Meeting

How can France's Foreign Trade Advisors help you expand your business abroad?

Publié le 06 juin 2025 - Directorate for Legal and Administrative Information (Prime Minister)

For this issue of Rencontre avec, we went to meet David Elizalde, Counselor of Foreign Trade of France (CCEF) and President of the Occitanie Bureau. With him, we talked about how he accompanies companies in their international development projects.

"We act as big brothers to help the leader break into the destination market by sharing our experience with them pro bono."

David ELIZALDE, Director of the Innovation Programs of a mid-sized company in the field of electronic systems and advisor to the French Foreign Trade.

When can a company leader turn to you for help with their international project?

The network of France's foreign-trade advisers, of which I am a member, brings together heads of company with offices in France and abroad. It now has more than **4,500 listening members** French companies aspiring to expand internationally.

A leader can ask us as soon as he has **an export project** and wishes to be **recommended on its strategy.** We share our experience mainly with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and even from time to time with mid-sized companies (MIDs), which have proved their worth in France.

What are your main accompaniments?

Depending on the need expressed, we take action on several key issues:

- **Refine target market choice:** After conducting market research with Business France, for example, we can help the manager select a destination among several options, thanks to the testimonials of network members based in these different countries. It is essential not to run several hares at the same time to be able to put all your energy in the country of your choice;
- **Connect with the right suppliers and potential customers:** In order to penetrate a market, the already established French Foreign Trade Adviser can share with the incoming manager his network, his knowledge of local practices, relations with the administration or the choice of the bank for example;
- **In some cases, temporarily housing the company**at the premises already available to the Counselor on the spot, to allow time to launch the activity;
- **Demystifying the international and its "unbridgeable mountains":** we popularize our own experiences as much as possible to help executives project themselves, protect their know-how, and become wary of investors who promise real estate. Drawing on the strength of the network and diverse perspectives can quickly find answers to your questions.

Do you have an example of a accompanied company?

Yes, I'm thinking of a small company of paramedical prosthetics in Occitania, which we connected with a large French manufacturer of prosthetics in the U.S. He directed her to:

- California as a location;
- the right industrial partners to launch its prosthetic production;
- the first potential customers, the most relevant price/product strategy in relation to the US market;
- temporary accommodation in Los Angeles.

Recently, we also accompanied a business in Occitanie that sells weather forecasting services. She asked for help selling her services abroad. We connected her with a peer in Chile who specializes in information systems. He helped her enter the South American market.

In uncertain times, the **France's network of external trade advisors is a valuable resource** for the benefit of French export efficiency. Companies in search of landmarks, come and see us!

To interact with an advisor

Company-Advisers.Service-Public.fr
(https://conseillers-entreprises.service-public.fr/?mtm_campaign=entreprendre&mtm_kwd=article-ccef)

The public service accompanying companies

Additional topics

France's Foreign Trade Advisers (https://www.cnccef.org/territoires/?lang=en)

Foreign Trade Advisers of France