

CBI MARKET SURVEY

THE CHEMICALS MARKET IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

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Report summary

This CBI market survey discusses, amongst others, the following highlights for the market for chemicals in the United Kingdom:

- The UK ranks among the leading EU markets for chemicals, with an industrial demand of € 71.5 billion in 2005. Production is also relatively large, with a turnover amounting to € 58 billion. In terms of turnover, the United Kingdom is the fourth largest producer of chemicals in EU after Germany, France and Italy.
- The UK is ranked fourth among EU chemical importers. Between 2002 and 2004, imports decreased by 8% annually, but then increased again by 9% annually between 2004 and 2006. In 2006, the import value of chemicals was € 6.7 billion.
- Developing countries are strongly represented in the supply of inorganic chemicals (29% of total EU imports) and dyes and pigments (20%). However, with respect to overall chemical imports, developing countries only play a minor role, accounting for 5% of the import value in 2006.

This survey provides exporters of chemicals with sector-specific market information related to gaining access to the UK. By focusing on a specific country, the survey provides additional information, complementary to the more general information and data provided in the CBI market survey covering the EU chemicals market.

As you will notice in this survey, much trend-related information is similar to that for the EU in general. Interview results showed that most of the major trends in individual countries are the same as the ones identified in the CBI market survey covering the EU chemicals market. This is due to the fact that the chemicals market is a very international market. Some countries export more than half of their chemical production. Moreover, the chemicals market is a very mature market, featuring commodities and many complex products which all have their own specific application. As this survey does not allow for the description of all of these individual products and is limited to four product groups¹, trend information is also mainly limited to those trends which are relevant to the entire chemical industry. Therefore it is recommended that you read this survey together with the CBI market survey covering the EU chemicals market.

That survey also contains an overview and explanation of the selected products dealt with, some general remarks on the statistics used, as well as information on other available documents for this sector. It can be downloaded from <http://www.cbi.eu/marketinfo>.

1. Market description: industrial demand and production**Industrial demand*****Total market size***

- The United Kingdom is the fourth largest consumer of chemicals, accounting for 13% of total industrial demand for chemicals in the EU.
- In 2005, total industrial demand for chemicals in the United Kingdom amounted to € 72 billion. UK industrial demand for chemicals remained quite stable between 2001 and 2005, showing an average annual increase of 0.4%.

¹ Inorganic chemicals, organic chemicals, dyes & pigments and oleochemicals.

Table 1.1 Industrial demand for chemicals in the EU and the UK, 2001-2005, in € million

	2001	2003	2005	Average annual growth
EU25	496,581	507,835	564,598	3.3%
The United Kingdom	70,275	64,157	71,544	0.4%

Source: European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC) (2006)

Trends in industrial demand

Partly due to the accession of the new member states to the European Union, UK experts expect that the chemical market in the United Kingdom will grow in the future. The demand for (UK) chemicals is increasing in these new member states, as they are rapidly industrialising.

Production

Total production

The United Kingdom is the fourth leading producer of chemicals in the EU, accounting for 9% of total turnover of the European chemical industry. In 2005, the total turnover of the UK chemical industry amounted to € 58 billion. Between 2001 and 2005, the total turnover of the UK's chemical industry remained rather stable, showing an average annual increase of only 0.4%.

The chemical sector is one of the largest manufacturing industries in the UK. The chemical industry accounts for 2% of the United Kingdom's GDP and 11% of its manufacturing industry's gross added value (Chemical Industries Association (CIA), 2003 and 2006).

The structure of the United Kingdom chemical industry corresponds to that of Germany and France. However, the United Kingdom tends to have a stronger emphasis on pharmaceutical intermediates, due to the fact that some of the largest pharmaceutical companies, for example GlaxoSmithKline, have their headquarters and manufacturing facilities in the United Kingdom. The relative share of the pharmaceutical industry was 37% of total chemical gross added value. Soaps, toiletries & cleaning preparations showed a relative share of 12% of gross added value amount, and basic organics of 10% of gross value added amount (CIA, 2006).

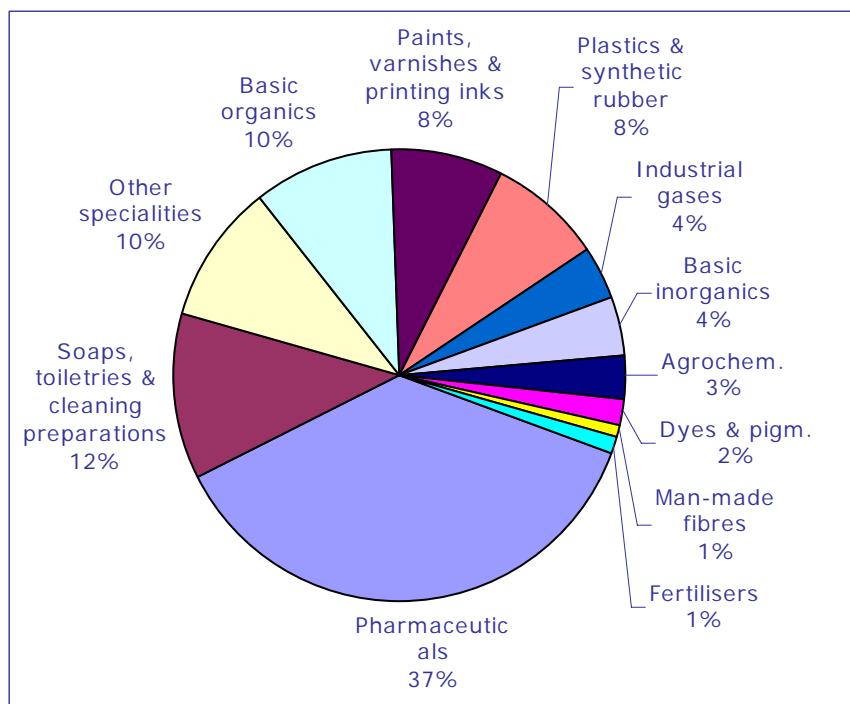
The chemical industry has one of the highest growth rates, compared to other industrial sectors in the UK. The annual average turnover growth of the chemical industry over the period 1994-2004 amounted to 2.9%, which was more than five times higher than the average for all UK industry (CIA, 2003 and 2006).

Product groups

The UK chemical industry manufactures a diverse range of materials and products. Raw materials are used as ingredients for chemical products such as pharmaceuticals, paints and personal hygiene goods, many of which are purchased by final consumers. However, about half of the chemical materials and products made are purchased directly by other industries and are inputs for the products and services provided by the latter.

The market can be segmented according to the various sub-sectors. In the UK, the main sub-sector is formed by pharmaceuticals, which amounted to more than one third of the gross value added in 2003. In 2005, sales of pharmaceuticals amounted to € 22,935 million. This makes the UK the second largest pharmaceuticals producer in the EU. Figure 1.1 shows the relative shares of the various sub sectors.

Figure 1.1 UK chemical industry sector shares of gross value added in 2003



Source: CIA (2006)

Major players

The UK chemical industry provides direct employment for 214,000 persons and supports several hundred thousand additional jobs throughout the economy. It has a relatively higher proportion employed in medium-sized enterprises, when compared to other European countries (CIA, 2003). The major players are listed below.

- The French company Rhodia acquired the ChiRex facility in Cramlington, near Newcastle upon Tyne. It is only involved in high value intermediates for pharmaceuticals. Early 2006, Rhodia sold its pharmaceutical custom manufacturing business to the Indian company Shasun. The company buys basic intermediates and some other complex chemicals. The company is certainly interested in buying the more basic products from other countries. Sales go all to the pharmaceutical industry, mostly direct.
- The Degussa operations in the United Kingdom are involved in the production of intermediates for agrochemicals and pharmaceuticals, as well as specialty and performance chemicals. The company has a strong international orientation, both in sales and in purchases. Sales go to other companies, in some cases through agents and distributors.
- This part of Clariant concentrates on the manufacture of intermediates for agrochemicals and pharmaceuticals. They are involved in co-operation with companies in the developing world. Sales go only to other industries. The pharmaceutical fine chemical business of Clariant has been sold to the private equity company Towerbrook, and it is now trading as Archimica.
- Avecia had two major lines of chemical activities: intermediates for agrochemicals and pharmaceuticals, and performance chemicals. The intermediates business has been sold to the Finnish company KemFine, and it is now trading as KemFine UK. The pharmaceuticals business has recently been acquired by the Indian pharmaceutical company Nicolas Piramal. The company buys products from developing countries. All of its sales go to other companies, sometimes through agents and distributors.
- ICI is heavily involved in performance chemicals. Other activities include polyurethanes (such as foams). The company is only involved in business-to-business activities. ICI is quite heavily involved in co-operation with companies in developing countries.

- Contract Chemicals is an independent manufacturer of fine organic chemicals. It is involved in product applications to cover the pharmaceutical, agrochemical, detergent, photographic, food and fragrance industries.

Trends in production

- Competition on the chemical market has increased due to the accession of the new member states to the EU. In order to reduce production costs, some UK companies decided to move towards countries where costs are lower (i.e. lower taxes and labour costs). It is also observed that British companies buy out companies in other (European) countries, for example in Spain. By doing so, the UK company can continue production at another location.
- As a result of all of these developments, it is expected that the production output of chemicals in the UK will decline in the future. Irrespective of this trend in production, it is expected that the favourable developments in the turnover will last during the coming years. However, this is mainly the result of the increased prices for chemicals.
- In addition to the replacement of companies, another result of the extension of the EU is the opening up of the international labour market. People from the new member states are coming to the UK to work in the chemical industry. This is one of the ways to reduce production costs.
- The increasing use of contract manufacturing is another recent trend in production. In contract manufacturing, which is mainly done in the pharmaceutical industry, a chemical ingredient is produced on the special order of a client. Only very specialised and non-standard products are produced in contract manufacturing.
- According to industry sources, the UK chemical industry is doing reasonably well, even though none of the sectors is doing very well. The only sector that has been doing better recently is the specialty and fine chemicals sector. This also has to do with the awareness in the UK that the quality of products from China is not always very good and that China is not always a reliable trade partner.
- There is a lack of skilled and educated people in the UK chemical industry. As in other countries in Europe, young people tend to prefer more 'soft' studies like political science, instead of a technical study.

Opportunities and threats

According to the British Chemical Industries Association, a major part of the investments made by chemical companies takes place in departments which are located in India and China, for example in the agro-chemical industry. This creates good opportunities for developing countries. The main problem in these countries, however, is the lack of service and technical assistance. In addition, there is sometimes a lack of information on health, environment and safety regulations.

An increasing number of chemical companies in the United Kingdom is working together with companies in developing countries in joint venture relations. According to the Chemical Business Association, companies prefer to start joint venture arrangements with a foreign company (for example in China) to making investments in their own company in the United Kingdom. This trend is, among others, related to the legislation, mainly concerning the environment and REACH (Registration Evaluation & Authorisation of Chemicals). For more information on REACH, refer to <http://www.cbi.eu/marketinfo>.

Useful sources

- Interesting sources for obtaining information on the industrial demand and production of chemicals are firstly encountered in the CBI survey covering the EU market.
- CIA, the Chemical Industries Association - <http://www.cia.org.uk>
- CEFIC, the European Chemical Industry Council - <http://www.cefic.org/factsandfigures>
- ONS, the Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom can also be a source of information - <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>.

- ChemIndustry.com, (<http://chemindustry.com/index.html>) is also of interest, for chemical information as well as finding companies in the United Kingdom.

2. Trade structure

Trade channels

In general, the same trade channels apply to the United Kingdom as in the rest of the EU. These channels have been described extensively in the CBI market survey covering the EU market for chemicals.

Focusing on The UK, there is a number of routes which lead from a producer of chemicals to the final customer. Open market places are not generally used in the chemical sector. The main distribution channels are distributors, agents and traders. In addition, e-business has become increasingly popular in the chemical industry.

The distributor plays a key role in the chemical sector. Distributors take care of all of the marketing. They search for customers and they are responsible for the logistics. Especially for end-users, who need a lot of different performance chemicals, it is efficient to buy them from one source. Distributors obtain various materials from a variety of different companies and can offer complete packages of all the products that producers need. Although the payment risk is low, the downside is that the producer does not gain customer contact and/or market knowledge, as these 'belong' to the distributor. He also takes part of the added value, so the producer has a lower margin.

Agents sell the product on behalf of the manufacturer. When they have sold a product they pass on the order to the manufacturer, who then supplies the product to the buyer. The manufacturer invoices the client, and pays a commission (pre-arranged percentage of the sales value) to the agent. Most agents will also take care of the logistics (for a fee). A typical problem when working with agents is that the agent is torn between being loyal to his principal (the manufacturer) and his clients.

Traders are only interested in buying and selling products. They never see any product, and sometimes they resell products within the hour. They are normally only interested in larger quantities of material. Their margin per tonne is low and hence they need high volumes to generate sufficient money.

The following overview presents the leading companies in the chemical sector in the United Kingdom.

Leading chemical companies	Website
Shasun	http://www.shasun.com
Degussa	http://www.degussa.com
Clariant	http://www.clariant.com
Archimica	http://www.archimica.com
Kemfine	http://www.kemfine.com
Nicolas Piramal	http://www.nicolaspiramal.com
ICI	http://www.ici.com
Contract chemicals	http://www.contract-chemicals.com

Trends

E-business is increasingly used by large chemical corporations. The chemical industry is considered among the best suited for e-commerce because it is fragmented and covers a variety of widely used products; has global reach; and includes multiple companies that, as each others' customers and suppliers, will benefit from being connected. Today, there are more than 40 third-party sites for buying and selling chemicals, and many more offer-related services, technology, or information.

Useful sources

Information about producers in the UK can be found at the website of the Chemical Industries Association, CIA (<http://www.cia.org.uk>). The site provides a list of the member companies and links to their individual websites.

→ Go to 'The CIA – Your partner for Business Growth' and click on 'Full Members'.

Information about distributors in the UK can be found at the website of the Chemical Business Association, CBA (<http://www.chemical.org.uk>). The site provides a list of the member companies and links to their individual websites.

→ Go to 'List of members' in the left menu.

E-business marketplaces can be found in the CBI market survey covering the EU market.

3. Trade: imports and exports

Imports

The UK is the fourth largest importer of chemicals in the EU, with imports amounting to € 6,669 million/ 2,930 thousand tonnes in 2006. The imports consists for 75% of organic chemicals, for 14% of oleo chemicals, for 6% of inorganic chemicals and for 5% of dyes and pigments. Between 2002 and 2004, imports decreased by 8% and then increased again by 9% between 2004 and 2006. This is similar to the developments in Belgium and France and is in line with the developments in industrial demand for chemicals, which also experienced a dip in 2004. Developing countries have a relatively small share in imports by the UK (5%), compared to their share in total EU imports (7%). However, between 2002 and 2006, intra-EU imports decreased by 3% annually, whilst imports from developing countries increased by 13% annually. This indicates a growing share imports from developing countries.

The UK's main supplier is Ireland, accounting for 22% of imports (€ 1,463 million) in 2006. Other important suppliers are The Netherlands, France and Germany. Between 2002 and 2006, imports from all these intra-EU suppliers decreased, while imports from the leading extra-EU suppliers increased. The figures show that the UK is widening its scope regarding the sourcing of chemicals. Leading suppliers which profited most from this development were Singapore (+16% annually) and Japan (+23% annually). The main developing country supplier of the UK is China, accounting for 2% of total supplies. Other significant developing country suppliers are Jamaica and India. The best performer of these countries is Jamaica, with supplies increasing by 32% annually between 2002 and 2006.

Table 3.1 Imports by the United Kingdom and leading suppliers to the United Kingdom, 2002-2006, € billion / share in % of value

Product	2002 € mln	2006 € mln	Leading suppliers in 2006 (share in %)		Share in UK imports
Total chemicals	5,059	4,511	Intra-EU:	Ireland (22), The Netherlands (14), France (13), Germany (10).	68%
	1,661	2,157	Extra-EU excl DC:	Singapore (8), USA (8), Japan (5).	27%
	214	354	DC*:	China (2), Jamaica (1), India (1).	5%
Dyes and pigments	233	185	Intra-EU:	Germany (20), Spain (7), The Netherlands (7).	51%
	199	181	Extra-EU excl DC:	USA (14), Switzerland (8), South Korea (4).	29%
	71	73	DC*:	China (11), India (8).	20%
Inorganic chemicals	116	227	Intra-EU:	Ireland (18), Germany (17), The Netherlands (4).	59%
	125	156	Extra-EU excl DC:	USA (7).	12%
	46	109	DC*:	Jamaica (23), China (3), Malaysia (1).	29%
Oleo	729	833	Intra-EU:	France (26), Germany (20), The	90%

Product	2002 € mln	2006 € mln	Leading suppliers in 2006 (share in %)		Share in UK imports
chemicals	92 5	88 10	Extra-EU excl DC: DC*:	Netherlands (14), Belgium (11). USA (6.), Norway (1). China (1).	9% 1%
Organic chemicals	3,981	3,266	Intra-EU:	Ireland (27), The Netherlands (15), France (12).	65%
	1,244	1,733	Extra-EU excl DC:	Singapore (11), USA (8), Japan (6),	32%
	93	162	DC*:	China (2), India (1)	3%

Source: Eurostat, 2007

*Developing Countries

Developing countries are strongest represented in the inorganic chemicals supply (29%) and dyes and pigments (20%). Imports of dyes and pigments decreased by 4% annually between 2002 and 2006, amounting to € 367 million/ 83 thousand tonnes. This is similar to the development in other EU countries. The largest suppliers of dyes and pigments are Germany and the USA. However, imports from these countries decreased by 9% and 6% annually respectively between 2002 and 2006. As imports from developing countries remained more or less stable, their share actually increased substantially. China even increased its supplies of dyes and pigments to the UK.

Imports of inorganic chemicals increased by 19% annually during the review period, amounting to € 383 million/ 1,019 thousand tonnes in 2006. The increase was much higher than that of the EU average (10%). Much of the increased imports were supplied by Ireland. Imports from this country increased by 267% annually, turning Ireland into the leading supplier to the UK. Other suppliers also performed well. Imports from Jamaica increased by 32% annually and imports from Germany increased by 21% annually. Developing countries did not perform worse: they maintained their large share in imports of inorganic chemicals by the UK.

Imports of oleo chemicals amounted to € 920 million/ 971 thousand tonnes in 2006, signifying a limited increase of 3% annually since 2002. As in other EU countries, the role of developing countries in the imports of oleo chemicals is negligible.

Total imports of organic chemicals decreased by 1% annually in the period 2002-2006, amounting to € 4,999 million/ 857 thousand tonnes in 2006. Meanwhile, imports by the EU increased by 8% annually. The widening scope of UK companies regarding their sourcing is particularly relevant to the imports of organic chemicals. Intra-EU trade decreased, while extra-EU imports increased. Imports from developing countries increased particularly fast, by 15% annually between 2002 and 2006. However, imports from developing countries remain very limited. China is the largest developing country supplier of this product group (€ 96 million).

Exports

The UK is the fourth largest EU exporter of chemicals, with exports amounting to € 6,167 million/ 1,219 thousand tonnes. It is still a net importer of chemicals, but exports increased at a higher rate than imports. Between 2002 and 2006, its exports increased by 7% annually. The increase was mostly accounted for by exports of organic chemicals, which increased by 11% annually.

The UK is a relatively small exporter of inorganic chemicals, for which it is ranked 10th among EU exporters. As its imports of this product group are relatively large, this makes the UK a strong net importer of inorganic chemicals. Furthermore, its inorganic chemical exports decreased by 6% annually between 2002 and 2006.

The UK's exports are mainly directed towards the USA and the EU. The leading export destinations are the USA (32% of exports) and Germany (18%). Moreover, exports to both these countries are increasing rapidly.

Opportunities and threats

Based on the presented trade statistics, it could be stated that the United Kingdom is one of the larger players on the EU market of chemicals. Developing countries still have a relatively small role in the UK market, although this is changing. UK companies are becoming more interested in outsourcing to low-cost developing countries. This has particularly affected imports of chemicals from China and India, since the costs of chemicals from these countries are very low. So far, the products coming from developing countries have proved satisfactory and reliable.

Developing countries are represented most strongly in the inorganic chemical supply (29%) and dyes and pigments (20%). The increasing need for imports of inorganic chemicals seems to offer particularly good opportunities for developing country suppliers. However, one needs to bear in mind that the UK only sources in a selected group of developing countries.

Useful sources

- EU Expanding Exports Helpdesk - <http://export-help.cec.eu.int>. Go to: trade statistics.
- Eurostat – official statistical office of the EU - <http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int>
Go to: 'themes' on the left side of the home page - 'external trade' - 'data – full view' - 'external trade - detailed data'.

4. Prices and margins

Prices and margins

Prices for chemicals are highly influenced by external developments. Firstly, global political decisions, for example concerning environmental legislation and taxes, might cause changes in production costs and, thus, will influence the price levels. Secondly, the global rise in oil prices proved disadvantageous to the prices for chemicals. Thirdly, dynamism in foreign and domestic demand will have an impact on the price levels. Unfortunately, no price information was available for chemicals in the United Kingdom in particular. Please refer to the CBI market survey covering the EU market for chemicals, for general information on prices for chemicals.

Useful sources

- The prices of most commodity chemicals can be found relatively easily. Useful sources are, for example, <http://www.europeanchemicalnews.com> and <http://www.icispricing.com>
- For information on EU producer prices, consult <http://www.cefic.org>
- The prices of fine and specialty chemicals are more difficult to obtain. They are not published and can vary widely from one application area to another. Obtaining reliable price information in these segments often requires asking a distributor, or asking a producer for a quotation.

5. Market access requirements

As a manufacturer in a developing country preparing to access the United Kingdom, you should be aware of the market access requirements of your trading partners and the British government. Requirements are demanded through legislation and through labels, codes and management systems. These requirements are based on environmental, consumer health and safety and social concerns.

Legislative requirements

Adherence to national legislation in EU countries is compulsory for all products traded within the country concerned. Therefore, as an exporter in a developing country you have to comply with the legislative requirements which are applicable to your products. For information on

legislation for chemicals, go to 'Search CBI database' at <http://www.cbi.eu/marketinfo>, select your market sector, and the EU country of your interest in the category search, click on the search button and click on legislative requirements for an overview of all documents on legislation in your country of interest.

Non-legislative requirements

Social, environmental and quality-related market requirements are of growing importance in international trade and are often requested by European buyers through labels, codes of conduct and management systems. For information on non-legislative requirements applicable to chemicals, go to 'Search CBI database' at <http://www.cbi.eu/marketinfo>, select your market sector and the EU country of your interest in the category search, click on the search button and click on your subject of interest under non-legislative requirements for an overview of all documents on the subject concerned in your country of interest.

Packaging, marking and labelling

For general information on packaging, refer to the CBI market survey covering the EU market for chemicals. You can download information on requirements on packaging, marking and labelling in specific EU markets from <http://www.cbi.eu/marketinfo>.

Tariffs and quota

For information on import tariffs, please refer to the CBI market survey covering the EU market for chemicals.

Useful sources

- CBI Database – <http://www.cbi.eu/marketinfo>
- Taric Homepage – http://europa.eu.int/comm/taxation_customs/dds/en/tarhome.htm
- Directorate General XXI – http://europa.eu.int/comm/taxation_customs/common/publications/info_docs/taxation/index_en.htm

6. Business practices

Selecting a suitable trading partner

Finding a trade partner in the United Kingdom does not particularly deviate from the general EU method as described in the CBI market survey covering the EU market. UK importers of chemicals generally have contact with agents and distributors, but not direct contact with companies in developing countries. Searching for new suppliers is mainly done through visiting international trade fairs.

- The major chemical trade fair in Europe for the market segments under review in this survey is ChemSpec (<http://www.chemspeceurope.com>). The ChemSpec exhibition is held in a different European city every year in June. It is organised by DMG World Media of the UK.
- All-Energy 2007 is the UK's largest exhibition and conference devoted to renewable energy. Attention will also be paid to Chemicals & Processes. The seventh in the annual series was held in Aberdeen, May 23 and 24, 2007. Admission to the exhibition and conference is free of charge to all who have a professional interest in renewable/sustainable energy - <http://www.all-energy.co.uk>
- Offshore Europe 2007 is the largest oil & gas conference and exhibition outside North America. New exploration & production technology were discussed, as well as new ideas to discover the solutions that will deliver sustainable oil & gas in the future - <http://www.offshore-europe.co.uk>. It took place from September 4-7, 2007 in Aberdeen.

- The Royal Society of Chemistry is the largest organisation in Europe for advancing chemical sciences. The site <http://www.rsc.org/Conferences> presents a comprehensive list of events concerning the chemical sector around the world, including details of all events linked to the RSC.
- Surface World 2007 will encapsulate the latest developments in wet paint, powder and specialised coatings, electroplating, anodising and galvanising, pre and post treatments, effluent control, testing, measurement and quality assurance, health and safety and materials handling; special emphasis on new techniques and materials for the coating and finishing of wood and plastic substrates - <http://www.surfaceworldshow.com>. Surface World 2007 will take place November 6-8, 2007 in Birmingham.

Reaching an agreement with your trade partner

There are no specific terms of trade for chemicals. The general information on marketing, presented in the EU market survey (chapter 14), is also applicable to the United Kingdom and does not differ among the various EU countries.

Sales promotion

Common practices of trade promotion should not differ considerably from other European countries. In general, good care should be taken of existing contacts, applying prompt, constant and reliable communication. Letters of inquiry should always be replied to. An essential tool used in sales is a detailed and up-to-date customer database.

Exporters should realise that the Internet is an important medium. A number of users/traders of chemicals stated that they use the Internet in order to find new suppliers.

Visiting or even participating in a trade fair can be an efficient tool for communicating with prospective customers. It can also be a valuable source of information on market developments, production techniques and interesting varieties.

A **Trade Fair** in the UK, which could be of interest is:

- Creative Chemicals for Industry- Telford: <http://www.cciformulate.com/>

Assistance with market entry can also be sought through local business support organisations, import promotion organisations such as CBI and branch organisations focusing on the sectors of chemicals.

A **trade association** which could be of interest is **CBA**, The Chemical Business Association (<http://www.chemical.org.uk>).

Trade press

- Chemical Market Reporter - <http://chemicalmarketreporter.com>
- Marketletter (Publications) - <http://www.marketletter.com/pharmamarketletter.htm>
- SCRIP - World Pharmaceutical News - <http://www.scrippharma.com>
- Scrip Magazine - <http://www.scripmag.com>
- The Pharmaceutical Journal - <http://www.pjonline.com>

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