programmes as compared to the sector risks in general in a given country. The results are exciting. For example, we saw a reduction of the risk of child labour by 67% in 9 programmes (for risk reduction percentages, see the infographic at the top of this page). Says our CSR Manager, Eva Smulders: ‘By integrating CSR Risk Analysis in CBI’s programmes, we can see what risks exist, identify key causes, and set targets and performance indicators for risk reduction in the companies we work with.’

Eight risks
CBI’s analysis focuses on eight specific risks: child labour, forced labour, human rights violation, unfair labour practices, health and safety risks, environmental harm, corruption and supply chain traceability. CBI derived this list from the guidelines drawn up by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The OECD’s mission is to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world.

Tools and examples
CBI has numerous tools for reducing risks like these. For instance, we give training on specific CSR issues. We help exporters draw up CSR plans aiming at two or three of the most obvious risks. And we use local experts – often specialised CSR agencies – to help get these plans implemented. A few practical examples:

- In Bangladesh we are training footwear and apparel exporters to deal safely and responsibly with chemicals;
- In the tourism sector, we have hooked up with Travelife, a CSR certification scheme that helps small to medium-sized enterprises set reachable CSR improvement targets;
- In South Africa, we have helped all of the companies in our home decoration and home textiles programme draw up their own CSR plans;
- In Latin America, tracking and tracing take a central role in our agriculture programmes.

A long-term effort
Efforts to reduce CSR risks are a long-term job. CBI’s role at ground level, helping companies clean up their act, is vital. Says Eva Smulders, ‘We’re in a position to tackle issues very near the source. This gives us unique opportunities to make a difference. For example, if we encounter child labour, we won’t exclude the companies involved from our programmes, but rather get to work with them on recognising the problem they are a part of and contributing to lasting solutions. Obviously, if a company can improve and choose not to we will not support its export efforts.’

“Many buyers in Europe are looking for companies that behave responsibly. They have an image to protect. So when they see that your company cares about things such as the environment, your people and the community in which you work, they will really value this. It is a way to gain trust. And when a buyer trusts you, he will trust you on a long-term basis. Because of CBI’s support, the companies in our chia programme are really committed to investing in good quality, social responsibility and sustainable growth. It is really important to receive encouragement from people who are not Bolivian and who tell you: ‘you can make it. And we are going to support you.’”

Mariana Zamora, CADEX Export Chamber of Santa Cruz, Bolivia bij CADEX
Q&A WITH ‘THE FACE OF CBI’

‘This work is all about personal relations’

Some said he was the face of CBI. Others lauded him as CBI’s walking encyclopaedia. Still others marvelled at his relentless optimism as a colleague, partner and aid for trade ambassador. Dick de Man, for many years our Deputy Managing Director, reached the age of retirement in 2015. In the final stages of a career well spent (he continues as a part-time advisor at CBI) – we asked him four questions.

1. Do you recall what you felt when in 1975 you first set foot in CBI’s office?

After 4 years of pioneering in exports for different US companies, I was looking for a more social dimension in my career. Coming across CBI, I saw a possibility to further develop my experience to the benefit of developing countries. The first encounter I had with CBI was at its world-wide product presentation. I noticed the products were not market-compliant. CBI later became the first organisation of its kind to guide exporters away from their traditional product-driven business towards a market-driven approach.

2. You’ve met many people in your 40 years with CBI, from government leaders to small business owners. Which encounters stands out?

What will remain with me is a deep respect for the many entrepreneurs I’ve met, their resilience, perseverance and – thanks to an improved understanding of the markets – the growing confidence with which they grasp market opportunities in a playing field that is often far from level. I also enjoyed the consistent interest in CBI of the former and present Directors-General of the World Trade Organisation. Their regular visits and efforts to offer CBI a multilateral platform on which to share our practical field experience kept re-affirming us in our critical role in making the difference for exporters between having market access and market presence.

3. What is the greatest personal change you experienced over the years?

Gradually discovering that this work is all about personal relations, it’s about being inspired and inspiring others to bring about positive changes in an often difficult reality – inspired by the realisation that what we do really matters. I see this inspiration and dedication in our staff, experts, clients and partners. I cannot think of a more fascinating environment in which to grow as a person and as a professional!

4. In which international development role do you see CBI starring over the next 5-10 years?

I see a continued strong role for CBI and RVO as internationally recognised public experts in international trade and in making small to medium-sized enterprises more self-reliant – with a stronger country and sector focus, a greater involvement of importer and exporter communities, more intense collaboration with local and (inter)national partners and our embassies and a wider scope of solutions – thanks to our integration with RVO.
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For further information
www.cbi.eu

or phone +31 (0)88 60 24 300

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