Spain Trade and Investment
Department of Evaluation
Deputy Directorate for Sustainability and Evaluation

# Business internationalisation through the gender glasses

## An analysis of ICEX support from a gender perspective

(this study has been undertaken within the framework of the “Women and Internationalisation” round tables).

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Evaluation report

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# EXECUTIVE REPORT

The study we present here is part of ICEX's line of work aimed at providing rigorous data on women's businesses to enable their analysis and contribute to a better understanding of their profile and international presence, in accordance with the women-empowering strategy included in the biennial Action Plan for the internationalization of the Spanish economy and the ICEX Strategic Plan 2021-2022, which both follow the conclusions of the Working Group on the role of women in the internationalization of the Spanish economy, promoted by the Spanish Secretary of State for Trade and the Spanish Secretary of State for Equality and against Gender Violence, through the Institute for Women and Equal Opportunities. This Working Group has fostered a forum for reflection, dialogue, collaboration and joint work around the aforementioned objective.

At the beginning of 2020, this Working Group held a series of round tables with the broad participation of the public and private sector, the academia and the civil society represented by associations and other concerned organisations. The sessions were organized around four theme areas:

- Statistics and data analysis
- Visibility, training, funding and support instruments
- Public procurement
- Private procurement

One of the main conclusions of the round table dedicated to the first topic was the absence of reliable and homogeneous data on women's businesses in the international arena, as well as the need to promote and advance in the analysis and diagnosis of the current situation. This knowledge is key to better identifying possible needs, designing instruments, or adopting initiatives that are effective in this regard.

This study undertakes a first and ambitious empirical analysis based on the universe of companies which have had any relationship with ICEX in the period starting in 2003. They amount to more than 190,000 companies in number, and we have linked our own data with data from other external sources, such as the statistics on foreign trade in goods from the Spanish General Directorate of Customs (AEAT) and economic data in the Business Registry, through Informa D&B.

In this study we have tried to answer the following relevant questions:

- Are there any specific training or capacity building needs in internationalization based on gender?
- Are there any differences in the characteristics of the company with an interest in internationalization depending on the gender of either the leader or the actual owner of the company?
- What has been the impact of ICEX's support on female participation in the company's Boards of Directors and Management Committee?
- Are there any differences in the use of ICEX support services based on the gender of either the leader or the actual owner of the company?
- Are there any differences in the target markets for ICEX support services based on the gender of either the leader or the actual owner of the company?

- Are there any differences in the export pathways for goods depending on the gender of either the leader or the actual owner of the company?

We are persuaded that the results shown here will open the way for new questions and working hypotheses that will in turn allow us to deepen our knowledge in this area, which will eventually result in improving the design of public policies that promote the participation and presence of women in the Spanish foreign sector.

This executive report presents the most relevant results of the study. The detailed and complete analyses can be found in Nuñez (2021, only in Spanish).

We begin by showing the results of an internal analysis of the contacts included in the ICEX Global CRM and the inquiries addressed by the Ventana Global contact centre (the one-stop information service of the Spanish Secretary of State of Commerce) according to the gender of the person responsible for the inquiry. Table E.1 provides the gender breakdown of contacts in ICEX Global CRM.

*Table E.1*

*ICEX CRM Global contacts by gender*

| Gender | Number | Porcentage |
|---|---|---|
| *Female* | *186.088* | *36,98%* |
| *Male* | *317.144* | *63,02%* |
| *All* | *503.232* | *100,00%* |

*Source: ICEX CRM Global and own elaboration*

## Relationship between gender and inquiries addressed by the Ventana Global contact centre

*Female gender (F)*
ICEX website support
Training
ICEX procedures

*Male gender (M)*
Gateway to export (Initiation)
Advice for internationalization
Financing
Attraction of foreign investment
Support services for establishment abroad

*No clear relationship*
Boosting exports

Response time
There are differences in the response times for inquiries between genders in 2019 within the family "ICEX procedures". This is due to atypical inquiries related to the following categories: Tax agency agreement, International employment, Public employment,

Procedures, collections and payments, Contractor profile, ICEX publications and Interview request.

## Relationship between decision-making capacity and gender

We show an extract from the results of the needs assessment of information, training and awareness-raising activities oriented to businesses, which was completed at the end of 2020. Table E.2 shows the gender breakdown of the sample corresponding to this evaluation.

*Table E.2*

*Gender breakdown of the sample of the needs assessment of information, training and awareness-raising activities oriented to businesses*

| Gender | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| *M (male)* | *1.014* | *62.09%* |
| *F (female)* | *554* | *33.93%* |
| *Missing* | *65* | *3.98%* |
| *Total* | *1.633* | *100.00%* |

*Source: ICEX Evaluation Department*

There are the following clear relationships between a person's decision-making capacity and their gender:

*Male gender (M)*
Strategic decision
Prescriber

*Female gender (F)*
Influencer
None

## Gender-specific training needs

The profile that almost exclusively demands Industry 4.0 contents corresponds to men with an influencer position between 21 and 40 years old.

Non-decision-makers of both sexes clearly demand sustainability contents, particularly women between the ages of 21 and 30.

Women with a prescriber o influencer position in companies are more likely to demand a modular training format than men, particularly between the ages of 31 and 50. Women with a prescriber position over the age of 40 are also particularly in demand for one-day short courses.

### Age differences by decision-making capacity

Within all positions with some decision-making capacity (from "influencer" to "strategic decision") women are on average 10 years younger than men.

## Impact of ICEX support on female participation in businesses

The analysis of the micro-data on participation in ICEX support services enriched with the micro-data on female participation in companies allows us to highlight the following three main results.

*Table E.3*

*Breakdown of companies that have had any relationship with ICEX between 2003 and 2019 for which gender information is available*

| Level | Type of company according to the Spanish Organic Law for Effective Equality of Women and Men[1] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Art_45 | Art_75 | Other | Total |
| *Management Committee* | *2,943* | *16,264* | *36,359* | *55,566* |
| *Board of Directors* | *2,895* | *15,598* | *79,756* | *98,249* |
| *Staff (*)* | *3,468* | *18,953* | *89,980* | *112,401* |
| *Total* | *3,468* | *18,953* | *89,980* | *112,401* |

*Self-employed people are not included*
*(*) Includes data on temporary staff, permanent staff, total staff and ratio of temporary employment*
*Source: ICEX Evaluation Department, Informa D&B and own elaboration*

### Natural evolution over time of the number of women within the Management Committee for companies that meet the objective of Article 45

There is a very marked growth of female participation in Management Committees from 2015 onwards, with annual growth rates over 10%. Data consistently show that companies meeting the Article 45 objective of a 40% minimum of female participation in the Board of Directors have one more woman in the Management Committee than their counterparts not meeting this objective.

### Impact of ICEX support on female participation in the company's Board of Directors

ICEX support has not had any impact on increasing women's participation in the companies' Boards of Directors. However, we can state that there is a 3% increase due to the passage of time in this participation.

### Impact of ICEX support on women's participation in Management Committees

However, the joint support of ICEX has led to an increase of 6.5% in the participation of women in the Management Committees. Furthermore, we can state that there is an increase of around 9% in this participation due to the passage of time. In addition, we can state that the companies that have made use of ICEX support services started in a slightly worse situation, since a company that used any ICEX support service in the period showed an average 3% less participation of women in the Management Committees than their counterparts.

## Differences in characteristics of firms that have been ICEX clients by gender

There is a higher concentration of companies led by women or owned by women within smaller-sized companies (microenterprises or businesses for which the size cannot

[1] The unabridged text of the law and the obligations for companies can be consulted in the following link (only in Spanish) https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2007-6115

be determined as they are not obliged to present financial statements), as well as in companies belonging to sectors of activity we have grouped under the heading of services to society[2], a concentration that is still higher in the case of the leader. Finally, there is also a higher concentration of female-led companies in Madrid, the Balearic Islands and to some extent Cantabria. In terms of actual owners, where this relationship is stronger, the community of Catalonia must be added.

*Table E.4*

*Active companies in 2018 and companies that have filed accounts in 2018 broken down by gender of the leader since 2014*

| Leader's gender since 2014 | Active companies | | Companies filing accounts | | Proportion (*) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Nº | Percentage | Nº | Percentage | |
| *Female* | *7,943* | *10.51%* | *5,941* | *10.61%* | *74.80%* |
| *Male* | *43,917* | *58.14%* | *33,490* | *59.83%* | *76.26%* |
| *Multiple* | *22,808* | *30.19%* | *15,895* | *28.40%* | *69.69%* |
| *Other* | *872* | *1.15%* | *648* | *1.16%* | *74.31%* |
| *Total* | *75,540* | *100.00%* | *55,974* | *100.00%* | *74.10%* |

*(*) Proportion of companies filing accounts in 2018 in relation to companies alive in 2018*
*Source: ICEX Evaluation Department, Informa D&B and own elaboration*

*Table E.5*

*Active companies in 2018 and companies that have filed accounts in 2018 broken down by the gender of the actual owner*

| Owner's gender | Active companies | | Companies filing accounts | | Proportion (*) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Nº | Percentage | Nº | Percentage | |
| *Female* | *4,243* | *7.51%* | *3,139* | *7.16%* | *73.98%* |
| *Male* | *19,665* | *34.79%* | *15,314* | *34.93%* | *77.87%* |
| *Multiple* | *32,582* | *57.65%* | *25,373* | *57.87%* | *77.87%* |
| *Other* | *29* | *0.05%* | *18* | *0.04%* | *62.07%* |
| *Total* | *56,519* | *100.00%* | *43,844* | *100.00%* | *77.57%* |

*(*) Proportion of companies filing accounts in 2018 in relation to companies alive in 2018*
*Source: ICEX Evaluation Department, Informa D&B and own elaboration*

This qualitative information is supported by differences in quantitative variables: women-led companies tend to be smaller in size than those led by men: they tend to have 60% less revenue, half the number of employees (in particular they hire more women), one registered trademark less, as well as one investee company less than their male counterparts. Finally, they tend to be younger.

[2] We have grouped the following CNAE categories under the name of services to society: administrative and support service activities; arts, entertainment and recreation; activities of households as employers of domestic staff; activities of households as producers of goods and services for own use; activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies; health and social work activities; public administration and defence; compulsory social security; education; and accommodation and food service activities.

These differences also exist in the case of actual owners, albeit somewhat attenuated. Women-owned firms tend to have 40% less revenue and 10% less value added. They tend to be younger, but in contrast they tend to have one more investee company.

### Relationship between size and sector of activity

There is only a difference in the percentage of companies according to the gender of the leader or the actual owner of the company in the following crosses by size and sector of activity:

*Higher percentage of male-led companies*

- Small companies belonging to the manufacturing industry (the difference between the percentage of these companies led by men vs those led by women is 2.35%).
- Small companies belonging to the wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (the difference between the percentage of these companies led by men vs those led by women is 2.68%).

*Higher percentage of male-owned companies*

- Small enterprises belonging to the wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (the difference between the percentage of these enterprises owned by males vs those owned by females is 2.84%).

*Higher percentage of female-led companies*

- Microenterprises belonging to the wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (the difference between the percentage of these companies led by women vs those lead by men is 4.64%).
- Microenterprises belonging to professional, scientific and technical activities (the difference between the percentage of these companies led by women vs those lead by men is 2.13%).

*Higher percentage of female-owned companies*

- Microenterprises belonging to the wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (the difference between the percentage of these companies owned by women vs those owned by men is 2.69%).
- Microenterprises belonging to professional, scientific and technical activities (the difference between the percentage of these companies owned by women vs those owned by men is 2.00%).

## Differences in the use of ICEX support according to gender

Table E.6 shows that only 12% of the companies that have had any relationship with ICEX in the period starting in 2003 have had a woman at the helm nonstop since 2014, compared to 63% of companies that have had a male at the helm. This implies a 5-to-1 ratio: for every company led by a woman there are 5 led by a male.

In terms of actual owners, table E.7 shows that only 9% of the companies have a woman as the actual owner, compared to 40% of companies that have had a man as the actual owner. This implies a 4-to-1 ratio: for every company owned by women there are 4 owned by men.

*Table E.6*

*Distribution of companies according to gender of the leader nonstop since 2014*

| Gender of leader since 2014 | Number of companies | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| *Female* | *14,639* | *12.04%* |
| *Male* | *76,570* | *62.99%* |
| *Multiple* | *28,863* | *23.75%* |
| *Other* | *1,482* | *1.22%* |
| *Total* | *121,554* | *100.00%* |

*Source: ICEX Evaluation Department, Informa D&B and own elaboration*

*Table E.7*

*Distribution of companies according to the gender of the actual owner*

| Gender of leader since 2014 | Number of companies | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| *Female* | *7,168* | *8.84%* |
| *Male* | *32,074* | *39.57%* |
| *Multiple* | *41,753* | *51.51%* |
| *Other* | *63* | *0.08%* |
| *Total* | *81,058* | *100.00%* |

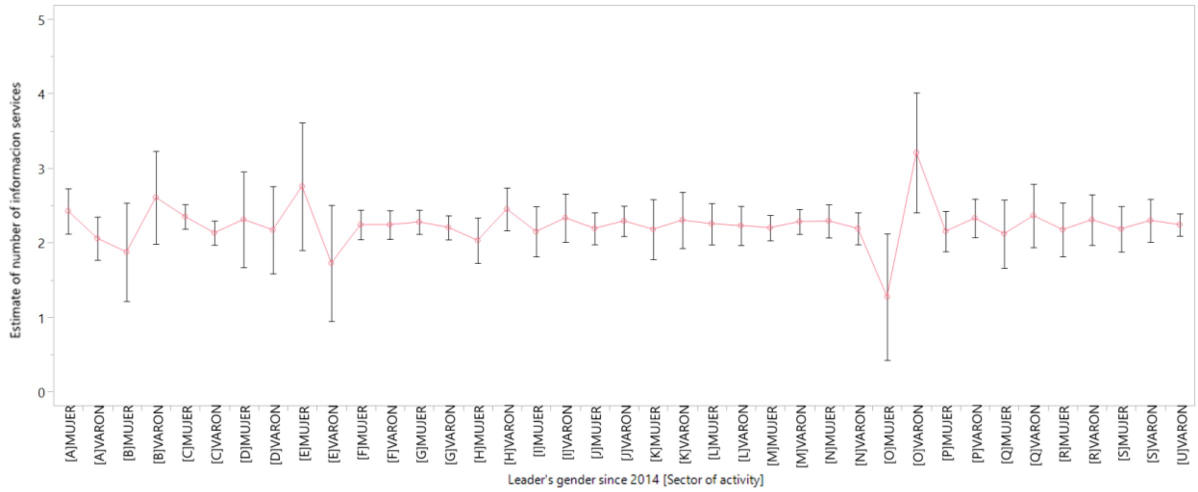
*Source: ICEX Evaluation Department, Informa D&B and own elaboration*

## Differences in the support provided to the company according to the gender of its leader

In the period 2014-2018, there have been no women-led companies that have requested investment attraction services.

*Graph E.1*

*Estimated number of information services requested corresponding to the leader's gender within each sector of activity*




*Source: ICEX Evaluation Department, Informa D&B and own elaboration*

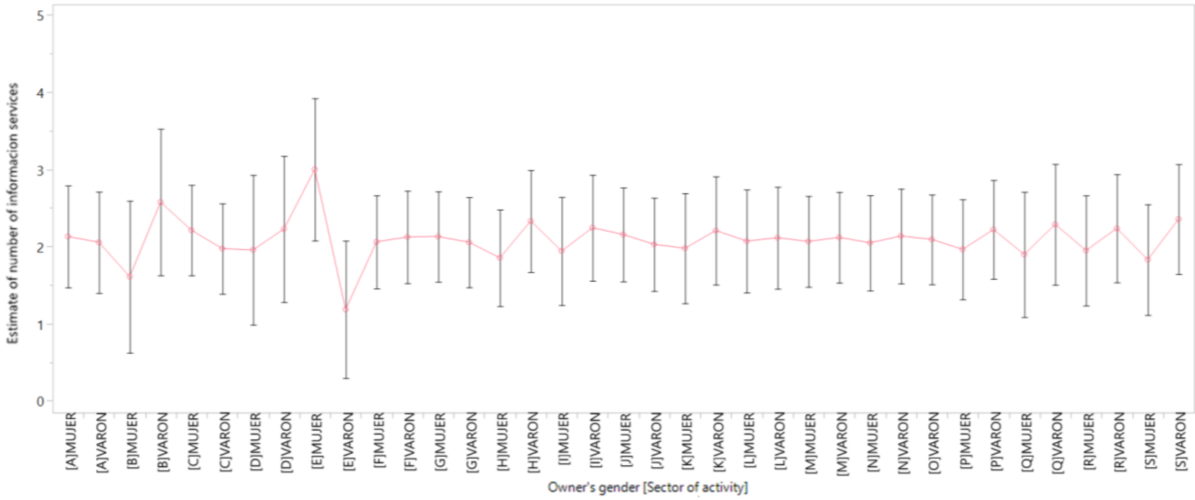
For the rest of the support services, there is only a clear difference in the information category for those businesses belonging to the Public Administration and defence sector (letter O in graph E.1), which includes official organizations, either state or local. Those organizations for which the leader is a woman have made use of at most two information services, while those organizations led by men have made use of more than two and the number can reach up to four.

### Differences in the support provided to the company according to the gender of its owner

In the period 2014-2018, except for the fact that there have been no women-owned businesses applying for investment attraction services, there are no clear differences in the use of services due to the gender of the actual business owner. We show for comparison the estimated number of information services in graph E.2.

*Graph E.2*

*Estimate of the number of information services requested corresponding to the gender of the owner within each sector of activity*




*Source: ICEX Evaluation Department, Informa D&B and own elaboration*

## Loyalty degree of companies according to size and gender in 2014-2018

We call loyalty the fact that a company has requested at least one ICEX support service in each of the years of the period 2014-2018.

### Differences in the degree of loyalty according to the gender of the leader since 2014

There are no differences in loyalty according to the gender of the company leader. The differences observed are due to the sector of activity, after controlling for company size.

### Differences in the degree of fidelity according to the gender of the actual owner

There is no major difference in the probability of a company requesting support from us for the first time depending on the gender of the actual owner of the company. However, once engaged, if a female-owned construction or utilities company has already requested a support service from us, there is a higher probability that it will end up requesting support for 5 years in a row than similar male-owned companies. This conclusion is also valid for companies dedicated to commerce or services to society, although the difference between probabilities is not robust enough.

## Differences in the destination markets for ICEX support by gender

*Table E.8*

*Number of companies that have received ICEX support associated with a destination market between 2014 and 2018 broken down by the gender of their leader since 2014 and percentage with respect to the total*

| Year | Gender of leader since 2014 | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Female | | Male | | Multiple | | Other | | Total |
| | Nº | % | Nº | % | Nº | % | Nº | % | Nº |
| 2014 | 514 | 8.77% | 3,627 | 61.86% | 1,642 | 28.01% | 80 | 1.36% | 5,863 |
| 2015 | 505 | 8.59% | 3,494 | 59.45% | 1,787 | 30.41% | 91 | 1.55% | 5,877 |
| 2016 | 513 | 9.19% | 3,201 | 57.35% | 1,798 | 32.21% | 70 | 1.25% | 5,582 |
| 2017 | 388 | 8.64% | 2,470 | 54.97% | 1,572 | 34.99% | 63 | 1.40% | 4,493 |
| 2018 | 373 | 8.68% | 2,314 | 53.88% | 1,557 | 36.25% | 51 | 1.19% | 4,295 |
| Period 2014-2018 | 1,135 | 8.94% | 7,204 | 56.73% | 4,193 | 33.02% | 166 | 1.31% | 12,698 |

*Source: ICEX Evaluation Department, Informa D&B and own elaboration*

*Table E. 9*

*Number of companies that have received ICEX support associated with a destination market between 2014 and 2018 broken down by the gender of the actual owner and percentage with respect to the total*

| Year | Gender of the actual owner | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Female | | Male | | Multiple | | Other | | Total |
| | Nº | % | Nº | % | Nº | % | Nº | % | Nº |
| 2014 | 287 | 6.17% | 1,301 | 27.95% | 3,066 | 65.86% | 1 | 0.02% | 4,655 |
| 2015 | 290 | 6.24% | 1,288 | 27.73% | 3,064 | 65.96% | 3 | 0.06% | 4,645 |
| 2016 | 275 | 6.33% | 1,218 | 28.04% | 2,850 | 65.61% | 1 | 0.02% | 4,344 |
| 2017 | 236 | 6.81% | 938 | 27.08% | 2,289 | 66.08% | 1 | 0.03% | 3,464 |
| 2018 | 218 | 6.55% | 904 | 27.15% | 2,207 | 66.28% | 1 | 0.03% | 3,330 |
| Period 2014-2018 | 644 | 6.60% | 2,903 | 29.76% | 6,206 | 63.61% | 3 | 0.03% | 9,756 |

*Source: ICEX Evaluation Department, Informa D&B and own elaboration*

### Differences in target markets for ICEX support based on the gender of the company's leader

The only results worth noting are that women-led firms use less contact support in South America, and use more trade promotion support in North America, the Far East and EFTA. This may be related to the fact that there is a higher concentration of female-led firms involved in services to society, including education, which have their target audience in high purchasing power markets.

### Differences in the target markets for ICEX support based on the gender of the company's owner.

In general, it cannot be said that women-owned firms prefer or avoid certain destination markets when applying for ICEX support. There is only evidence that women-owned firms use less contact support in Eastern Europe. In South America, however, they use more investment and tender-oriented services.

Table E.10

Number of companies using ICEX services that have exported goods between 2000 and 2019 broken down by the gender of their leader since 2014 and percentage with respect to the total

| Company type by export flow [3] | Gender of leader since 2014 | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Female | | Male | | Multiple | | Other | | Total |
| | Nº | % | Nº | % | Nº | % | Nº | % | Nº |
| 1 | 845 | 13.53% | 3,879 | 62.11% | 1,457 | 23.33% | 64 | 1.02% | 6,245 |
| 2 | 532 | 8.73% | 3,898 | 63.95% | 1,592 | 26.12% | 73 | 1.20% | 6,095 |
| 3 | 2,371 | 9.87% | 15,847 | 65.97% | 5,548 | 23.10% | 254 | 1.06% | 24,020 |
| 4 | 323 | 10.29% | 1,991 | 63.41% | 797 | 25.38% | 29 | 0.92% | 3,140 |
| 5 | 424 | 13.82% | 1,803 | 58.75% | 796 | 25.94% | 46 | 1.50% | 3,069 |
| 6 | 954 | 9.48% | 6,583 | 65.44% | 2,411 | 23.97% | 111 | 1.10% | 10,059 |
| 7 | 404 | 12.32% | 1,912 | 58.29% | 922 | 28.11% | 42 | 1.28% | 3,280 |
| Unkown | 1,275 | 11.57% | 6,747 | 61.25% | 2,876 | 26.11% | 118 | 1.07% | 11,016 |
| Total | 7,128 | 10.65% | 42,660 | 63.74% | 16,399 | 24.50% | 737 | 1.10% | 66,924 |

Companies not belonging to any type (unknown type) have exported only one year in the period
Source: AEAT, ICEX Evaluation Department, Informa D&B and own elaboration

Table E.11

Number of companies using ICEX services that have exported goods between 2000 and 2019 broken down by the gender of the actual owner and percentage of the total

| Company type by export flow | Gender of the actual owner | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Female | | Male | | Multiple | | Other | | Total |
| | Nº | % | Nº | % | Nº | % | Nº | % | Nº |
| 1 | 380 | 8.64% | 1,633 | 37.12% | 2,384 | 54.19% | 2 | 0.05% | 4,399 |
| 2 | 298 | 5.99% | 1,419 | 28.54% | 3,254 | 65.45% | 1 | 0.02% | 4,972 |
| 3 | 1,232 | 6.22% | 6,465 | 32.64% | 12,092 | 61.06% | 16 | 0.08% | 19,805 |
| 4 | 186 | 8.90% | 951 | 45.48% | 954 | 45.62% | 0 | 0.00% | 2,091 |
| 5 | 187 | 9.42% | 793 | 39.95% | 1,001 | 50.43% | 4 | 0.20% | 1,985 |
| 6 | 477 | 5.56% | 2,773 | 32.33% | 5,322 | 62.04% | 6 | 0.07% | 8,578 |
| 7 | 187 | 8.11% | 754 | 32.71% | 1,363 | 59.13% | 1 | 0.04% | 2,305 |
| Unkown | 663 | 9.50% | 2,965 | 42.47% | 3,349 | 47.97% | 5 | 0.07% | 6,982 |
| Total | 3,610 | 7.06% | 17,753 | 34.73% | 29,719 | 58.14% | 35 | 0.07% | 51,117 |

Companies not belonging to any type (unknown type) have exported only one year in the period 2000-2018
Source: AEAT, ICEX Evaluation Department, Informa D&B and own elaboration

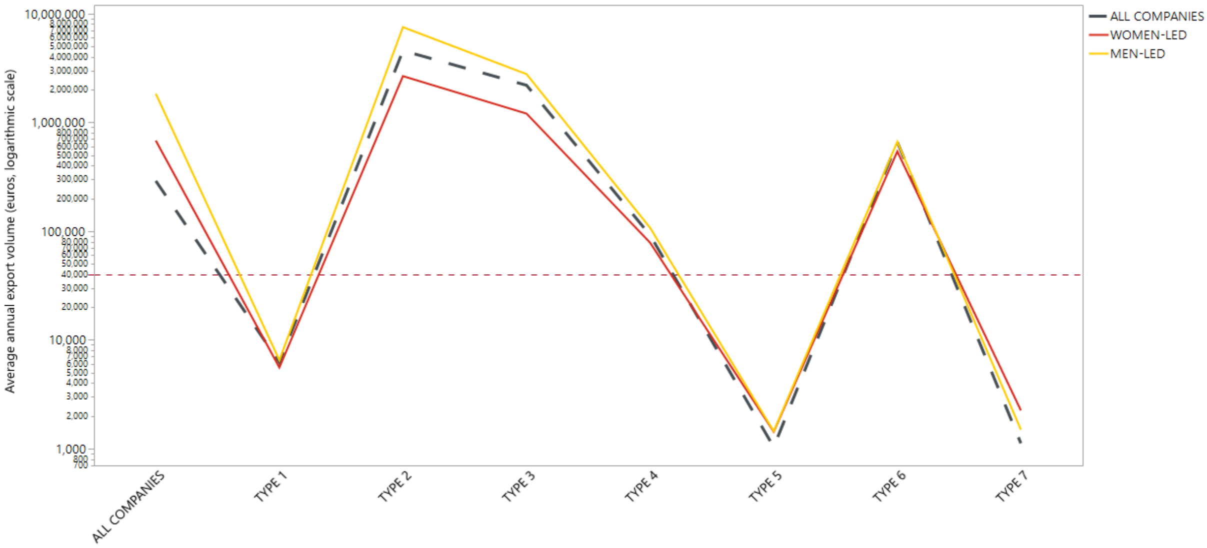
[3] Company types by export flow have been calculated based on the clustering carried out at ICEX, which can be found in Núñez (2020). A description of these types is given below:
- Type 1. Estimated export time: around five years. Annual export volume: less than 10,000 euros.
- Type 2. Estimated export time: over seven years. Annual export volume: around 4 million euros.
- Type 3. Estimated export time: exceeding nine years. Annual export volume: around 2 million euros.
- Type 4. Estimated export time: two years. Annual export volume: around 100,000 euros.
- Type 5. Estimated export time: two years. Annual export volume: around 1,000 euros.
- Type 6. Estimated export time: around nine years. Annual export volume: around 1 million euros.
- Type 7. Estimated export time: four years. Annual export volume: around 1,000 euros.

## Differences in export pathways for goods by gender

50% fewer female-led companies are expected to start their export activity than male-led firms, with a 20% lower average annual export volume. On the other hand, 30% fewer female-owned companies are expected to start exporting compared to the number of male-owned companies, although in this case there is no difference in the average annual export volume.

*Graph E.3*

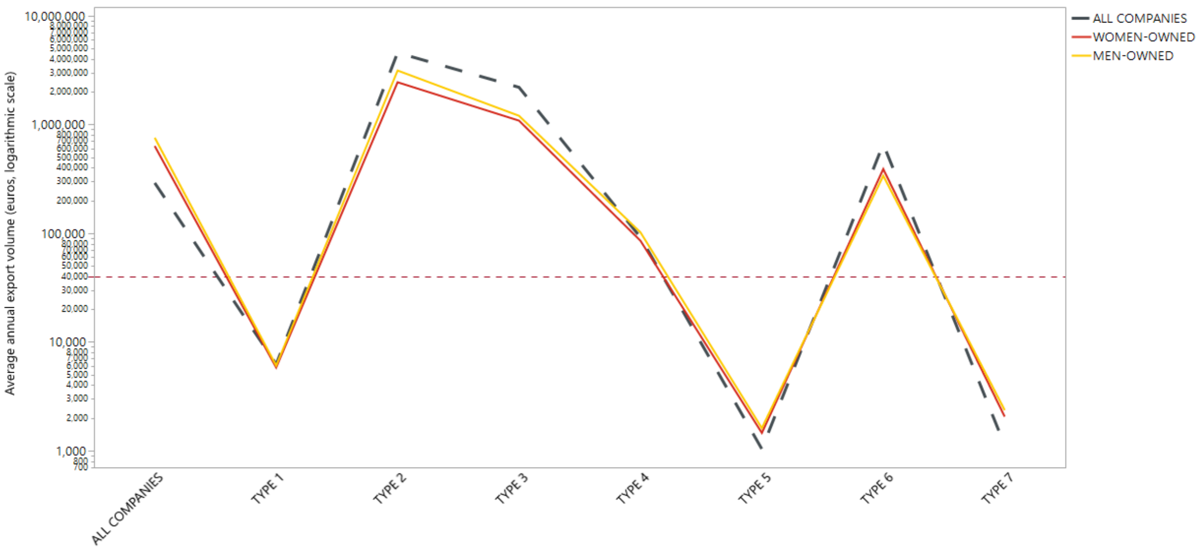
*Average annual volume of goods exports between 2000 and 2019 by company type and gender of leader since 2014*




*Source: AEAT, ICEX Evaluation Department, Informa D&B and own elaboration*

*Graph E.4*

*Average annual volume of goods exports between 2000 and 2019 by company type and gender of the actual owner of the firm*




*Source: AEAT, ICEX Evaluation Department, Informa D&B and own elaboration.*

However, the non-existence of differences in the probabilities of becoming a regular firm and a viable regular firm tells us that the conditions for a firm to achieve this status do not depend on the gender of the people who hold the majority of the capital or who lead the firm's international strategy.

Therefore, would-be differences in the international pathways of a company are rather company-type-dependent than gender-dependent.

For companies starting their export activity as from 2010, there are no major differences in the weight of the EU according to either the gender of the leader or the actual owner. However, from 2012 onwards the EU market gains weight for companies with both a longer international track record and higher export volumes led by women compared to similar companies led by men. In terms of actual owners, for the same type of companies the EU gains weight from 2012 onwards for women-owned companies, although this importance decreases for companies that have been starting their export activity in subsequent years.

Longer-lived companies with a longer international track record (types 2 and 3) led by women explore slightly fewer areas and receive an export volume that is normally lower –and at most equal– than their male-led counterparts. However, female-owned companies explore the same number of areas but receive a smaller –and at most the same– export volume as their male-owned counterparts.

There is no great difference in the export pathways for goods according to the gender of the actual owner. This implies that both men and women act equally when it comes to decide upon entering any market, and therefore it cannot be said that women are more risk averse to entering any particular export market. However, there are areas where women-led companies have less presence. Since in the corporate hierarchy, the actual owner has more decision-making capacity than the leader of the international strategy –in essence, a senior employee of the company whose position is always at the disposal of the actual owner– this fact can only be explained by the existence of glass ceilings for women. Regardless of whether the owner is a male or a female, there are circumstances under which the decision is against placing a woman at the helm of the international strategy.

There are certain differences in the probability of a company initiating its export process in a particular area or eventually exporting to a particular area at some point in time, depending on the gender of the owner or the leader. Considering the most frequent pathways among the companies that have had any relationship with ICEX and only the differences due to the owner, it could be said that companies whose owner is a woman have a greater probability of both initiating and continuing their international process in Asia and Oceania, while companies whose owner is a man have a greater probability of both initiating and continuing their international process in areas with a more historical commercial relationship with Spain, such as North Africa or South America.

### Relationship between gender and first export area

We show the areas where a company is most likely to export for the first time based on the gender of its owner.

*Male-owned companies*
Central Africa
Central America
EFTA
European Union
North Africa
North America
Rest of Europe
South America

*Female-owned companies*
Arabian Peninsula
Central Asia
Far East
Near East
Oceania
South Asia
Southern Africa
Western Africa

### Relationship between gender and export areas

We show those areas where a company is most likely to export based on the gender of the actual owner.

*Male-owned companies*
North Africa
Rest of Europe
South America

*Female-owned companies*
Arabian Peninsula
Central America
EFTA
Far East
Near East
North America
Oceania
Southeast Asia

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