

# Results of the 3rd Barometer Survey

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**The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation  
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# Executive summary

The 3rd Barometer Survey (March 2026) provides an updated and evidence-based assessment of the business climate, export performance, and investment environment in Suriname. Building on two previous survey rounds conducted in 2024 and 2025, this study enables meaningful trend analysis and offers deeper insights into how business sentiment, constraints, and opportunities have evolved over time. The survey reached 212 companies, representing a participation rate of 28%, and was based on an expanded and validated directory of 770 exporters and foreign investors. The larger sample size allows for robust and representative analysis across sectors and company sizes, enabling disaggregated insights, for example, between small and large firms, as well as between exporters and foreign investors.

Overall, the findings indicate a moderately positive outlook among companies in Suriname. A majority of respondents (69%) expect the business climate to improve over the next 12 months, resulting in an average confidence score of 6.7 out of 10. This confirms a continued upward trend in business confidence observed across previous survey rounds. At the same time, expectations regarding export performance show a more mixed picture. Although 63% of companies anticipate an increase in exports or overseas revenue, the overall export expectation score declined slightly to 6.2 compared to previous survey rounds, suggesting that external or international factors may be influencing export prospects. Despite these mixed export expectations, companies remain optimistic about their own performance. A large majority expect growth in key areas such as turnover, profit, investments, and workforce size over the coming year. This reflects a level of resilience within the private sector, as well as confidence in future business opportunities.

At the same time, the survey confirms that structural constraints continue to pose significant challenges for businesses. The most frequently reported obstacles include bureaucratic inefficiencies, currency fluctuations, unpredictability of policymaking, inflation, and labor-related issues. These constraints have remained largely consistent across all survey rounds, indicating that they are deeply rooted and require sustained attention. A notable development in this survey is the increasing prominence of labor market challenges. While previous surveys highlighted the cost and availability of labor, the current findings point more strongly to issues related to skills, education levels, and productivity. This suggests a growing mismatch between labor supply and the needs of the private sector, with direct implications for business expansion and competitiveness.

In terms of the broader economic structure, the findings confirm that Suriname's economy is predominantly service-oriented, with the majority of companies operating in the services sector and most firms classified as small businesses.

In conclusion, the 3rd Barometer Survey presents a picture of a business environment that is gradually improving in terms of confidence and growth expectations, while still facing persistent structural challenges. The availability of three consecutive survey rounds now makes it possible to identify clear trends over time, providing a strong empirical basis for a deeper understanding of how business sentiment, constraints, and opportunities are evolving in Suriname.



## CHAPTER 1

# Introduction, Technical approach and methodology

In this chapter, we briefly summarize the key findings and lessons from the previous barometer cycle. We also outline the process used to revise the questionnaire and update the directory and present the methodology for the 3rd Barometer Survey.

## 1.1 Introduction

Over the past year, NIKOS successfully implemented the first full cycle of the Barometer Survey of Exporters and Foreign Investors in Suriname, commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and Cooperation and the Suriname Investment and Trade Agency (SITA). This assignment resulted in two comprehensive barometer surveys, a national directory of exporters and foreign investors, and an in-depth qualitative stakeholder analysis. Together, these outputs provided the Government of Suriname with a clearer and more evidence-based understanding of the current investment and export climate<sup>1</sup>.

In the previous phase of this research project, a directory of **588 companies** was developed by systematically compiling information from more than twenty sources, complemented by a verification process and direct engagement at national business events. Two survey rounds, one in September 2024 and the other in April 2025, yielded strong response rates for enterprise research in Suriname, **34%** in the first round and **26%** in the second, enabling detailed analysis of business sentiment, sectoral dynamics, constraints, and future export expectations. In addition, qualitative interviews with key stakeholders enriched the findings by capturing deeper perspectives on their individual experiences and realities.

The results demonstrated clear trends in business confidence, export potential, and structural barriers, while also revealing a growing sense of optimism among firms, especially in light of major developments in the oil sector. The study also confirmed the value of repeating the barometer at regular intervals: longitudinal data enables early detection of changes in the business environment and supports more targeted policy responses.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sita.sr/sita-barometer-survey-2025/>

Building on previous experience, the present phase of the project utilizes a revised methodology that continues and strengthens the data collection efforts. The 3rd Barometer cycle builds on lessons learned from previous rounds, particularly in relation to sampling strategy, survey design, outreach, quality control, and stakeholder engagement, to ensure the collection of high-quality, comparable data across survey rounds.

## 1.2 Technical approach and methodology

The next phase of the project aims to produce a refined and validated directory of exporters and foreign investors, alongside the implementation of a new round of the Barometer Survey. The **directory** has been updated through a systematic review of multiple data sources (*table 1*) to ensure full coverage of exporters, foreign investors, and firms close to export readiness. During the past period, the directory has consistently been updated, expanding it from 588 to 770 exporters and foreign investors. **Foreign investors** are residents or companies from one country (the source country) that invest or acquire an interest in an enterprise operating in another economy (country) for the long-term<sup>2</sup>. The investor's purpose is to have an effective voice in the management of the enterprise and to control the production, distribution and other activities of a firm in another country (the host country)<sup>3</sup>. **Exporters** are companies that produce goods in one country and sell them in another country or provide a service in one country for a national or resident of another country<sup>4</sup>. We also include multinational enterprises in our definition of exporters. Multinational enterprises are companies that operate in more than one country, they are firms which are primarily national, and their international operations are seen as expansions from their home/national base<sup>5</sup>. In our case we have included Surinamese companies that operate outside of Suriname.

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<sup>2</sup> The OECD definition speaks of 'a lasting interest as evidenced when the direct investor owns at least 10% of voting power of the direct investment enterprise'.

<https://www2.oecd.org/daf/inv/FDI-statistics-explanatory-notes.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Moosa, I. (2002). *Foreign Direct Investment: Theory, Evidence and Practice*. London: Palgrave Macmillan London. Methodologische nota – directe investeringen met het buitenland.

<https://www.nbb.be/nl/search/publications/methodologische%2520nota>

<sup>4</sup> Joshi, R.M. (2014). *International Marketing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>5</sup> Subedi, K. (2022). *International Business: Concept definition and characteristics*.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362829613\\_International\\_Business\\_Concept\\_Definition\\_and\\_Characteristics](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362829613_International_Business_Concept_Definition_and_Characteristics)

**Table 1.** Sources used for the development of a comprehensive list of existing exporters and investors

Source/registry			
	SITA information	The American Chamber of Commerce of Suriname	
	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Entrepreneurship and Technological Innovation	Suriname-Guyana Chamber of Commerce	
	Central Bank of Suriname	Internationaal Ambiteus (Trade missions NL-SUR)	
	Customs Authority	National Export Center Suriname	
	Chamber of Commerce & Industry	Embassies of Suriname	
	Suriname Business Association	General Bureau of Statistics	
	Manufacturers Association Suriname	Suriname's Growth Enterprises	
	Association of Exporters of Fruits and Vegetables in Suriname	Suriname Energy, Oil & Gas Summit	
	Suriname Business Forum	Staatsolie/Blue Wave Supplier Development Program	
	Suriname Hospitality and Tourism Association	Economic Council Embassy of China in Suriname	
	Association of Small Medium Sized Enterprises	Brazilian National Confederation of Industry	
Snowball-sampling (network approach)			

The **pre-data collection phase** focused on preparing all instruments, tools, and operational arrangements required for the Barometer Survey. This included finalizing the work plan, updating and validating the directory of exporters and foreign investors, developing and testing the questionnaire, defining the sampling strategy, and establishing data-collection and quality-control procedures. Pretesting of all data-collection instruments was conducted prior to the implementation phase to ensure clarity, relevance, and technical functionality.

Building on lessons learned from previous barometer cycles, the survey **questionnaire** was substantially refined and expanded in close collaboration with SITA (*see Appendix 1*). In addition to a core set of general questions administered to all respondents, adaptive question modules were developed that were activated only when respondents indicated experiencing a specific obstacle or challenge. This approach allowed for a deeper exploration of targeted topics while keeping the overall survey length manageable for the average respondent.

For strategic and methodological reasons, including the prevention of survey fatigue and the need to capture a broad range of firm-level experiences, the study relied primarily on this adaptive survey design, rather than conducting a large number of in-depth interviews during the survey phase. This approach enabled the collection of detailed information from a substantially larger number of companies across multiple thematic areas, rather than from a limited subset of interviewees.

Prior to the implementation of the survey, **enumerators** were recruited and provided with implementation guidelines. The enumerators had prior experience with similar data-collection activities (previous barometer surveys) and were therefore already competent in key aspects such as interviewing techniques, questionnaire administration, and ensuring data quality. Where necessary, brief instructions were provided by the team leader and research expert to ensure alignment on the survey instrument, key areas of focus for representativeness, and the measurements to be taken. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, were also addressed. A test phase was conducted in which several companies were contacted to validate the questionnaire and data-collection procedures.

During the survey all required **ethical procedures** were followed. The study applied the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). All participants were fully informed about the purpose and procedures of the study, as well as how the collected information would be used. Respondents were informed of the voluntary nature of their participation and assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of the information provided. They were also informed of their right to refuse to answer any or all questions and to withdraw from the interview at any time.

Data collection was conducted using Qualtrics Survey Software, with data processing and analysis carried out in Qualtrics, SPSS, and Microsoft Excel. Data visualization was performed using Microsoft Excel.

The **methodology** followed included surveying the full, updated directory of exporters and foreign investors, consistent with the 2024 and 2025 barometer studies. This approach ensured adequate representation across sectors, gender, and firm size, and enabled disaggregated analysis while mitigating the impact of non-response, which is typically high in enterprise surveys.

The survey was primarily conducted via email and telephone, and where necessary, through face-to-face interactions. Throughout the fieldwork period, the Team Leader and Research Expert applied continuous **quality-control procedures**, including daily verification of incoming data, assessment of non-response patterns, and consistency checks, prior to finalizing the dataset for analysis.

During the **post-data analysis phase**, quality-control measures included testing for systematic enumerator errors, identifying regular or unexpected response patterns, detecting unusual

responses and outliers, and examining unexpected correlations. The reliability and validity of the data were assessed. In addition, a detailed analysis of non-respondents was conducted to identify potential biases and patterns in non-response.

In the final phase, all data collected for the 3rd Barometer Survey were processed, validated, and consolidated. The use of comparable instruments across survey rounds, combined with the results from this cycle, enabled robust **trend analysis** through direct comparison with previous barometer surveys. This allowed for the assessment of how business sentiment, constraints, and opportunities have evolved over the current year as well as over the past few years.

## CHAPTER 2

# Analysis of the Barometer survey of March 2026

In this chapter, we present a detailed analysis of the 3rd Barometer Survey, complemented by trend analysis and comparative insights from previous barometer surveys.

## 2.1 Sector and company information

In the most recent survey round (March 2026), participation increased to 212 companies, up from 153 in April 2025 and 178 in September 2024. At the same time, the company directory expanded from 523 companies in the first round to 588 in the second, reaching 770 companies in the latest phase. This means that this phase of the survey has a response rate of 28%, compared to 34% for the first survey and 26% for the second. Due to the increase in directory size, the absolute number of responses has increased significantly, even though the relative response rate is comparable to the second survey.

Responses have been cross-checked to determine how many companies participated in the barometer survey more than once. The analysis shows that 125 companies participated in at least two of the three survey rounds that were held in the past year and a half.

As with the previous surveys, all companies in the directory have been contacted numerous times (e-mailed/called/visited) to request their participation in the survey. In addition, a media briefing was held on March 13, 2026, about the findings of the previous survey rounds. Companies and other relevant stakeholders were also invited to this briefing, which further supported participation by increasing awareness of the barometer survey. The data gathering process started on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February, 2026 and officially lasted until the 27<sup>th</sup> of March, 2026. On average, it took companies around 13 minutes to fill in the survey. If we look at the language, 104 companies filled in the English version of the questionnaire, while 108 respondents used the Dutch version. This means that it was useful that the questionnaire was available in both languages.

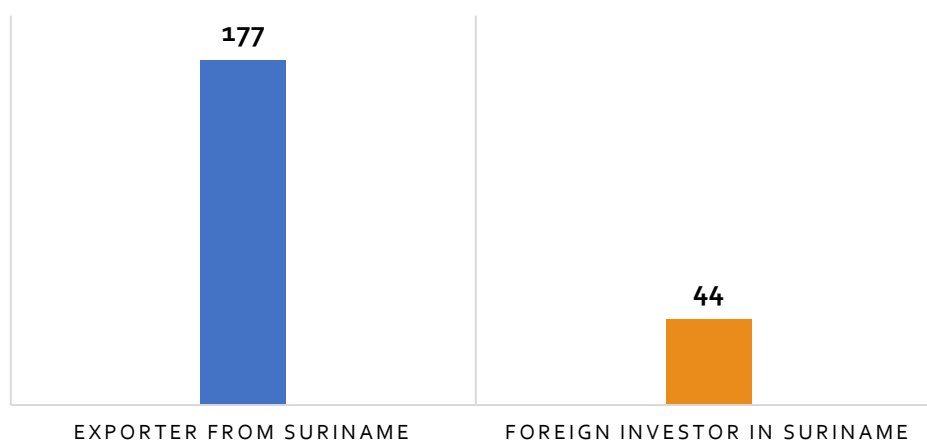
177 companies in the survey were exporters (or are planning to export in the near future) and 44 companies were foreign investors<sup>6</sup>. Combined, these figures slightly exceed the total number of

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<sup>6</sup> The survey software registers from which country the questionnaire was filled in, most often this was from Suriname (187 companies), but also from a range of other countries such as the Netherlands (10), the United States (4), Trinidad & Tobago (4), Guyana (2), and Aruba (1), Curaçao (1), France (1), Australia (1), and Brazil (1). This does not necessarily

companies that were in the survey, because some foreign investors are also exporting from Suriname (which places them in both categories). Exporters include companies that serve tourists and those who provide services in a country outside of Suriname or to foreign entities. The ratio of exporters to foreign investors in the most recent survey, which is about 4:1, is similar to the second survey, indicating a stable distribution between these groups.

An analysis of the country of origin of the foreign investors that responded shows that the Netherlands is the most common country of origin, accounting for slightly more than one-third of respondents. In addition to the Netherlands, a notable share of foreign investors originates from Trinidad and Tobago, followed by the United States and the United Arab Emirates. Other countries of origin represented in the survey include Aruba, Australia, Barbados, Canada, Curaçao, Denmark, France, Guyana, Italy, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen.

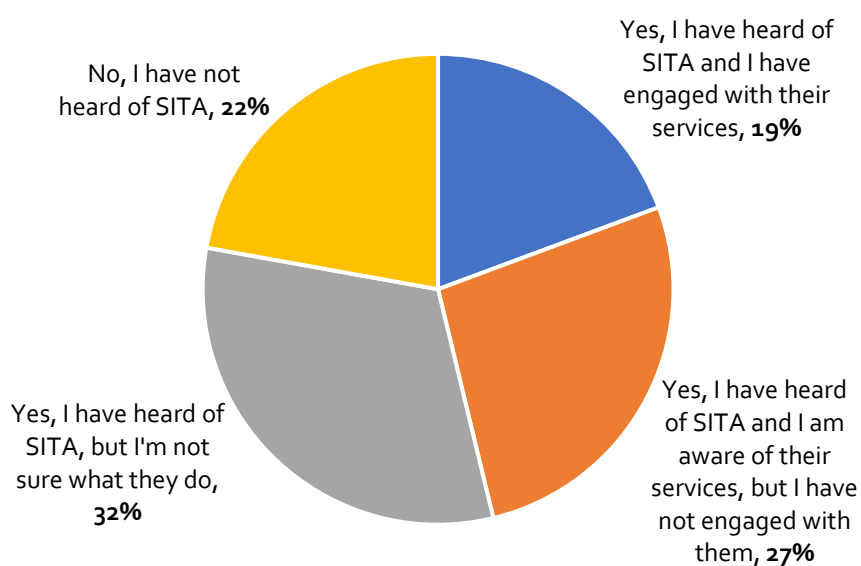


**Figure 1.** *Number of exporters and foreign investors that participated in this survey (the combined total exceeds 212 companies, because some companies are in both categories)*

Companies were asked if they are aware of the existence of the Suriname Investment and Trade Agency (SITA) and the services they provide, and if they have ever engaged with them. 78% of participating companies have heard of SITA. The figure below shows what percentage of companies know what SITA does or whether they have engaged with their services.

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mean that the company is located in that country, but it does give an indication that the survey reached companies (foreign investors) beyond Suriname.



**Figure 2.** Levels of awareness and engagement with SITA among surveyed companies

It's worth mentioning that exporters are more familiar with SITA than foreign investors. For instance, 51% of all exporters in the survey know what SITA does (regardless of whether they have engaged with their services or not). In comparison, just 29% of foreign investors in the survey know what SITA does.

When grouping companies by sector (goods or services), the difference is a bit smaller. Out of all companies producing goods, 48% know what SITA does. For service providers, this number is 42%. When further analyzing the familiarity of SITA by type of goods or services, the results are varied, ranging from 35% to 80% across the different categories of goods, and 35% to 67% across the service categories. In the two tables below, the familiarity of companies with SITA is displayed.

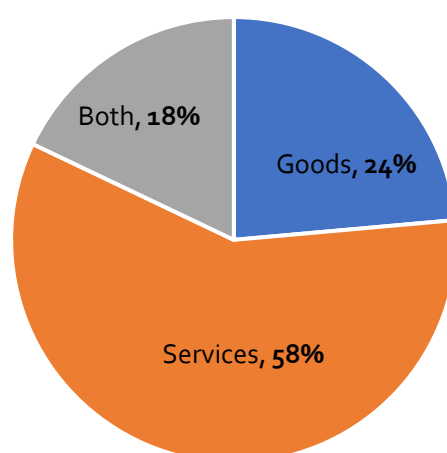
**Table 2.** SITA Familiarity by Goods Sector

Sector (goods)	Familiar with SITA	Not familiar with SITA
Base metals (e.g. iron, aluminium)	80%	20%
Vegetable and fruit products	77%	23%
Foodstuffs, beverages, spirits, tobacco and tobacco substitutes	62%	38%
Products of chemical or allied industries	53%	47%
Wood & wood products (excluding furniture)	50%	50%
Miscellaneous manufactured articles (including furniture and prefab housing)	47%	53%
Other (goods)	39%	61%
Live animals and animal products	36%	64%
Machinery and appliances, electrical equipment, sound and video equipment, parts thereof	35%	65%

**Table 3. SITA Familiarity by Services Sector**

Sector (services)	Familiar with SITA	Not familiar with SITA
Other professional services (e.g. real estate, rental, leasing)	67%	33%
Environmental services (e.g. sewage, waste, sanitation)	67%	33%
Business process outsourcing (e.g. contact centers, overseas support services)	60%	40%
Transport services (e.g. maritime, air, road)	56%	44%
Construction and related engineering services (e.g. building, civil engineering)	52%	48%
Computer and related services (e.g. installation, software, data processing)	50%	50%
Distribution services (e.g. wholesale, retail, franchising)	50%	50%
Tourism and travel related services (e.g. hotels, restaurants, travel agencies)	43%	57%
Other business services (e.g. consultancy, support services, advertisement, research)	42%	58%
Communication services (e.g. courier, telecom, audiovisual)	40%	60%
Professional services (e.g. legal, accounting, taxation, engineering, medical)	38%	62%
Educational services	35%	65%

Figure 3 shows that 58% of participating companies are solely service providers, 24% produce goods, and 18% are in both categories. In general, more than 80% of companies in Suriname are service providers<sup>7</sup>.

**Figure 3. Company produces/sells goods or provides services (or both)**

When looking at the sectors for goods and services it appears that almost all categories (except *textile articles*, which was just 2% in the first and second survey) are represented. Additionally, the distribution among sectors closely resembles the directory, which indicates that no systematic

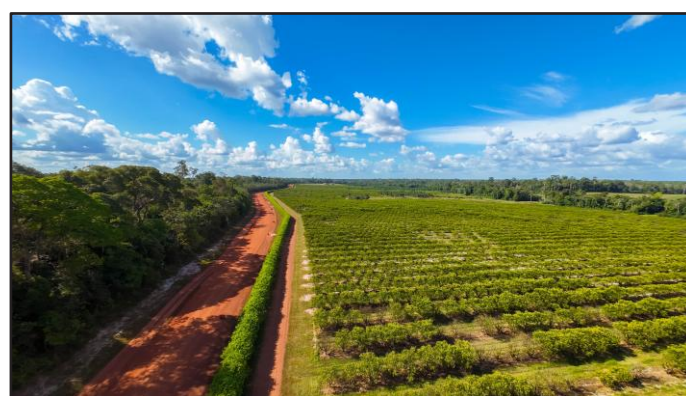
<sup>7</sup> <https://statistics-suriname.org/bedrijventelling-2016/>

bias is present in the survey (only three sectors are slightly underrepresented or overrepresented<sup>8</sup>).

The most common product categories among the companies in this survey are *Foodstuffs, beverages, spirits, tobacco and tobacco substitutes* (16%), *Vegetable and fruit products* (13%) and *Machinery and appliances, electrical equipment, sound and video equipment, parts thereof* (13%). The most common service categories are *Tourism and travel related services (e.g. hotels, restaurants, travel agencies)* (26%), *Professional services (e.g. legal, accounting, taxation, engineering, medical)* (14%) and *Other business services (e.g. consultancy, support services, advertisement, research)* (13%).

**Table 4.** *The primary product that the company produces/sells*

Sector (Goods)	Percentage
Live animals and animal products	11%
Vegetable and fruit products	13%
Animal or vegetable fats and oils	1%
Foodstuffs, beverages, spirits, tobacco and tobacco substitutes	16%
Mineral products (e.g. crude oil and fuel)	1%
Products of chemical or allied industries	12%
Plastics, rubber and articles thereof	3%
Textiles and textile articles	0%
Wood & wood products (excluding furniture)	6%
Footwear, headgear	2%
Stone, glass	1%
Pearls, precious & semi-precious stones, precious metals, etc.	2%
Base metals (e.g. iron, aluminum)	4%
Machinery and appliances, electrical equipment, sound and video equipment, parts thereof	13%
Miscellaneous manufactured articles (including furniture and prefab housing)	12%
Other	5%



**Pictures 1-2.** *Citrus production (Sipaliwini) in Suriname (vegetable and fruit sector)*

<sup>8</sup> The incidence of almost all sectors in the survey is within a 5% range from the sectors (products & services categories) in the directory. This shows that the survey findings closely resemble the directory and that all sectors are represented in the survey.

For the products sector, only the category '*Miscellaneous manufactured articles (including furniture and prefab housing)*' is slightly overrepresented in the survey: 5% in the directory compared to 12% in the survey.

Regarding the services sector, the category '*Educational services*' is slightly overrepresented in the survey: 2% in the directory compared to 8% in the survey. The category '*Tourism and travel related services (e.g. hotels, restaurants, travel agencies)*' is slightly underrepresented in the survey: 34% in the directory compared to 26% in the survey.

It's worth mentioning that the number of over- or underrepresented categories is lower than in the previous survey.

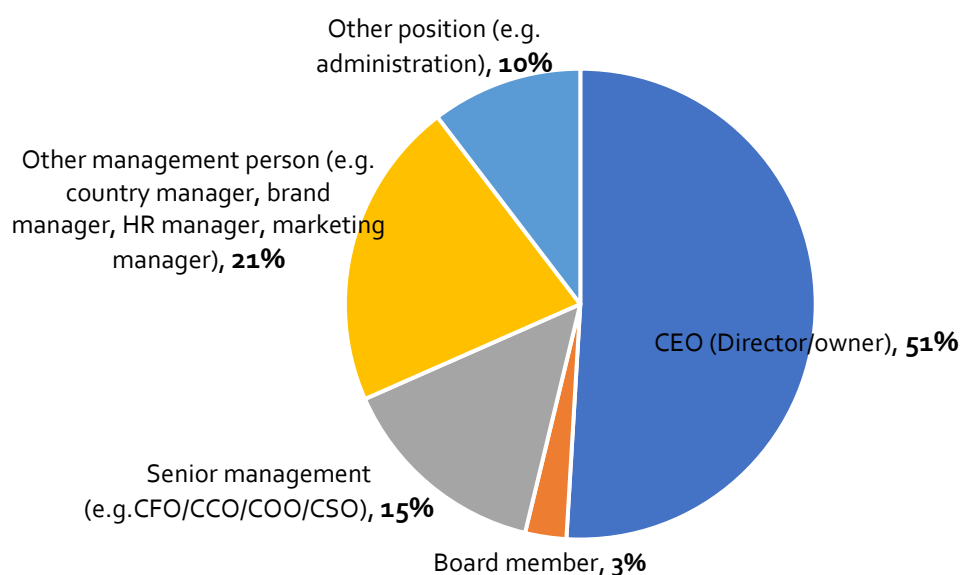


**Pictures 3-4.** *Danpaati River Lodge and Kumalu Dream Island (Sipaliwini) in Suriname (tourism services sector)*

**Table 5.** *The primary service that the company provides*

<b>Sector (Services)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Professional services (e.g. legal, accounting, taxation, engineering, medical)	14%
Computer and related services (e.g. installation, software, data processing)	5%
Business process outsourcing (e.g. contact centers, overseas support services)	2%
Other business services (e.g. consultancy, support services, advertisement, research)	13%
Other professional services (e.g. real estate, rental, leasing)	4%
Communication services (e.g. courier, telecom, audiovisual)	2%
Construction and related engineering services (e.g. building, civil engineering)	9%
Distribution services (e.g. wholesale, retail, franchising)	3%
Educational services	8%
Environmental services (e.g. sewage, waste, sanitation)	3%
Financial services (e.g. insurance, banking)	1%
Tourism and travel related services (e.g. hotels, restaurants, travel agencies)	26%
Transport services (e.g. maritime, air, road)	11%

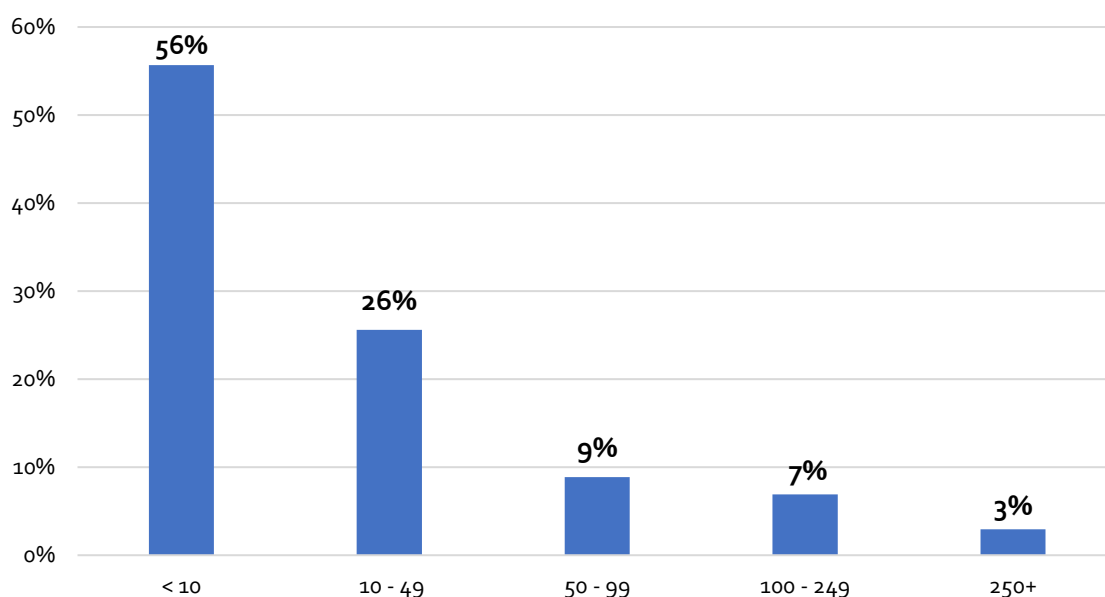
We asked all companies if a senior management representative could fill in the questionnaire and this succeeded in many cases, as can be seen from figure 4. In fact, in 51% of cases the CEO/Director filled in the questionnaire, which is slightly higher than in the previous survey (44%) and in other cases it was mostly a high-level senior executive or someone else in a management position. In addition, we were interested in knowing which companies consider themselves female-owned and/or female-led, in order to gain insight into the representation of females in the Surinamese business sector. More than half (53%) of companies have stated that their company is female-owned or female-led. This is higher than in the previous round. However, the question on whether a company is female-owned and/or female-led is based on self-identification and may be subject to interpretation, as no strict definitions were provided. This should be taken into account when comparing results across survey rounds. In future surveys, it would be advisable to more explicitly state a definition of ‘female-owned or female-led’ companies or to provide a few examples.



**Figure 4.** *Position of the person responding on behalf of the company*

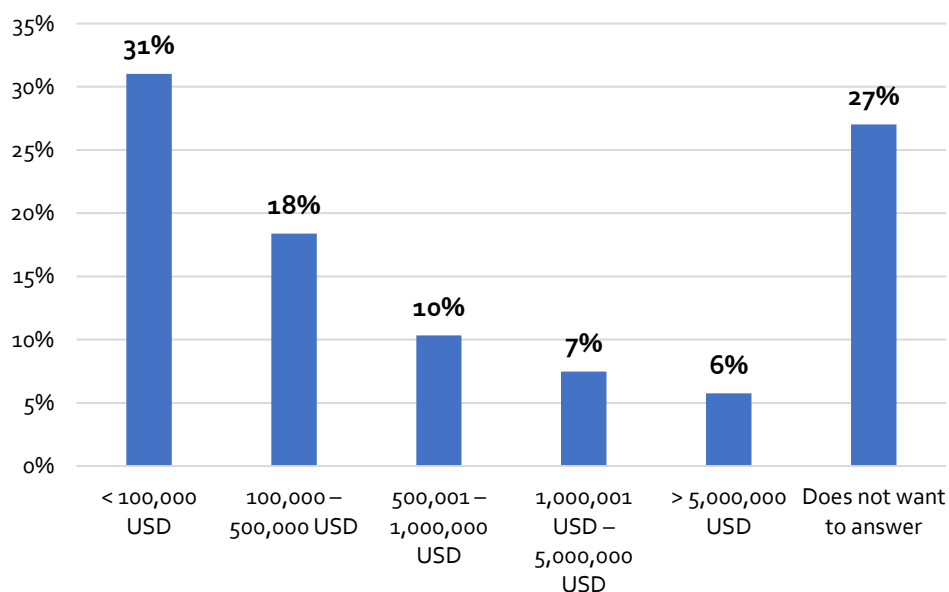
Most of the companies that responded can be classified as a small business (<50 employees, see figure 5). It appears that 81% fall into this category. Just 10% of companies have more than 100 employees. This indicates that the Surinamese market primarily consists of small businesses (which was also a conclusion of the business census<sup>9</sup>).

<sup>9</sup> According to the 2016 Business Census by the General Bureau of Statistics, 89.8% of all companies in Suriname employ less than 10 people. The same census found that only 81 companies in Suriname, which is 0.6% of all companies in the country, employ more than 100 people.



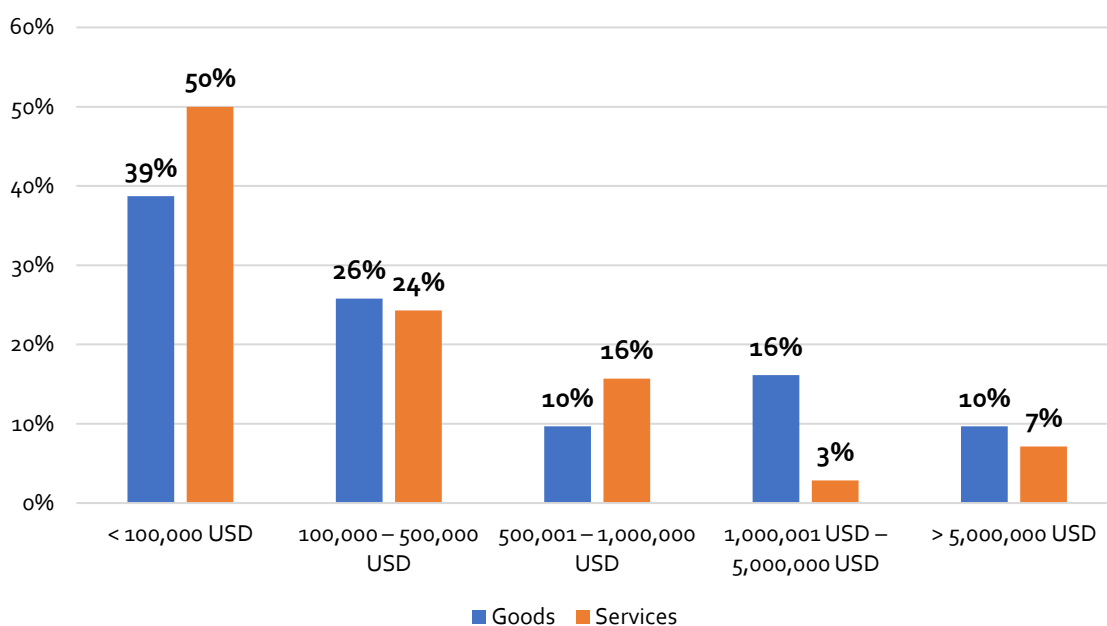
**Figure 5.** *Distribution of companies by number of employees*

Regarding the turnover in Suriname of companies that participated in the survey, 60% have reported a turnover below 1 million USD. Just 6% of companies generate more than 5 million USD a year in revenue. This reinforces the previous finding that the Surinamese market mostly consists of small and medium-sized companies. Compared to previous surveys, fewer large companies participated in this round, a trend that started to emerge in the second survey round. However, despite the relatively limited number of large companies in the survey in terms of turnover, it is still possible to make meaningful comparative analyses across company categories due to the size of the dataset (212 companies). However, future survey rounds would benefit from targeted efforts to increase the participation of larger companies, which will be a challenge due to the small number of large companies operating in Suriname.

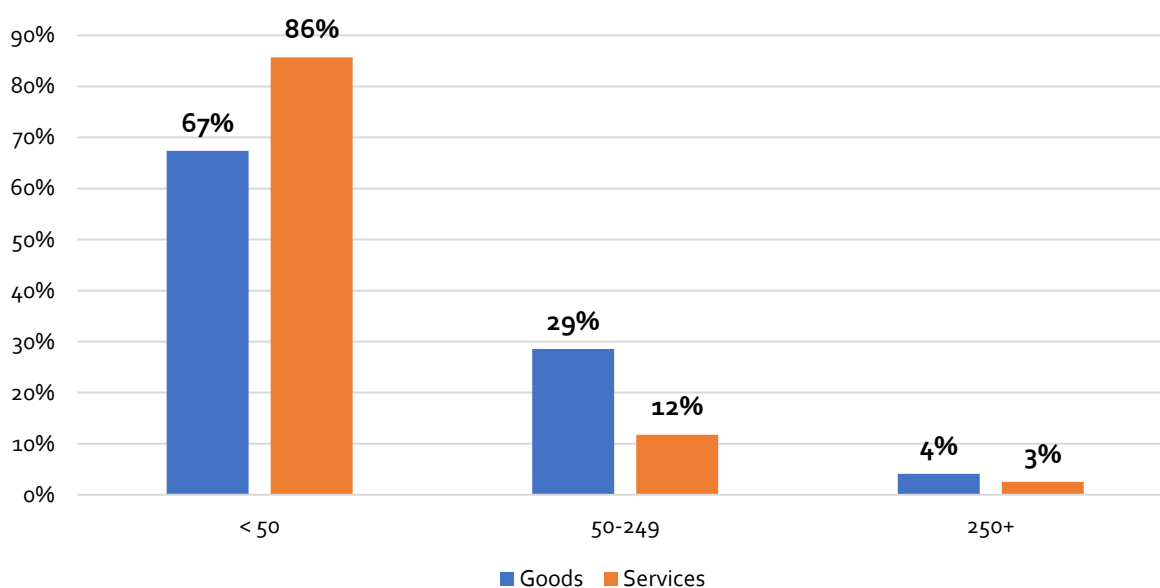


**Figure 6.** *Annual turnover of companies in Suriname (in USD)*

When comparing companies by type of product (goods or services), it appears that companies producing goods generally have a higher turnover than companies providing services. In the goods category, 26% of companies generate more than 1 million USD in turnover and 39% generate less than 100,000 USD. In contrast, in the service category just 10% of companies generate more than 1 million USD, while 50% generate less than 100,000 USD (see figure 7). If we look at company size (by number of employees), larger companies (50+ employees) are more common in the goods category. 33% of companies producing goods have 50 or more employees, while only 15% of companies providing services have this number of employees (see figure 8).

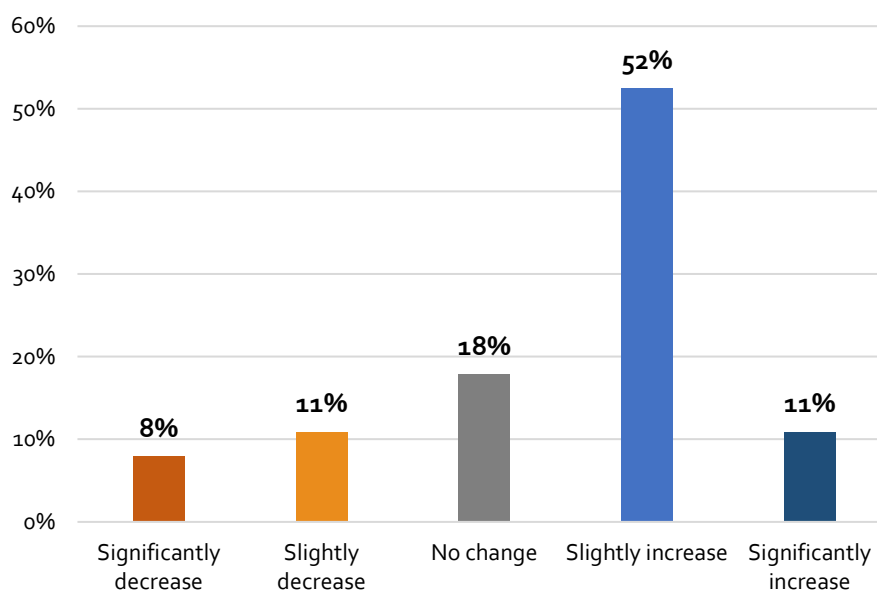


**Figure 7.** Annual turnover of companies (in USD) by type of product



**Figure 8.** Company size (by number of employees) by type of product

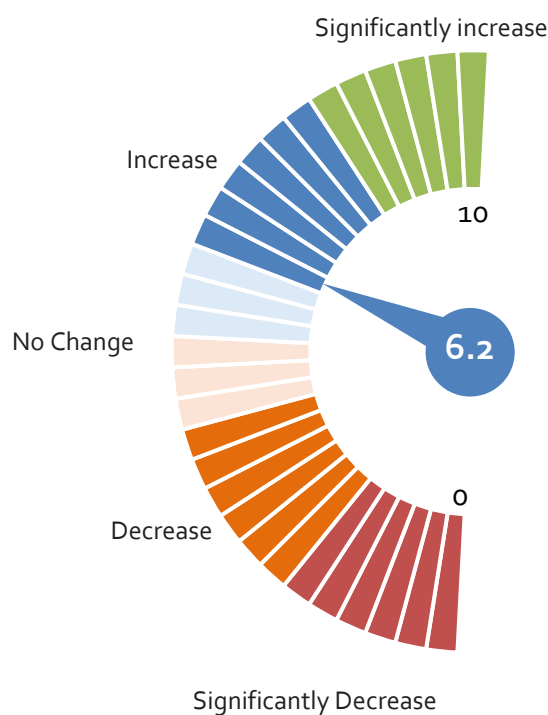
The majority of exporting companies have positive expectations for the future: 63% of companies expect an increase in their exports/overseas revenue during the following 12 months. Only 19% of companies expect a decrease.



**Figure 9.** *Expectations for exports or overseas revenue during the following 12 months*

If we attempt to visualize their expectations in a barometer (see figure 10), exporting companies gave an average score of 6.2 (on a scale of 0 to 10) when asked if they expect their exports to increase or decrease in the following 12 months, which is slightly lower than the scores in the first

(6.5 in September 2024) and second (6.8 in April 2025) surveys. If we exclude extractive sectors<sup>10</sup>, the score is still 6.2.



**Figure 10.** *Expected developments for exports or overseas revenue during the following 12 months*

In table 6, companies are grouped in different categories: by type of product, turnover and company size (by number of employees). For each of these categories, the export expectation score has been calculated. It appears that exporters of services have slightly higher expectations than exporters of goods. If we look at turnover, it appears that companies with a low (<100.000 USD) and high (> 1,000,000 USD) turnover gave a slightly higher score than companies in the middle. When looking at company size (by number of employees), larger companies (with 100+ employees) have lower expectations than small and medium-sized companies.

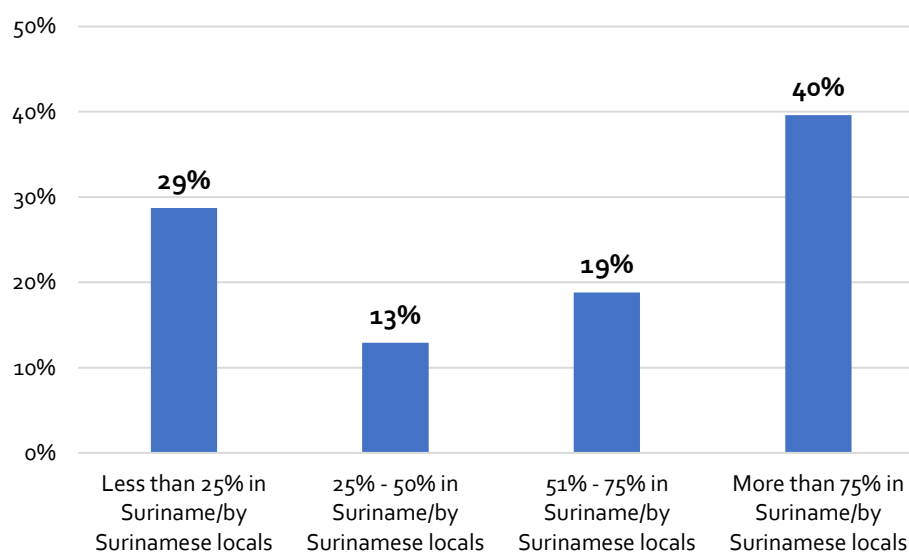
<sup>10</sup> Extractive sectors include: 1. Mineral products (e.g. crude oil and fuel), 2. Stone, glass, 3. Base metals (e.g. iron, aluminium), 4. Pearls, precious & semi-precious stones, precious metals, etc.

**Table 6.** Expectations for export growth in the following 12 months (0= significantly decrease, 10= significantly increase) by type of product, turnover and company size.

	Export expectation score September 2024	Export expectation score April 2025	Export expectation score March 2026
<b>Type of product</b>			
Goods	6.2	6.5	5.8
Services	6.7	6.8	6.2
<b>Turnover of company</b>			
< 100,000 USD	8.1	6.9	6.6
100,000 – 1,000,000 USD	5.8	7.4	5.3
> 1,000,000 USD	6.6	6.3	6.6
<b>Company size by number of employees</b>			
Small companies (<10 employees)	6.3	6.9	6.3
Medium-sized companies (10-99)	6.2	6.5	6.1
Large companies (100+)	7.8	7.2	5.9

When comparing the export expectation score by type of company from all three barometer surveys, a general downward trend in export expectations is visible between the surveys. This decline is most pronounced among large companies (by employee size) and goods-producing firms, suggesting increased sensitivity to changing market conditions. In contrast, service-based companies and firms with higher turnover levels show relatively more stable expectations over time.

Regarding the income of exporting companies in Suriname, even though a number of companies in Suriname are actively exporting, providing services abroad or catering to tourists, it does not always mean that the majority of their revenue is of foreign origin. Out of all exporting companies, 40% generate more than 75% of their revenue on the local market. For this subgroup of companies, it appears that most of their revenue is generated in Suriname/by Surinamese locals, despite their status as an exporter, as can be seen from figure 11.



**Figure 11.** Percentage of company's revenue generated in Suriname and generated overseas

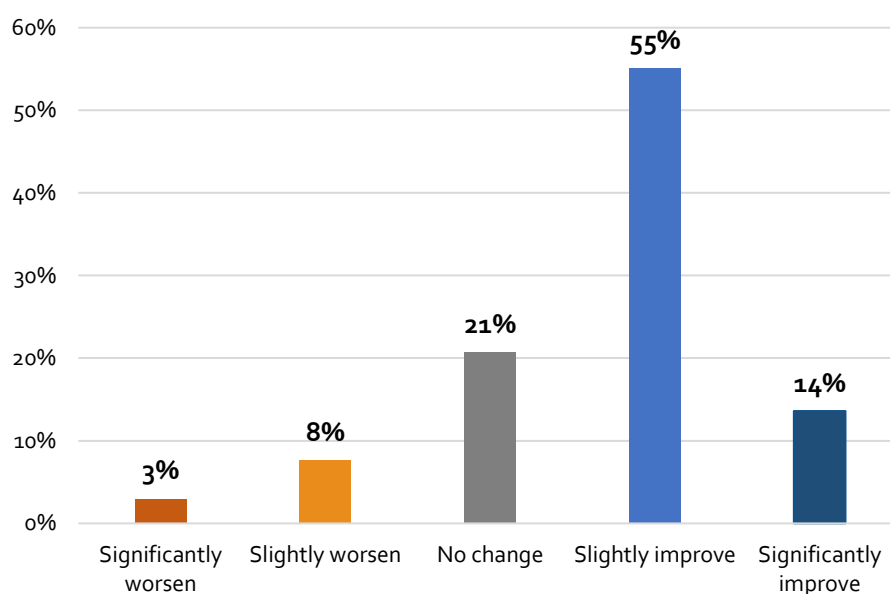
Depending on the answer provided to the question what part of their revenue is generated overseas or in Suriname, companies were asked what factors have contributed to their export activities or what factors have limited (the expansion of) their export activities.

Companies that generate significant revenue from foreign markets have listed *'International business networks and relationships with foreign clients'* as the primary reason for their success. *'Quality, reliability, and distinctiveness of our products or services'*, *'Our company's organizational strength and capacity'*, *'Effective marketing, branding, and/or online presence targeting foreign markets'* and *'International certifications, standards, or compliance with foreign market requirements'* were the second, third, fourth and fifth most important reasons.

Exporting companies that generate most of their revenue on the local market (which means that they are still struggling with expanding their exports) have listed *'Limited access to finance or investment capital'* as the primary obstacle preventing the expansion of their export activities. *'Logistical challenges, transport constraints, or inadequate infrastructure'*, *'Limited international business networks or lack of relationships with foreign clients'*, *'Limited support from government agencies or trade promotion programs'* and *'Lack of international certifications, standards, or difficulty meeting foreign market requirements'* were the second, third, fourth and fifth most significant obstacles.

## 2.2 Business climate

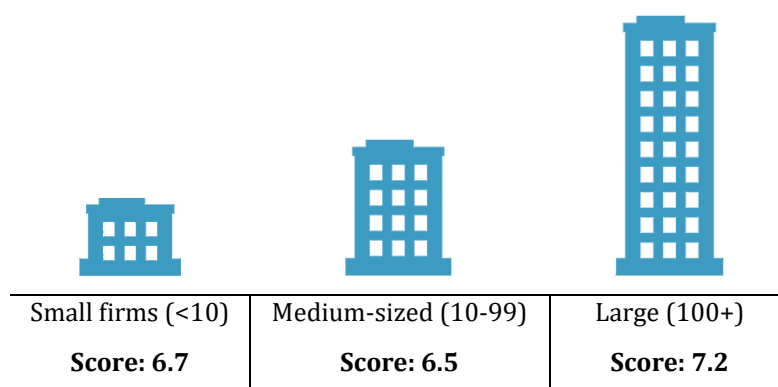
More than half of all companies (69%) expect the business climate to improve in the following 12 months. 11% expect the business climate to worsen and 21% expect no change.



**Figure 12.** *Expectations regarding the business climate in Suriname over the next 12 months*

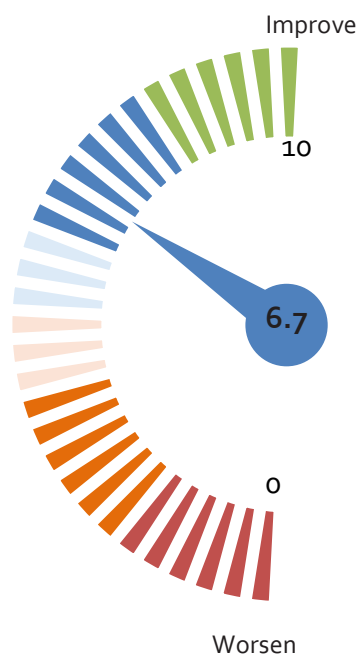
We found that large firms (by number of employees) have slightly better expectations for the business climate in the following 12 months than small firms. Large companies gave an average

score of 7.2 when asked if the business climate in Suriname is likely to worsen or improve (on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 = worsen and 10 = improve, *see figure 13*).

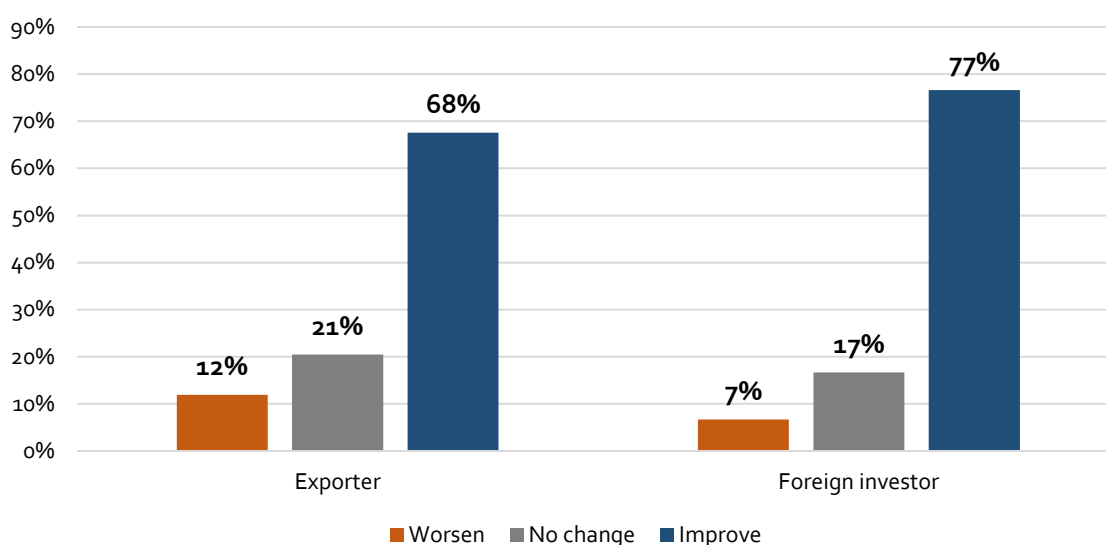


**Figure 13.** *Expectations for the business climate in Suriname over the following 12 months (0= worsen, 10 = improve) and company size*

If we look at the average confidence score that companies gave regarding the business climate in Suriname for the following 12 months it was **6.7** (on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 = worsen and 10 = improve, *see figure 14*). Foreign investors in Suriname have more confidence in the business climate (7.3) than exporters from Suriname (6.6), a pattern that is also evident in figure 15, which shows a stronger expectation of improvement among foreign investors.

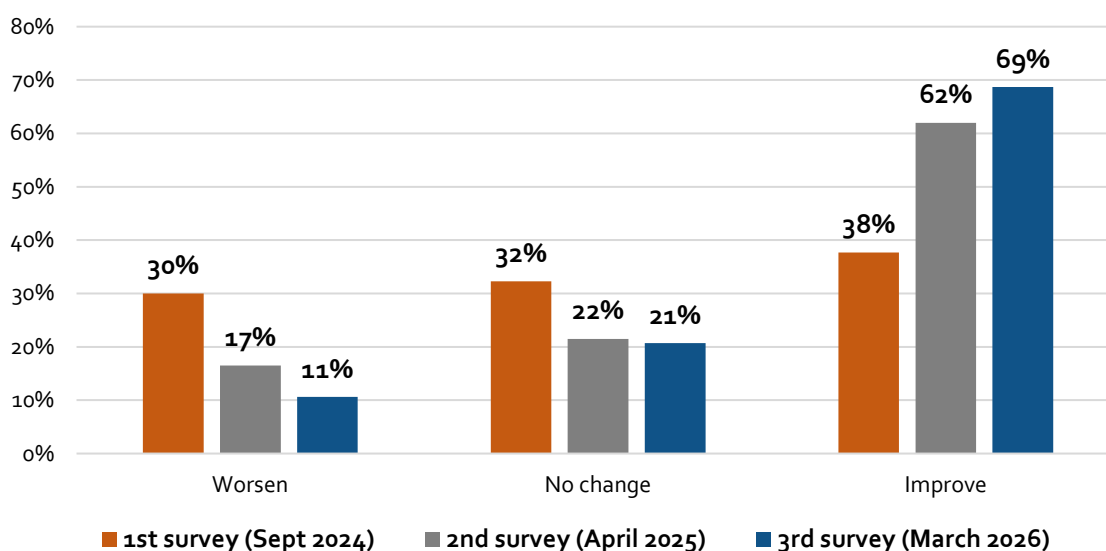


**Figure 14.** *Company expectations regarding the business climate during the following 12 months*



**Figure 15.** *Expectations regarding the business climate over the next 12 months for exporters or foreign investors*

Figure 16 shows a clear positive shift in business sentiment over time. The share of companies expecting an improvement in the business climate increased substantially from 38% in the first survey to 69% in the third survey, while expectations of worsening conditions declined sharply from 30% to 11%. Overall, this indicates a strengthening level of confidence among businesses in Suriname across the three survey rounds.



**Figure 16.** *Expectations regarding the business climate in Suriname over the next 12 months, across three Barometer Survey rounds*

Table 7 and 8 show the average confidence score of companies in each category of products and services, sorted from low to high. It also shows the biggest obstacle for that category of products and services. Additionally, the export expectation score per category of goods and services has

been calculated. Do keep in mind that some categories had very few respondents, making the score less accurate and representative. Categories with less than 5 respondents are in *italics*.

**Table 7.** *The primary product that companies produce/sell, their average expectations regarding the business climate in Suriname during the following 12 months (0 = worsen, 10 = improve), their expectations for export growth in the following 12 months (0 = significantly decrease, 10 = significantly increase) and their biggest obstacle<sup>11</sup>.*

<b>Sector (Goods)</b>	<b>Business climate score</b>	<b>Export expectation score</b>	<b>Biggest obstacle</b>
Stone, glass	2.5	0.0	-
Wood & wood products (excluding furniture)	4.6	4.0	Bureaucratic hurdles
Live animals and animal products	5.4	5.2	General inflation rate
Base metals (e.g. iron, aluminium)	6.5	1.3	Bureaucratic hurdles
Foodstuffs, beverages, spirits, tobacco and tobacco substitutes	6.9	7.3	Bureaucratic hurdles
Vegetable and fruit products	7.0	5.8	Unpredictability in policymaking
Mineral products (e.g. crude oil and fuel)	7.5	-	<i>Multiple</i>
Machinery and appliances, electrical equipment, sound and video equipment, parts thereof	7.5	6.0	Bureaucratic hurdles
Products of chemical or allied industries	7.5	6.8	Bureaucratic hurdles
Miscellaneous manufactured articles (including furniture and prefab housing)	7.5	7.5	Bureaucratic hurdles
Plastics, rubber and articles thereof	8.1	8.3	<i>Transportation &amp; logistics + bureaucratic hurdles</i>
Footwear, headgear	8.3	7.5	<i>Multiple</i>
Pearls, precious & semi-precious stones, precious metals, etc.	8.8	7.5	<i>Multiple</i>
Animal or vegetable fats and oils	10	10	<i>Multiple</i>

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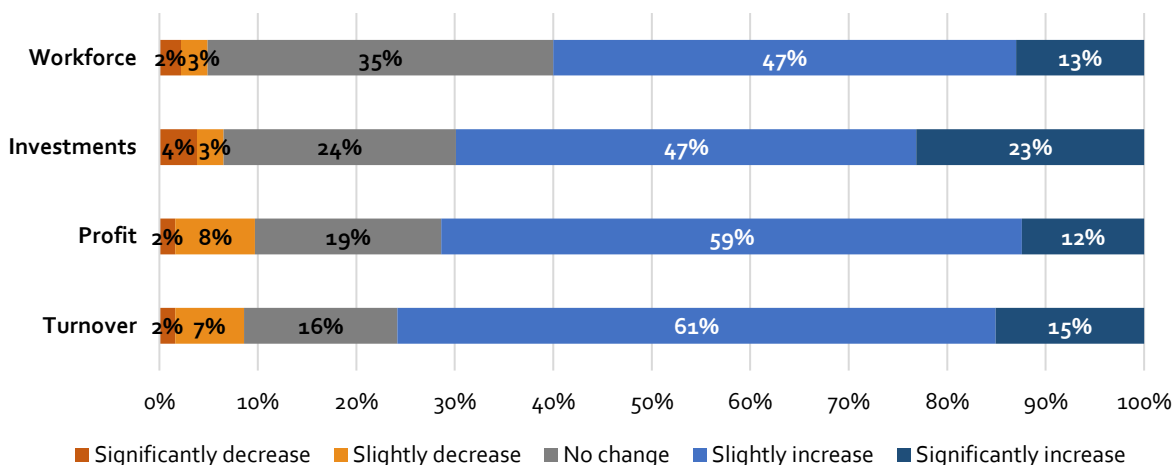
<sup>11</sup> If less than 5 companies provided a score it is in italics and should therefore be interpreted with caution.

**Table 8.** *The primary service that companies provide and their average expectations regarding the business climate in Suriname during the following 12 months (0 = worsen, 10 = improve), their expectations for export growth in the following 12 months (0 = significantly decrease, 10 = significantly increase) and their biggest obstacle<sup>12</sup>.*

<b>Sector (Services)</b>	<b>Business climate score</b>	<b>Export expectation score</b>	<b>Biggest obstacle</b>
Communication services (e.g. courier, telecom, audiovisual)	5.5	6.3	Bureaucratic hurdles
Environmental services (e.g. sewage, waste, sanitation)	5.8	5.6	Multiple
Financial services (e.g. insurance, banking)	<i>5.8</i>	6.3	<i>Currency fluctuations</i>
Other professional services (e.g. real estate, rental, leasing)	6.1	5.5	Bureaucratic hurdles
Other business services (e.g. consultancy, support services, advertisement, research)	6.6	5.8	Unpredictability in policymaking
Computer and related services (e.g. installation, software, data processing)	6.7	7.5	Bureaucratic hurdles
Construction and related engineering services (e.g. building, civil engineering)	6.9	5.7	Bureaucratic hurdles
Transport services (e.g. maritime, air, road)	7.1	5.0	Bureaucratic hurdles
Distribution services (e.g. wholesale, retail, franchising)	7.1	5.6	Bureaucratic hurdles + currency fluctuation
Tourism and travel related services (e.g. hotels, restaurants, travel agencies)	7.1	6.8	Currency fluctuations
Educational services	<i>7.2</i>	<i>7.9</i>	Multiple
Business process outsourcing (e.g. contact centers, overseas support services)	7.5	7.5	<i>Multiple</i>
Professional services (e.g. legal, accounting, taxation, engineering, medical)	7.7	6.7	Bureaucratic hurdles

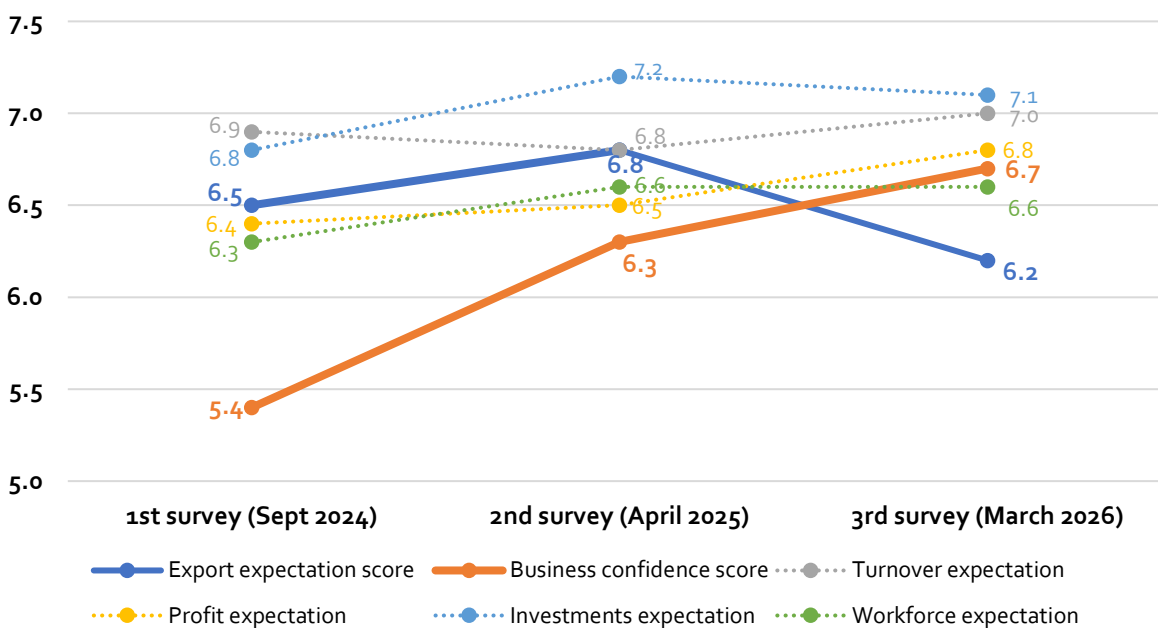
The majority of companies expect an increase in the four areas (workforce, investments, profit and turnover) during the following 12 months (*see figure 17*). In this time period, 76% of companies expect an increase in their turnover, 71% expect an increase in profit, 70% expect an increase in investments and 60% expect an increase in their workforce.

<sup>12</sup> If less than 5 companies provided a score it is in italics and should therefore be interpreted with caution.



**Figure 17.** Expectations for own company in the following areas during the next 12 months

Figure 18 below shows the trendlines of how several different indicators have evolved throughout the three barometer surveys taken so far. The business confidence score stands out, showing continuous increases. This means that companies, on average, have increasingly positive expectations for the (near) future regarding the evolution of the business climate in Suriname. The export expectation score paints a different picture. While it showed a slight increase between the first and second survey, it has now decreased to a lower score than during the first survey. It's worth mentioning, however, that the export score is also influenced by international developments, so it is not purely a reflection of local circumstances. The figure also shows the expectations that companies have for their own performance on four different metrics during the following 12 months. Compared to the business and export confidence scores, these four indicators show minor to no changes, which indicates that, on average, companies have relatively stable and consistent expectations regarding their own operational performance.

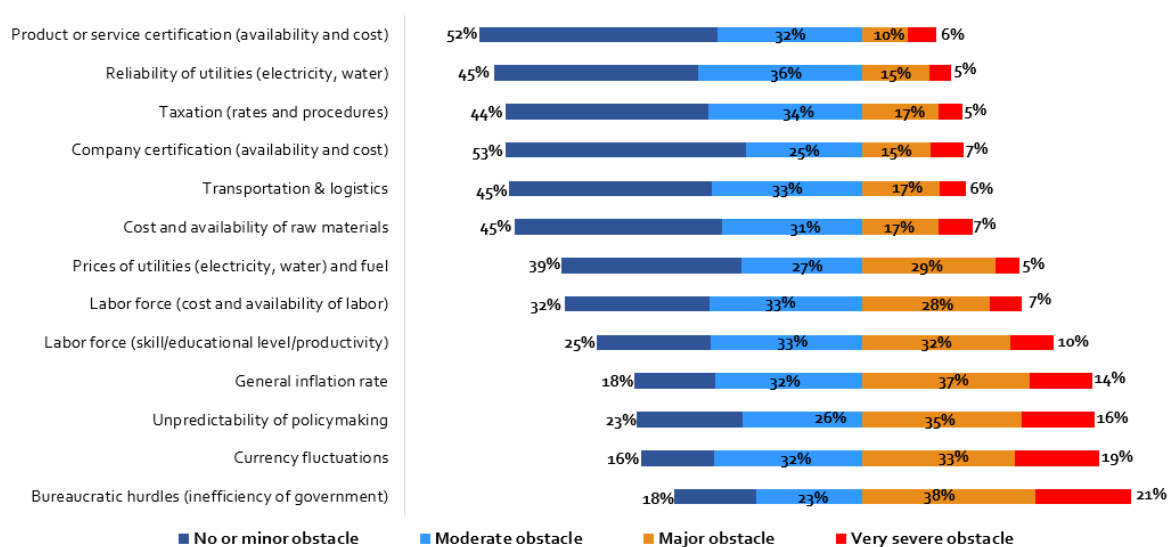


**Figure 18.** Shift in expectations across three Barometer Survey rounds (Scale 0-10)

## 2.3 Obstacles

In addition to the general sentiment about the business climate and company-specific expectations for the following 12 months, companies were asked which obstacles they face or perceive in the Surinamese business environment and how severe each of these obstacles is. The 5 issues most commonly reported by companies as a major or very severe obstacle that they face are (see figure 19):

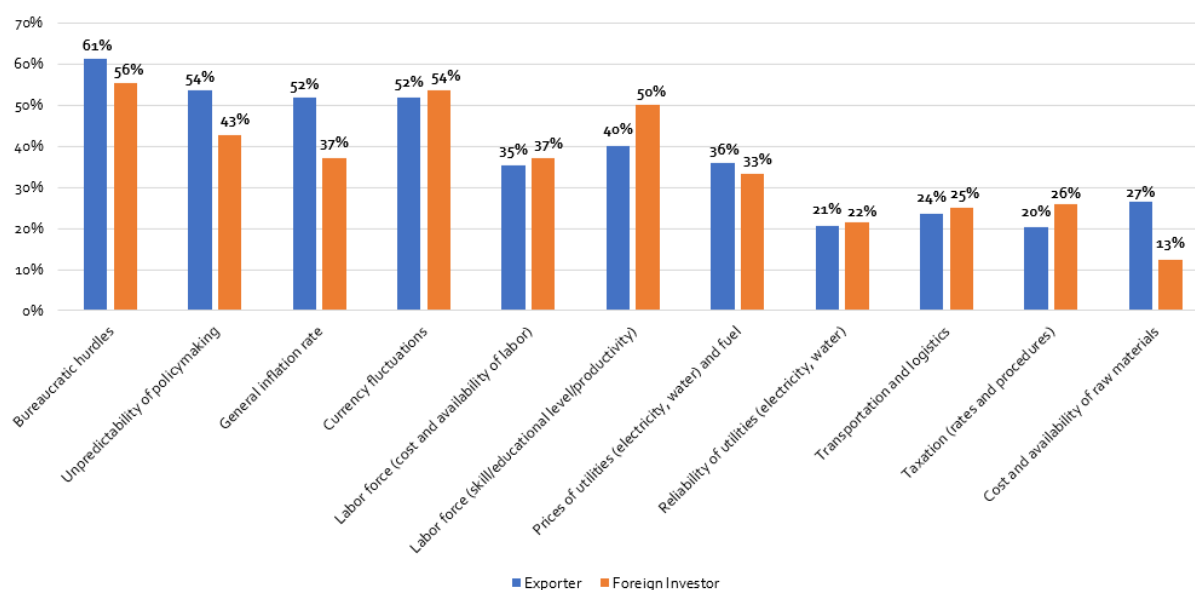
1. Bureaucratic hurdles (inefficiency of government) (59%)
2. Currency fluctuations (52%)
3. Unpredictability of policymaking (51%)
4. General inflation rate (51%)
5. Labor force (skill/educational level/productivity) (42%)



**Figure 19.** To what degree are the following issues in Suriname perceived or experienced as an obstacle for your company

Compared to the first and second survey, three issues have consistently remained in the top 5 of most prominent obstacles. These are: bureaucratic hurdles, currency fluctuations and unpredictability of policymaking. Inflation has remained in the top 5 of the last two surveys. New this round is the increasing number of companies that listed the skill/educational level/productivity of the labor force as a major or very severe obstacle. Last round, it was the cost and availability of labor that made it to the top 5. This shows that labor-related issues are increasingly starting to become a bottleneck for companies operating in Suriname.

Foreign investors have mentioned bureaucratic hurdles, currency fluctuations, the labor force (skill/educational level/productivity), unpredictability of policymaking and the labor force (cost and availability of labor) as their 5 most important issues, while exporters name bureaucratic hurdles, unpredictability of policymaking, currency fluctuations, the general inflation rate and the labor force (skill/educational level/productivity) as their top 5 (see figure 20).



**Figure 20.** To what degree are the following issues in Suriname perceived or experienced as a major or severe obstacle for your company (exporters and foreign investors)

Regarding the issues listed, a factor analysis shows that 12 of these items can be clustered into four main categories. Factor analysis is a statistical method that aims to uncover structures in large sets of items. The items in the clusters are interrelated, i.e. correlate with each other. The first cluster has more to do with the government and the influence of its (macroeconomic) policy on inflation and exchange rates. The second cluster is related to the labor market. The third cluster concerns utilities. The fourth cluster regards inputs, as well as regulatory and compliance constraints.

**Table 9.** Clusters made on basis of a factor analysis

Cluster 1 (Macro) government policy	Cluster 2 Labor market challenges	Cluster 3 Utilities	Cluster 4 Regulation & input constraints
Bureaucratic hurdles (inefficiency of government)	Labor force (skill/educational level/productivity)	Reliability of utilities (electricity, water)	Company certification (availability and cost)
Unpredictability in policymaking	Labor force (cost and availability of labor)	Prices of utilities (electricity, water) and fuel	Product or service certification (availability and cost)
General inflation rate			Taxation (rates and procedures)
Currency fluctuations			Cost and availability of raw materials

When companies reported a challenge as “major” or “very severe”, they were asked a subsequent question inquiring into the exact way in which the selected issue affects their daily operations.

### Insights on bureaucratic hurdles and unpredictability in policymaking

The qualitative responses presented here are based on 119 companies that identified *bureaucratic hurdles* and/or *policy unpredictability* as a major or very severe obstacle. Of these 119 companies, 100 filled in the extra question. As such, the findings below reflect the experiences of the 100 firms that are most affected by these issues.

- **Bureaucratic inefficiencies and administrative delays** are perceived as a major constraint on business operations. Respondents frequently refer to prolonged approval processes, particularly for permits and licenses, as illustrated by statements such as *“Waiting for permits”* and *“Long waiting time for permits in general”*. These delays are often described as systemic, with one respondent noting that *“government services are inefficient and extremely slow”*, while another characterizes the process as *“a painful ordeal”*.
- **Lack of transparency in procedures** - Companies report that requirements are often unclear or change during the process, as reflected in the statement: *“the guidelines are seldom clear from the start... and then you have to start over”*. This lack of clarity increases the administrative burden for companies.
- **Lack of a clear long-term policy** - This creates uncertainty and complicates long-term planning. Respondents highlight that *“policies and regulations can change unexpectedly”* and *“unpredictability of policy”*, noting that decisions are sometimes made without sufficient communication or transition periods. As one company explains, *“there is no clear long term development plan and road map... causing certain procedures to take much longer than they should”*. This unpredictability directly affects investment decisions, with firms stating that they *“cannot plan for future investments and know what the return of investment will be.”*
- **Institutional weaknesses** - including inconsistent application of rules and limited coordination between government entities. This is reflected in observations that *“the same law or procedure can be interpreted in different ways”* and that processes depend on informal networks, such as *“names and faces in order to do business”*. In some cases, concerns about perceived corruption are also raised, for example: *“tenders are given to company with strong bonds with politicians”*.

The impact of these challenges on business performance is significant. Bureaucratic hurdles lead to delays in project implementation, increased operational costs, and reduced efficiency. As one respondent summarizes, *“These issues can slow down project implementation, increase administrative workload, and affect overall business efficiency”*.

### Insights on inflation and exchange rate volatility

Although no extra questions on inflation and exchange rate dynamics were included in the survey, these topics have emerged in answers to other open-ended questions. In their answers, respondents frequently refer to rising costs, price instability, and challenges related to foreign currency access. For example, companies note that *“prices are constantly increasing”* and that *“unpredictability of the price increases affect everything”*. In addition, several respondents highlight exchange rate-related challenges, such as difficulties in accessing USD (*“you have to be lucky to receive your requested USD”*) or transferring funds in and out of Suriname and the perceived absence of clear exchange rate policies, which *“makes prices fluctuate”*.

## Insights on issues related to the labor market

The qualitative responses presented here are based on 92 companies that identified *labor force (skill/educational level/productivity)* and/or *labor force (cost and availability of labor)* as a major or very severe obstacle. Of these 92 companies, 77 filled in the extra question. As such, the findings below reflect the experiences of the firms that are most affected by issues related to the labor market.

- **Shortage of skilled and qualified labor** - The most prominent challenge identified by respondents is the limited availability of skilled and adequately trained workers. Companies frequently report difficulties in finding employees with the required technical skills and educational background, as illustrated by statements such as *“we don't have enough skilled or educated people”* and *“skilled laborers are very rare to find”*. This issue is even more prominent in tech-heavy sectors such as IT and engineering. In many cases, firms indicate that the existing workforce does not meet the required standards, with one respondent noting that *“the education level is too low... employees often need to be fully retrained”*. This shortage leads to longer recruitment processes, increased training costs, and delays in operations.
- **Mismatch between education and labor market needs** - Several respondents point to a structural disconnect between the education system and the needs of the private sector. This is reflected in observations such as *“a mismatch between education and practice”* and *“curriculum levels have declined, affecting overall competency”*. As a result, companies are required to invest significantly in internal training and capacity building, which increases operational costs and reduces efficiency.
- **Work ethic, productivity, and reliability issues** - In addition to skill shortages, many companies highlight challenges related to employee attitude and productivity. Respondents refer to issues such as low motivation, absenteeism, and lack of responsibility, for example *“unhealthy mentality of a lot of employees”* and *“lack of responsibility and low work enthusiasm”*. These challenges require increased supervision and management effort, and negatively affect overall productivity and service quality.
- **Mismatch between wage expectations and productivity** - Several respondents indicate that labor is not only scarce but also relatively costly compared to productivity levels. Companies report that workers are *“hard to find and overpriced”* and that there are *“high expectations regarding starting salaries”*. In some cases, firms note that employees expect wages that are not aligned with their skills or performance, which complicates hiring decisions and increases labor costs.
- **Limited labor supply, high turnover and outward migration** - Structural factors such as the small size of the labor market, high turnover and outward migration further constrain the availability of talent. Respondents note that the employee retention level is low, *“many skilled workers leave to the Netherlands”*, and that workers *“use the company to gain experience and then leave for better opportunities”*, which reduces the pool of skilled labor. This creates additional pressure on companies to compete for a limited number of qualified employees, as well as continuous recruitment and training cycles, increasing costs and reducing operational stability.

The impact of the labor market on business performance is significant. Labor market constraints are said to lead to delays in project implementation, increased training and recruitment costs,

reduced productivity, and limitations in scaling business activities. As two respondents have stated, *“We don't have enough skilled or schooled/educated people. Cannot take on more work.”* And *“Our company faces challenges in finding skilled and experienced workers in Suriname, especially for technical and machine-related positions. This can slow down projects and increase training costs.”*

### **Insights on issues related to utilities**

The qualitative responses presented here are based on 73 companies that identified *prices of utilities (electricity, water) and fuel* and/or *reliability of utilities (electricity, water)* as a major or very severe obstacle. Of these 73 companies, 54 filled in the extra question. As such, the findings below reflect the experiences of the firms that are most affected by issues related to utilities.

- **High and rising utility costs** - The most frequently mentioned issue relates to the high and increasing costs of electricity and fuel. Respondents note that *“the prices of utilities are too high”* and that *“fuel prices keep rising”*, directly affecting operational expenses and competitiveness. Several companies indicate that rising costs *“have a negative effect on cashflow”* and reduce profit margins.
- **Unreliable supply and outages** - In addition to cost, reliability is a key concern. Companies frequently report power outages and unpredictable interruptions, with some noting that *“power outages can interrupt daily operations and delay work activities”*. In more severe cases, outages *“cause production to come to a halt”*.
- **Internet is also an issue** - Although “internet/telecom” was not explicitly mentioned in our question, several companies have stated that connectivity and the reliability of telecom services is an issue. As one respondent states it, *“Our biggest utility reliability are the telecom providers. Most of our work revolves around internet, and if internet is slow or not working we have an issue.”*
- **Lack of transparency and unpredictability** - Respondents also point to unclear billing practices and unpredictable price changes. For example, utility invoices are described as *“not always transparent”*, while others mention that *“prices are unpredictable”*.

As a result of both high costs and unreliability, companies are forced to invest in backup systems such as generators and water storage. This leads to additional costs and inefficiencies, with firms indicating that these challenges increase overhead and affect productivity and project timelines. One respondent summarizes both the problem and its impact, *“Our company faces challenges related to the reliability and cost of utilities in Suriname, particularly electricity and fuel. Power outages and fluctuations can interrupt daily operations, affect productivity, increase costs, and sometimes delay project completion.”*

### **Insights on issues related to transportation & logistics**

The qualitative responses presented here are based on 43 companies that identified *Transportation & logistics* as a major or very severe obstacle. Of these 43 companies, 35 filled in the extra question. As such, the findings below reflect the experiences of the firms that are most affected by issues related to transportation & logistics.

Respondents frequently point to limited connectivity, high transport costs, and inadequate infrastructure as key constraints. Companies refer to *“poor infrastructure”* and *“bad roads”*, as well as delays caused by traffic congestion and limited access to certain areas (this is especially the case for tourism companies, because of the location of many touristic attractions). In addition,

several respondents highlight high and volatile transportation costs, noting that *“fuel prices keep rising”* and that increases in fuel prices directly affect transport costs. International connectivity is also seen as a constraint, with firms indicating that there are *“too few air cargo options”* and that the country is *“relatively isolated”*. These challenges are compounded by logistical inefficiencies, including port delays and limited shipping options, which make exporting *“complex and expensive”*.

### **Insights on issues related to taxation**

The qualitative responses presented here are based on 41 companies that identified *Taxation (rates and procedures)* as a major or very severe obstacle. Of these 41 companies, 29 filled in the extra question. As such, the findings below reflect the experiences of the firms that are most affected by issues related to taxation.

Respondents frequently point to high tax rates, complex regulations, and administrative burdens as key constraints. Companies indicate that *“the Tax Code is too complex and there are too many types of taxes. Also the corporate tax rate of 36% is way too high”* and that *“corporate tax rates make investing very difficult”* and *“discourage foreign investors”*. Companies also state that a lack of tax incentives for starting businesses provides insufficient incentive to companies willing to take risks in Suriname. Due to the complexity of the Surinamese tax system, companies must invest significant time and resources to ensure compliance. In addition, several respondents highlight inconsistencies, unequal treatment and lack of transparency in the system, referring to *“frequent policy changes”* and processes that are *“not transparent”*. Import duties were identified as a major concern due to high rates, and VAT due to delays in refunds, which can *“affect cash flow”* and increase the cost of doing business.

At the end of the survey, all companies were asked an open-ended question. This question provided them with the opportunity to share any additional information that was not covered in the survey or list additional issues that were not included in the earlier questions.

Respondents frequently point to a lack of a level playing field and perceived unfair competition, for example noting that *“some companies in the same industry do not pay taxes”* and that this creates unequal conditions for compliant businesses. In addition, concerns about corruption and governance are explicitly raised, with respondents stating that *“corruption is still a huge problem”* and that it disadvantages companies that operate according to formal rules.

Another recurring theme is the limited access to finance and support mechanisms, with firms indicating that it is *“difficult to obtain affordable capital”* and that support from financial institutions and government bodies is insufficient. Related to this, respondents also highlight the need for stronger investment support, local content policies, and business development frameworks to enable companies in Suriname to grow and compete.

## **2.4 Conclusions and recommendations regarding the barometer survey**

### **Conclusions**

The Barometer Survey provides a set of critical insights into Suriname’s economic environment, the challenges faced by businesses, and the outlook for the investment and export sectors.

Building on recommendations from the previous Barometer, this round includes a more in-depth analysis on selected themes, such as labor market challenges, bureaucratic hurdles, and the reasons behind the unfavorable foreign/local income ratio among exporters. Based on these recommendations, extra questions were added to this survey, some of which were dynamically displayed based on respondents' answers, i.e. companies that listed a specific issue as very severe, received subsequent open-ended questions on that specific topic, to allow room for elaboration.

Another recommendation from the previous report was to share survey findings with both participants and the wider business community. This has been done; the full report has been made available through SITA's website and the main findings have been presented to the public during an in-person session. This led to widespread appreciation by the business community and has increased the level of enthusiasm among respondents during the data collection phase of the third survey. The participation rate (now 28%, but from a larger sample – it was 34% and 26% during the first and second surveys, respectively) has remained relatively high.

Now that three surveys have been taken at different moments, trends are starting to appear. The business confidence score is gradually and consistently increasing, while the export expectation score is fluctuating. This shows increasing confidence in local developments, but concern about international factors. While the obstacles that companies face have mostly remained stable, another trend that emerged is that the severity and scope of labor market challenges is starting to increase. This increase has been constantly visible and appears to be accelerating, when comparing the first, second and third survey results. However, while the primary labor-related issue was *'cost and availability'* in previous surveys, it has been surpassed by *'skill/educational level/productivity'*.

Most of the top issues in both previous surveys (bureaucratic hurdles, unpredictability of policymaking and currency fluctuations) are still the top issues in this survey. This means that much more priority should be given to addressing these issues in an effective way. In addition to emphasizing that these issues still persist, what this report adds is more in-depth insights into the specific ways in which companies experience inconvenience from these obstacles.

This survey reinforces the finding that many exporting companies generate a significant portion of their revenue on the local market, despite their status as an exporter. Follow-up questions have provided insights into the reasons why some companies are able to successfully export more, while others remain mostly dependent on the local market. It appears that successful exporters mostly benefit from strong (international) networks, high quality standards of their products/services, and sufficient internal capacity within the company. On the other hand, companies struggling to expand exports are primarily constrained by limited access to finance, weak international connections, and logistical barriers.

## **Recommendations**

It appears that not all companies (especially foreign investors) that participated in the survey are aware of the existence of SITA or know exactly what SITA does. This gap needs to be bridged, because SITA offers services that can be quite useful for companies, such as the Cost Share Grant. This can be done through targeted marketing campaigns among the types of companies that would benefit the most from engaging with SITA. Another method to improve the visibility of SITA

is to share success stories/testimonials from companies that have engaged with SITA and have benefited from their programs and/or services.

In the next round, in addition to the core components of the barometer survey, it is recommended to select one key constraint for more in-depth analysis. Given the increasing prominence of labor market challenges, a follow-up study could focus on mapping the specific skill needs of companies. This would allow the survey to move beyond identifying constraints and actively contribute to solutions, by providing actionable insights that can help align education and training provision with labor market demand. Given the strong participation rate and large directory of companies that was created for the barometer surveys, this presents a unique opportunity to capture a broad and representative view of business needs.

A focus on labor market challenges is particularly relevant, as solutions extend beyond government policy alone. While issues such as bureaucracy and unpredictability of policymaking largely require policy reforms and government intervention, labor market challenges can be addressed more broadly through collaboration between public institutions, private training providers, and other stakeholders (such as community organizations).

# Appendix 1. Questionnaire survey

## Questionnaire Barometer Survey March 2026 (English)

*Good day. In 2024 and 2025 NIKOS conducted two Barometer surveys in Suriname, on behalf of the Suriname Investment and Trade Agency (SITA), and the main findings have been shared with all participants. The purpose of this third survey is to measure sentiment changes among foreign investors and exporters in Suriname. Exporters include companies that serve tourists and those who provide services in a country outside of Suriname or to foreign entities.*

*This barometer survey, that will be repeated approximately every six months, is meant to recognize emerging trends, map the current business sentiment and identify key constraints. It will provide useful information for businesses, (potential) investors and SITA. The results of these surveys will provide SITA with the necessary knowledge to guide companies and investors regarding their activities in Suriname.*

*The data will be securely processed, so your confidentiality is guaranteed. All collected data will be presented only in aggregate form, and the main findings will be shared with all participants. It would be best if a senior management representative filled out the questionnaire. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes of your time. We thank you for your cooperation.*

### 1. What is the name of your company in Suriname?

.....

### 2. Do you consider your company female-owned and/or female-led?

- Yes
- No

### 3a. Has your company participated in one or more of the previous Barometer surveys in September 2024 or April 2025?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

### 3b. Is your company aware of the existence of the Suriname Investment and Trade Agency (SITA) and the services they provide, such as information about investing in Suriname and the Cost Share Grant program to support new and existing exporters?

- Yes, I have heard of SITA and I have engaged with their services
- Yes, I have heard of SITA and I am aware of their services, but I have not engaged with them
- Yes, I have heard of SITA, but I'm not sure what they do
- No, I have not heard of SITA

**4. What is the position of the person responding on behalf of the company?**

- CEO (Director/owner)
- Board member
- Senior management (e.g. CFO/CCO/COO/CSO)
- Other management person (e.g. country manager, board manager, HR manager, marketing manager)
- Other position (e.g. administration)
- Other, please specify.....

**5a. Does your company produce/sell goods or provide services (or both)?**

- Goods
- Services

**5b. *(only answer if your company produces goods)* What is the primary product that your company produces/sells?**

- Live animals and animal products
- Vegetable and fruit products
- Animal or vegetable fats and oils
- Foodstuffs, beverages, spirits, tobacco and tobacco substitutes
- Mineral products (e.g. crude oil and fuel)
- Products of chemical or allied industries
- Plastics, rubber and articles thereof
- Textiles and textile articles
- Wood & wood products (excluding furniture)
- Footwear, headgear
- Stone, glass
- Pearls, precious & semi-precious stones, precious metals, etc.
- Base metals (e.g. iron, aluminium)
- Machinery and appliances, electrical equipment, sound and video equipment, parts thereof
- Miscellaneous manufactured articles (including furniture and prefab housing)
- Other, please specify.....

**5c. (only answer if your company provides services) What is the primary service that your company provides?**

- Professional services (e.g. legal, accounting, taxation, engineering, medical)
- Computer and related services (e.g. installation, software, data processing)
- Business process outsourcing (e.g. contact centers, overseas support services)
- Other business services (e.g. consultancy, support services, advertisement, research)
- Other professional services (e.g. real estate, rental, leasing)
- Communication services (e.g. courier, telecom, audiovisual)
- Construction and related engineering services (e.g. building, civil engineering)
- Distribution services (e.g. wholesale, retail, franchising)
- Educational services
- Environmental services (e.g. sewage, waste, sanitation)
- Financial services (e.g. insurance, banking)
- Tourism and travel related services (e.g. hotels, restaurants, travel agencies)
- Transport services (e.g. maritime, air, road)
- Other, please specify .....

**6. How many employees does your company have in Suriname?**

- < 10
- 10 - 49
- 50 - 99
- 100 - 249
- 250+
- N/A

**7. What is the annual turnover of your company in Suriname (in USD)?**

- < 100,000 USD
- 100,000 – 500,000 USD
- 500,001 – 1,000,000 USD
- 1,000,001 USD – 5,000,000 USD
- > 5,000,000 USD
- Does not want to answer
- N/A

**8. Is your company currently an exporter/foreign investor or do you have future plans to become one?** (*exporters include companies that serve tourist and those who provide services in a country outside of Suriname or to foreign entities*)

- Exporter (goods or services) or company serving tourists
- Foreign investor (*continue with question 9*)
- Both (my company is a foreign investor that also exports from Suriname)
- Neither (*continue with question 9*)

**8b. Do you expect your exports or overseas revenue to increase/decrease in the following 12 months?**

- Significantly decrease
- Slightly decrease
- No change
- Slightly increase
- Significantly increase

**8c. What percentage of your revenue is generated in Suriname and how much is generated overseas?** (*for companies that serve tourists or other foreigners: what percentage of your revenue is generated by Surinamese locals and how much by foreigners*)

- Less than 25% in Suriname
- 25 – 50% in Suriname
- 51 – 75% in Suriname
- More than 75% in Suriname

**8d. (*Only for respondents with 75% or less revenue generated in Suriname*) What factors have contributed to your ability to build and sustain export activities? (*please select the most significant factors, max 3*)**

(*for companies that serve tourists or other foreigner customers: what has helped you attract foreign tourists to generate revenue from international markets*)

- International business networks and relationships with foreign clients
- Proximity to and familiarity with regional and international markets
- Our company's organizational strength and capacity
- Quality, reliability, and distinctiveness of products or services
- International certifications, standards, or compliance with foreign market requirements
- Effective marketing, branding, and/or online presence targeting foreign markets
- Support from government agencies, and/or trade promotion programs
- Reliable logistics, transport connections, and access to adequate infrastructure
- Access to finance/investment capital
- Ability to manage financial/currency-related risks
- Other, please specify .....



**11. To what degree are the following issues in Suriname perceived or experienced as an obstacle for your company?**

	1 No obstacle	2 Minor obstacle	3 Moderate obstacle	4 Major obstacle	5 Very severe obstacle	6 Don't know
a) Labor force (cost and availability of labor)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Labor force (skill/educational level/productivity)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Prices of utilities (electricity, water) and fuel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Reliability of utilities (electricity, water)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Transportation & logistics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Taxation (rates and procedures)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Unpredictability in policymaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Bureaucratic hurdles (inefficiency of government)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) General inflation rate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Currency fluctuations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) Cost and availability of raw materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l) Product or service certification (availability and cost)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m) Company certification (availability and cost)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**11b. What specific labor force challenges does your company face in Suriname and how do they affect your company's performance?**

*This question applies only if "major obstacle" or "very severe obstacle" was selected for labor force-related issues (cost/availability of labor or skill/educational level/productivity)*

.....

.....

.....

**11c. What specific challenges related to the price/reliability of utilities does your company face in Suriname and how do they affect your company's performance?**

*This question applies only if "major obstacle" or "very severe obstacle" was selected for utilities-related issues (prices of utilities and fuel, or reliability of utilities).*

.....

.....

.....

**11d. What specific challenges related to transportation and logistics does your company face in Suriname and how do they affect your company's performance?**

*This question applies only if "major obstacle" or "very severe obstacle" was selected for transportation and logistics-related issues.*

.....  
.....  
.....

**11e. What specific challenges related to taxation does your company face in Suriname and how do they affect your company's performance?**

*This question applies only if "major obstacle" or "very severe obstacle" was selected for taxation-related issues (rates and procedures).*

.....  
.....  
.....

**11f. What specific bureaucratic hurdles/unpredictable policy decisions does your company face in Suriname and how do they affect your company's performance?**

*This question applies only if "major obstacle" or "very severe obstacle" was selected for policy- and bureaucracy-related issues (unpredictability in policymaking or bureaucratic hurdles).*

.....  
.....  
.....

**12. You have reached the end of this survey. Is there anything else that you would like to share? This could also be about an obstacle for your company that was not listed in the survey.**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Thank you for your cooperation.**

## Questionnaire Barometer Survey March 2026 (Dutch)

*Goedendag. In 2024 en 2025 heeft NIKOS twee Barometer-surveys uitgevoerd in Suriname, namens de Suriname Investment and Trade Agency (SITA), en de belangrijkste bevindingen zijn naar alle deelnemers verstuurd. Het doel van deze derde survey is om te peilen of er veranderingen zijn in het sentiment van buitenlandse investeerders en exporteurs in Suriname. Onder exporteurs vallen ook bedrijven die toeristen als klant hebben en bedrijven die diensten leveren in het buitenland of aan buitenlandse partijen. Deze barometer-survey, die ongeveer om de zes maanden wordt herhaald, is bedoeld om trends te ontdekken, het huidige ondernemingsklimaat in kaart te brengen en de belangrijkste uitdagingen te identificeren. Uit dit onderzoek zal nuttige informatie naar boven komen voor bedrijven, (potentiële) investeerders en SITA. De resultaten van deze surveys zullen SITA van de nodige informatie voorzien om bedrijven en (potentiële) investeerders te kunnen begeleiden met betrekking tot hun activiteiten in Suriname. Er wordt zorgvuldig omgegaan met alle gegevens, dus uw confidentialiteit is gewaarborgd. De verzamelde informatie wordt uitsluitend in geaggregeerd formaat weergegeven en de belangrijkste resultaten worden opnieuw met alle deelnemers gedeeld. Het is aanbevolen dat een vertegenwoordiger van het senior management de vragenlijst invult. De survey duurt ongeveer 10 minuten. Hartelijk dank voor uw medewerking.*

### 1. Onder welke naam is het bedrijf actief in Suriname?

.....

### 2. Is een vrouw (mede-)eigenaar van uw bedrijf of wordt het bedrijf (mede) door een vrouw geleid?

- Ja
- Nee

### 3a. Heeft uw bedrijf ooit eerder meegedaan aan een Barometer-survey (in september 2024 of april 2025)?

- Ja
- Nee
- Ik ben niet zeker

### 3b. Is uw bedrijf op de hoogte van het bestaan van de Suriname Investment and Trade Agency (SITA) en de diensten die zij bieden, zoals informatie over investeren in Suriname en het Cost Share Grant-programma om nieuwe en bestaande exporteurs te ondersteunen?

- Ja, ik ken SITA en ik heb gebruik gemaakt van hun diensten
- Ja, ik ken SITA en weet wat ze doen, maar heb geen gebruik gemaakt van hun diensten
- Ja, ik heb gehoord van SITA, maar weet niet zeker wat ze doen
- Nee, ik heb niet van SITA gehoord

**4. Wat is de functie van de persoon die deze vragenlijst namens het bedrijf invult?**

- CEO (directeur/eigenaar)
- Bestuurslid/lid van de Raad van Commissarissen
- Senior management (bv. CFO/CCO/COO/CSO)
- Andere managementpositie (bv. country manager, board manager, HR manager, marketing manager)
- Andere positie (bv. administratief)
- Anders, namelijk.....

**5a. Houdt uw bedrijf zich bezig met de productie/verkoop van goederen of het leveren van diensten (of beide)?**

- Goederen
- Diensten

**5b. *(alleen antwoorden als uw bedrijf goederen produceert)* Welke type product wordt voornamelijk door uw bedrijf geproduceerd/verkocht?**

- Levende dieren en dierlijke producten
- Groenten en fruit
- Plantaardige/dierlijke vetten en oliën
- Voedingswaren, dranken, tabak en tabakssubstituten
- Minerale producten (o.a. ruwe olie en brandstof)
- Producten van chemische en aanverwante industrieën
- Kunststof, rubber en dergelijke
- Textielstoffen- en waren
- Hout & houtproducten (exclusief meubels)
- Schoeisel, hoofdbedekking
- Steen, glas
- Parels, edelstenen, halfedelstenen, edele metalen, etc.
- Onedele metalen en metalen voorwerpen (bijv. ijzer en aluminium)
- Machines, toestellen, elektrisch materieel, video-audio apparatuur, onderdelen
- Diverse goederen en gefabriceerde producten (waaronder meubels en prefabwoningen)
- Anders, namelijk.....

**5c. (alleen antwoorden als uw bedrijf diensten levert) Welke type diensten wordt voornamelijk door uw bedrijf geleverd?**

- Professionele dienstverlening (o.a. juridisch, boekhoudkundig, fiscaal, technisch, medisch)
- Computer- en aanverwante diensten (o.a. installatie, software, dataverwerking)
- Business process outsourcing (o.a. contactcentra, dienstverlening aan het buitenland)
- Andere zakelijke diensten (o.a. consultancy, ondersteunende diensten, reclame, onderzoek)
- Andere professionele diensten (o.a. onroerend goed, verhuur, leasing)
- Communicatiediensten (o.a. koerier, telecom, audiovisueel)
- Bouw en aanverwante ingenieursdiensten (o.a. bouwkunde, civiele techniek)
- Distributiediensten (o.a. groothandel, detailhandel, franchising)
- Educatieve diensten
- Milieudiensten (o.a. riolering, afval, sanitaire voorzieningen)
- Financiële diensten (o.a. verzekeringen, banken)
- Toerisme en reizen (o.a. hotels, restaurants, reisbureaus)
- Transportdiensten (o.a. maritiem, lucht, weg)
- Anders, namelijk.....

**6. Hoeveel werknemers heeft uw bedrijf in Suriname?**

- < 10
- 10 - 49
- 50 - 99
- 100 - 249
- 250+
- N.v.t.

**7. Wat is de jaarlijkse omzet van uw bedrijf in Suriname (in USD)?**

- < 100.000 USD
- 100.000 - 500.000 USD
- 500.001 - 1.000.000 USD
- 1.000.001 - 5.000.000 USD
- > 5.000.000 USD
- Wil geen antwoord geven
- N.v.t.

**8. Heeft uw bedrijf momenteel de status van exporteur/buitenlandse investeerder of zijn er plannen om in de toekomst te exporteren of te investeren in Suriname, indien uw bedrijf buitenlands is?** *(het verlenen van diensten in een land buiten Suriname of aan toeristen kan ook worden gezien als export)*

- Exporteur (van goederen of diensten) of actief in het toerisme
- Buitenlandse investeerder *(ga naar vraag 9)*
- Beide (mijn bedrijf is een buitenlandse investeerder die ook vanuit Suriname exporteert)
- Geen van beide *(ga naar vraag 9)*

**8b. Verwacht u de komende 12 maanden een daling of stijging in uw exportvolume/omzet in het buitenland?**

- Sterke daling
- Lichte daling
- Geen verandering
- Lichte stijging
- Sterke stijging

**8c. Hoeveel procent van uw omzet wordt in Suriname gegenereerd en hoeveel procent is uit het buitenland afkomstig?** *(voor bedrijven die toeristen of andere buitenlandse personen als klant hebben: hoeveel procent van uw omzet is afkomstig van ingezetenen van Suriname en hoeveel van buitenlanders?)*

- Minder dan 25% in Suriname
- 25 – 50% in Suriname
- 51 – 75% in Suriname
- Meer dan 75% in Suriname

**8d. (Alleen voor respondenten met 75% of minder omzet gegenereerd in Suriname) Welke factoren hebben eraan bijgedragen dat u momenteel in staat bent en kunt doorgaan met exporteren? (selecteer de belangrijkste factoren, maximaal 3)**

*(Voor bedrijven die toeristen of andere buitenlandse personen of entiteiten als klant hebben: wat heeft u in staat gesteld om buitenlandse toeristen als klant aan te trekken of omzet in het buitenland te genereren?)*

- Internationale zakelijke netwerken en banden met buitenlandse afnemers
- Afstand tot en bekendheid van regionale en internationale markten
- De organisatorische capaciteit van ons bedrijf
- Kwaliteit, consistentie en onderscheidend vermogen van onze producten of diensten
- Internationale certificering, het voldoen aan de standaarden/vereisten van buitenlandse markten
- Effectieve marketing, branding en/of online promotie, gericht op buitenlandse markten
- Ondersteuning van overheidsinstanties en/of exportfaciliterende programma's
- Betrouwbare logistieke netwerken, transportverbindingen en de kwaliteit van beschikbare infrastructuur
- Toegang tot financiering/investeringskapitaal
- Het vermogen om financiële/wisselkoersgerelateerde risico's te beheersen
- Anders, namelijk.....

**8d. (Alleen voor respondenten met 75% of meer omzet gegenereerd in Suriname) Welke obstakels zijn er die uw mogelijkheden om te exporteren beperken? (selecteer de belangrijkste factoren, maximaal 3)**

*(Voor bedrijven die toeristen of andere buitenlandse personen of entiteiten als klant hebben: welke uitdagingen zijn er om (meer) buitenlandse toeristen aan te trekken of (meer) buitenlandse omzet te genereren?)*

- Onvoldoende internationale zakelijke netwerken en banden met buitenlandse afnemers
- Te grote afstand tot en onbekendheid van regionale en internationale markten
- Gebrek aan organisatorische capaciteit binnen ons bedrijf
- Uitdagingen met betrekking tot de kwaliteit, consistentie en onderscheidend vermogen van onze producten of diensten
- Gebrekkige mogelijkheden tot internationale certificering, uitdagingen bij het voldoen Aan de standaarden/vereisten van buitenlandse markten
- Onvoldoende marketing, branding en/of online promotie, gericht op buitenlandse markten
- Gebrekkige of onvoldoende ondersteuning van overheidsinstanties en/of exportfaciliterende programma's
- Onbetrouwbare logistieke netwerken, gebrekkige transportverbindingen en infrastructuur
- Onvoldoende toegang tot financiering/investeringskapitaal
- Uitdagingen bij het beheersen van financiële/wisselkoersgerelateerde risico's
- Anders, namelijk.....



**11b. Wat zijn de specifieke uitdagingen voor uw bedrijf met betrekking tot de arbeidsmarkt in Suriname en hoe beïnvloeden ze de prestaties van uw bedrijf?**

*Deze vraag is alleen van toepassing indien u bij arbeidsmarkt-gerelateerde knelpunten ("kosten en beschikbaarheid van arbeid" of "niveau van vaardigheden/opleiding/productiviteit") heeft aangegeven dat dit een grote belemmering of een zeer ernstige belemmering vormt.*

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**11c. Wat zijn de specifieke uitdagingen voor uw bedrijf met betrekking tot de betalbaarheid/betrouwbaarheid van nutsvoorzieningen in Suriname en hoe beïnvloeden ze de prestaties van uw bedrijf?**

*Deze vraag is alleen van toepassing indien u bij nutsvoorziening-gerelateerde knelpunten ("prijzen van nutsvoorzieningen en brandstof" of "betrouwbaarheid van nutsvoorzieningen") heeft aangegeven dat dit een grote belemmering of een zeer ernstige belemmering vormt.*

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**11d. Wat zijn de specifieke uitdagingen voor uw bedrijf met betrekking tot transport en logistiek in Suriname en hoe beïnvloeden ze de prestaties van uw bedrijf?**

*Deze vraag is alleen van toepassing indien u bij transport/logistiek-gerelateerde knelpunten heeft aangegeven dat dit een grote belemmering of een zeer ernstige belemmering vormt.*

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**11e. Wat zijn de specifieke uitdagingen voor uw bedrijf met betrekking tot belastingen in Suriname en hoe beïnvloeden ze de prestaties van uw bedrijf?**

*Deze vraag is alleen van toepassing indien u bij belasting-gerelateerde knelpunten ("tarieven en procedures") heeft aangegeven dat dit een grote belemmering of een zeer ernstige belemmering vormt.*

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**11f. Welke bureaucratische obstakels hinderen uw bedrijfsvoering of op welke manier beïnvloedt onvoorspelbaarheid van beleid in Suriname de prestaties van uw bedrijf?**

*Deze vraag is alleen van toepassing indien u bij beleids- en bureaucratie-gerelateerde knelpunten ("onvoorspelbaarheid van beleid" of "bureaucratische obstakels") heeft aangegeven dat dit een grote belemmering of een zeer ernstige belemmering vormt.*

.....  
.....  
.....

**12. U bent nu gekomen aan het einde van de vragenlijst. Is er nog iets dat u wilt delen? Dit kan ook over een uitdaging gaan die niet is genoemd in de vragenlijst.**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Bedankt voor uw medewerking.**

## **Appendix 2. Press Briefing 3<sup>rd</sup> Survey**

## PERSBERICHT

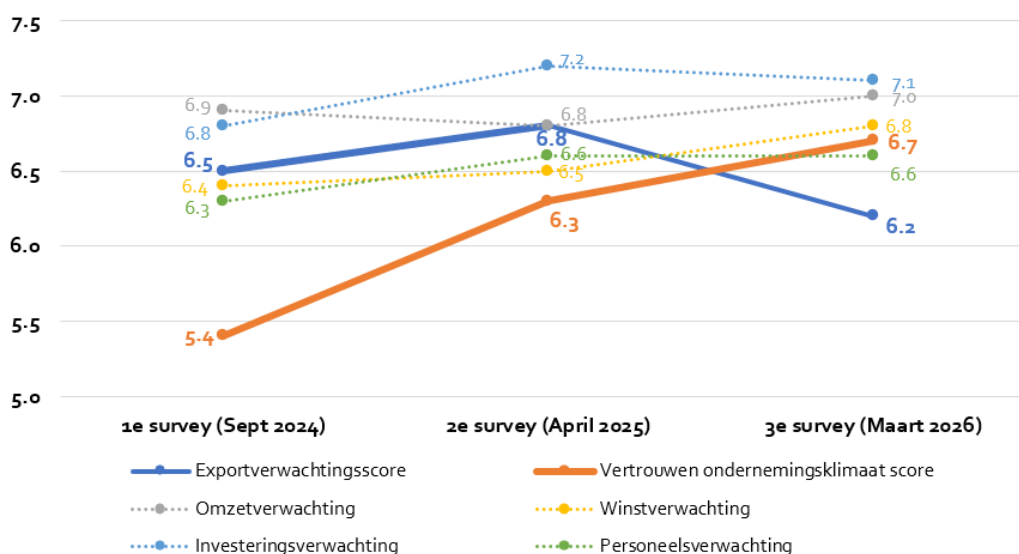


### SITA – Derde Export Barometer: lokaal vertrouwen neemt toe, exportverwachtingen dalen, structurele uitdagingen blijven bestaan

**Paramaribo, april 2026** — De derde Barometer Survey van de Suriname Investment & Trade Agency (SITA) is uitgevoerd in maart 2026. De resultaten van de vorige twee Barometer Surveys zijn aan het publiek gepresenteerd tijdens een fysiek persmoment voor belanghebbenden en geïnteresseerden op 13 maart 2026. Het volledige rapport van deze surveys is ook gepubliceerd op de website van SITA en is openbaar toegankelijk. De Barometer Survey meet het vertrouwen van bedrijven, uitdagingen waar bedrijven mee te maken hebben en de verwachtingen van bedrijven voor de komende 12 maanden op een aantal prestatie-indicatoren, of dit nou een stijging, daling of geen verandering is. Nu de Barometer Survey drie keer is gehouden, worden trends zichtbaar en is het mogelijk om deze te analyseren.

Het aantal deelnemende bedrijven is gestegen. Deze ronde hebben 212 bedrijven meegedaan aan de survey (vergeleken met 178 en 153 in respectievelijk de eerste en tweede ronde). Dit zijn exporteurs en buitenlandse investeerders uit een groot aantal sectoren en van verschillende groottes. Daarnaast is het bedrijvenbestand uitgebreid naar 770 bedrijven. Dit omvat zowel Surinaamse exporteurs als buitenlandse investeerders die actief zijn in het land. Onder exporteurs vallen ook bedrijven die toeristen als klant hebben en bedrijven die diensten verlenen in een ander land dan Suriname of aan buitenlandse partijen. Het responspercentage van deze survey is 28%, wat net als de twee vorige surveys boven het gemiddelde van vergelijkbare onderzoeken is. Ook interessant is het feit dat 125 bedrijven aan tenminste twee van de drie gehouden surveys hebben meegedaan.

#### Toenemend vertrouwen in lokaal ondernemingsklimaat, terwijl de exportverwachtingen zijn gedaald



**Figuur** Vertrouwen in het ondernemingsklimaat, exportverwachtingen en bedrijfsprestatieverwachtingen uit alle drie surveys

Uit de resultaten blijkt dat het vertrouwen in het ondernemingsklimaat (alle scores zijn gemeten op een schaal van 0 tot 10) geleidelijk en consistent toeneemt, terwijl de exportverwachtingen fluctueren. Dit geeft aan dat het vertrouwen in lokale ontwikkelingen stijgt, terwijl er zorgen zijn over internationale factoren. De survey meet ook welke verwachtingen bedrijven voor hun eigen operationele prestaties hebben (op een viertal gebieden, namelijk omzet, winst, investeringen en personeelsbestand) gedurende de komende 12 maanden. Vergeleken met het vertrouwen in het ondernemingsklimaat en de exportverwachtingen zijn deze vier indicatoren niet veel veranderd, wat aantoont dat bedrijven over het algemeen stabiele en consistente verwachtingen hebben voor hun eigen prestaties.

### **Structurele uitdagingen blijven bestaan**

Uit alle drie surveys blijkt dat er structurele uitdagingen zijn, die blijven bestaan. De volgende obstakels komen structureel aan top: bureaucratische inefficiëntie, wisselkoersschommelingen, onvoorspelbaarheid van beleid, hoge inflatie en uitdagingen met betrekking tot de arbeidsmarkt. Hoewel de uitdagingen voor bedrijven grotendeels hetzelfde zijn gebleven, is er ook een nieuwe ontwikkeling zichtbaar: de arbeidsmarkt lijkt een steeds grotere uitdaging te vormen voor bedrijven. Deze toename is al een tijdje zichtbaar en lijkt ernstiger te worden als we de resultaten van alle drie surveys vergelijken. Ook vermeldenswaardig: in de vorige surveys kwam 'kosten en beschikbaarheid' van arbeid naar boven als het grootste arbeidsmarktgerelateerde obstakel. Die is nu overtroffen door 'vaardigheden/opleidingsniveau/productiviteit'. De derde survey is dieper ingegaan op de uitdagingen van bedrijven, waardoor SITA, relevante overheidsinstanties en andere stakeholders meer informatie krijgen over hoe deze uitdagingen de dagelijkse bedrijfsvoering precies beïnvloeden. Dit biedt waardevolle inzichten die een sterke basis vormen voor beleidsmaatregelen en interventies om het ondernemingsklimaat in Suriname te verbeteren.

### **Erkenning en betrokkenheid**

SITA spreekt haar oprechte dank uit aan alle deelnemende bedrijven. Dankzij hun bijdrage kunnen strategische inspanningen worden uitgevoerd om duurzame groei te bevorderen en de positie van Suriname veilig te stellen als sterke en betrouwbare partner in internationale handel en investeringen.

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### **Noot van de redacteur:**

Deze Barometer Survey is uitgevoerd door NIKOS onder leiding en coördinatie van de Suriname Investment and Trade Agency (SITA). SITA is de nationale Handels- en Investeringspromotieorganisatie (TIPA) en functioneert als een onafhankelijke, staatsgefinancierde onderneming onder het Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, Internationale Handel en Internationale Samenwerking.

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## PRESS BRIEFING

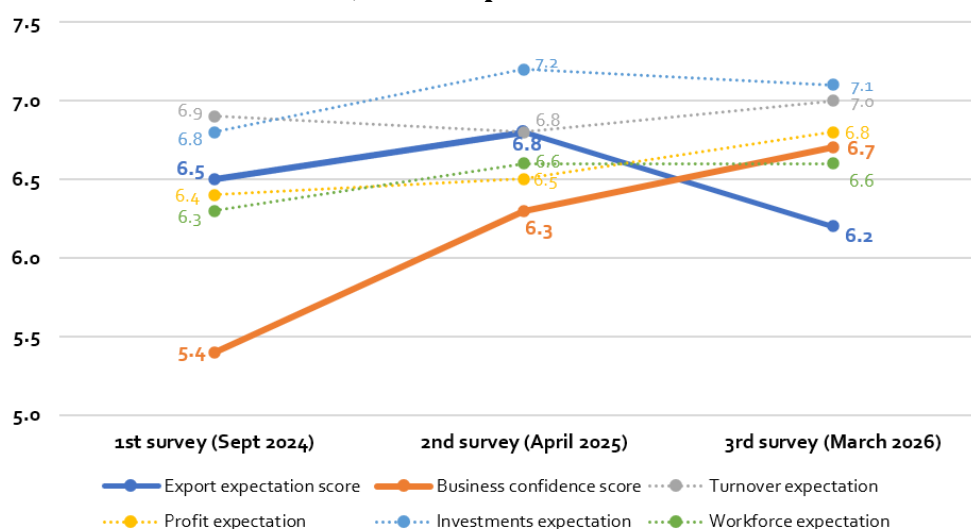


# SITA Third Export Barometer Survey: Local Business Confidence Grows, Export Sentiment Declines and Persistent Challenges Remain

**Paramaribo, April 2026** — The third Barometer Survey of the Suriname Investment & Trade Agency (SITA) has been conducted in March 2026. The results of the previous two Barometer Surveys have been presented during an in-person media briefing for stakeholders on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026. The full report of these surveys has also been published on SITA’s website and is publicly accessible. The Barometer Survey measures business sentiment, business constraints, as well as companies’ expectations over the next 12 months across a variety of performance indicators, whether this be an increase, decrease, or no change. Now that the Barometer Survey has been held three times, trends are starting to appear and trend analyses are now possible.

The number of responding companies has increased. This round, 212 companies have participated in the survey (compared to 178 and 153 in the first and second rounds, respectively). These companies represent a diverse and balanced cross-section of exporters and foreign investors from a wide range of sectors and company sizes. In addition, the directory of companies has expanded to 770 companies, comprising both Surinamese exporters and foreign investors active in the country. Exporters include companies that serve tourists and those who provide services in a country outside of Suriname or to foreign entities. The participation rate for this survey is 28%, which remains well above the national average for similar research projects. It is also worth mentioning that 125 companies have participated in at least two of the three surveys.

### Local Business Confidence Grows, While Export Sentiment Declines



**Figure** Business confidence, export sentiment and company performance expectations throughout all three surveys

The results show that the business confidence score (all scores are measured on a scale from 0 to 10) is gradually and consistently increasing, while the export expectation score is fluctuating. This indicates increasing confidence in local developments, but concern about international factors. The survey also measures the expectations that companies have for their own performance on four different metrics (turnover, profit, investments and workforce) during the following 12 months. Compared to the business and export confidence scores, these four indicators show minor to no changes, which indicates that, on average, companies have relatively stable and consistent expectations regarding their own operational performance.

### **Persistent Challenges Remain**

All three survey rounds show that structural challenges persist, with the following obstacles repeatedly ranking among the most critical: bureaucratic inefficiencies, currency fluctuations, unpredictability of policymaking, high inflation, and labor market constraints. While the obstacles that companies face have mostly remained stable, a trend that emerged is that labor market challenges are becoming more prominent and severe. This increase has been consistently visible and appears to be intensifying when comparing the first, second, and third survey results. Additionally, while the primary labor-related issue was 'cost and availability' in previous surveys, it has been surpassed by 'skill/educational level/productivity'. The third round of the survey went more in-depth into the issues that companies face, which provides SITA, relevant government agencies and other stakeholders with additional information about how these issues affect the daily operations of companies. This provides valuable insights that can help design policy measures and interventions to improve the business environment in Suriname.

### **Acknowledgment and Commitment**

SITA expresses its sincere appreciation to all participating companies for their input. Their contributions provide the foundation for strategic efforts to promote sustainable growth and to position Suriname as a strong and reliable partner in international trade and investment.

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### **Editor's Note:**

This Barometer Survey was conducted by NIKOS, on behalf of and coordinated by the Suriname Investment and Trade Agency (SITA). SITA is the national Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (TIPA) and functions as an independent, state-funded enterprise under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and International Cooperation.

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