



# DAMPENED OPTIMISM

*EXPORT MANAGERS' INDEX*  
*Third quarter 2024*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Business Sweden's Export Managers' Index (EMI) fell back in the third quarter and dropped by 4.9 points to 50.4, from 55.3 in the second quarter. The fact that the index is close to the 50-mark – the dividing line between optimism and pessimism – signals that export companies have a dampened optimistic view of export development.

The decline in EMI was driven by assessments of both the current situation and the outlook for the next three months. The EMI current subindex fell by 3.9 points to 50.6 in the third quarter, from 54.5 in the second quarter. EMI forecast, the subindex for the forward-looking questions, fell by 5.9 points to 50.2 in the third quarter, from 56.1 in the previous quarter. Both subindices are just above the 50-mark which indicates that export managers have a dampened optimistic view of current export performance and future prospects.

The most notable result in the survey was that it shows a broad-based decline. Most subindices fell back, with several dropping below the 50-mark, unlike the previous survey where almost all subindices – except the index for export order stocks – were above 50. A bright spot in the third quarter survey was seen in the index reflecting views of expected export sales which remained high, signalling continued optimism.

The index for export sales in the next three months increased marginally by 0.6 points to 60.7 in the third quarter, from 60.1 in the second quarter. Despite a sharp fall of 9.2 points, the current export sales index remains slightly above the 50-mark. The index reflecting views of the profitability of current export sales was more or less unchanged and remains high at 57.0. At the same time, the index for expected profitability of export sales in the next three months plunged by 12.3 points to 49.2 in the third quarter, from 61.5 in the second quarter. In this context, the stronger Swedish krona has most likely played a contributing role.

The regional differences became more pronounced once again. The index for expected export demand dropped significantly in several regions and is now below the 50-mark in four of the six regions. The decline was particularly sharp in South America and Asia, where the index for expected demand is well below the 50-mark, indicating that export companies have a gloomy view of demand from these regions. Despite the decline in the third quarter, export companies maintain an optimistic view of demand from Western Europe and North America and a balanced view of demand from Central and Eastern Europe as well as the Middle East, Türkiye, and Africa.

Overall, the third quarter survey shows that optimism has dampened among export companies. This is likely a response to the turmoil of recent months in the global economy. Growing concerns about both the Chinese and American economies have prompted a more cautious outlook and many companies have lowered their expectations. But there are also positive signals. While geopolitical tensions remain, they have not accelerated. The global economy is relatively stable, and central banks and governments are increasingly focused on stimulating economies by easing both monetary and fiscal policies. In all, this will most likely lead to increased demand and new opportunities ahead.

Lena Sellgren  
Chief Economist

NEXT EXPORT  
MANAGERS' INDEX

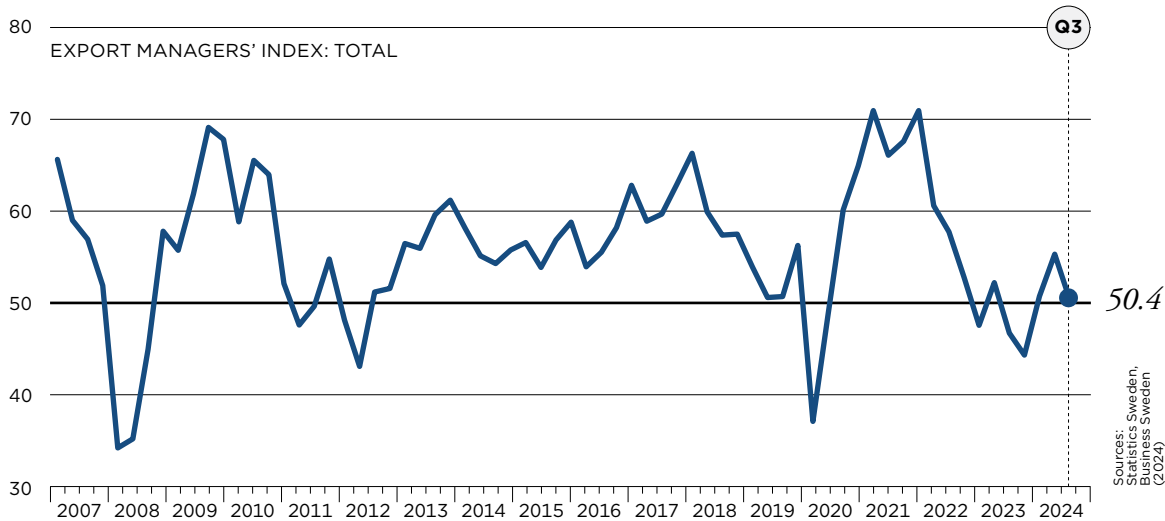
NOVEMBER

7



# EXPORT MANAGERS' INDEX FELL BACK

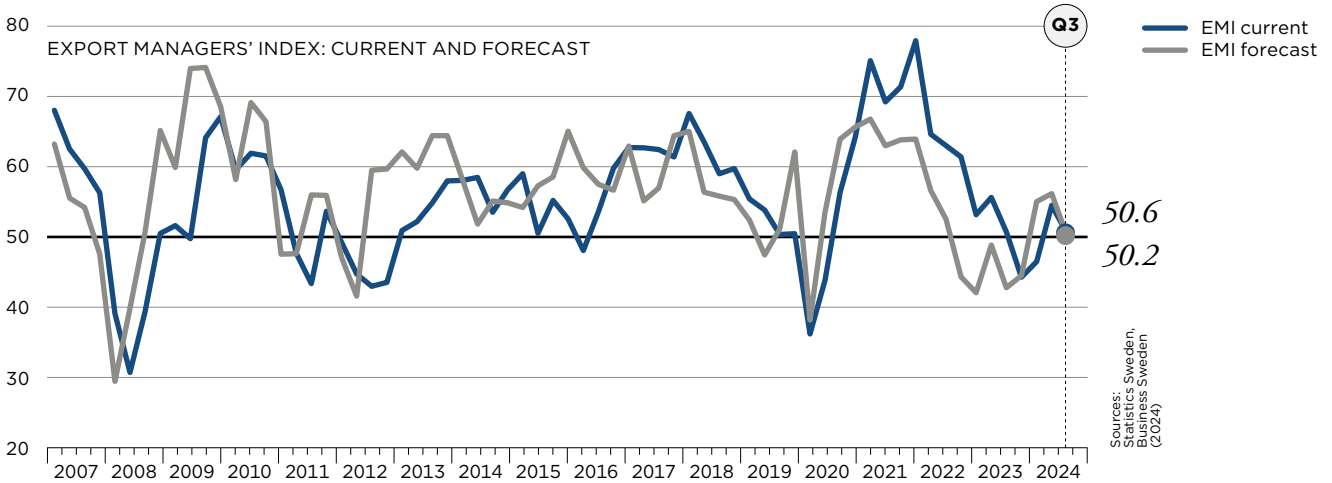
EXPORT MANAGERS' INDEX (EMI) DROPPED IN THE THIRD QUARTER



Business Sweden's Export Managers' Index, which monitors views and reflects sentiment among Swedish exporters of goods and services, fell back in the third quarter. EMI fell by 4.9 points to 50.4, from 55.3 in the second quarter. The fact that EMI is above the 50-mark – the dividing line between

optimism and pessimism – means that more export companies believe in a strengthening of export development than a weakening. However, EMI is now close to the 50-mark which indicates that companies have a dampened optimistic view of the export market.

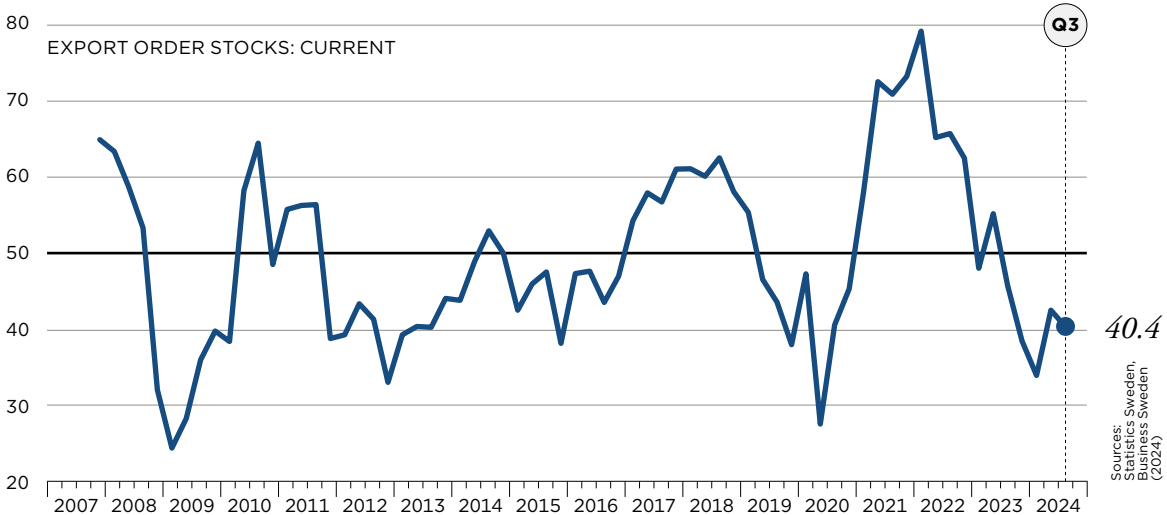
## EMI DECLINE DRIVEN BY VIEWS OF BOTH CURRENT EXPORT DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE PROSPECTS



The decline in EMI was driven by views of both the current situation and the outlook for the next three months. The EMI current subindex fell by 3.9 points to 50.6 in the third quarter, from 54.5 in the second quarter. EMI forecast, the subindex for the forward-looking questions, fell by 5.9 points to 50.2 in the third quarter,

from 56.1 in the previous quarter. Both subindices are just above the 50-mark. This indicates that export managers are cautiously optimistic about both current export performance and future prospects.

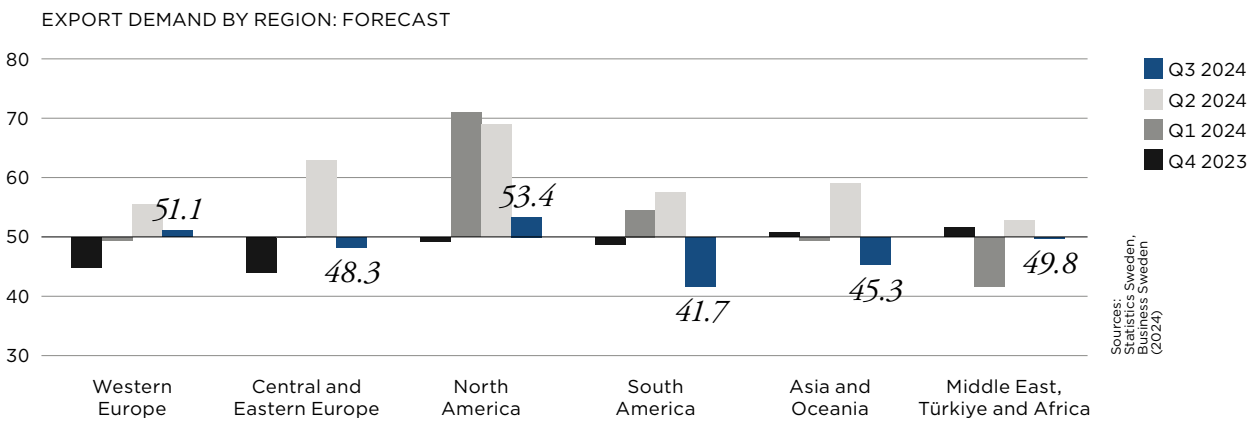
## VIEWS OF EXPORT ORDER STOCKS REMAIN GLOOMY



The uptick seen in the index reflecting views of export order stocks in the second quarter was all but temporary and fell back. The index dropped by 2.1 points to 40.4 in the third quarter, from

42.5 in the second quarter. The fact that the index is below 50 indicates that more export companies are dissatisfied with export order stocks than vice versa.

## DECLINE IN EXPECTED EXPORT DEMAND FROM ALL REGIONS



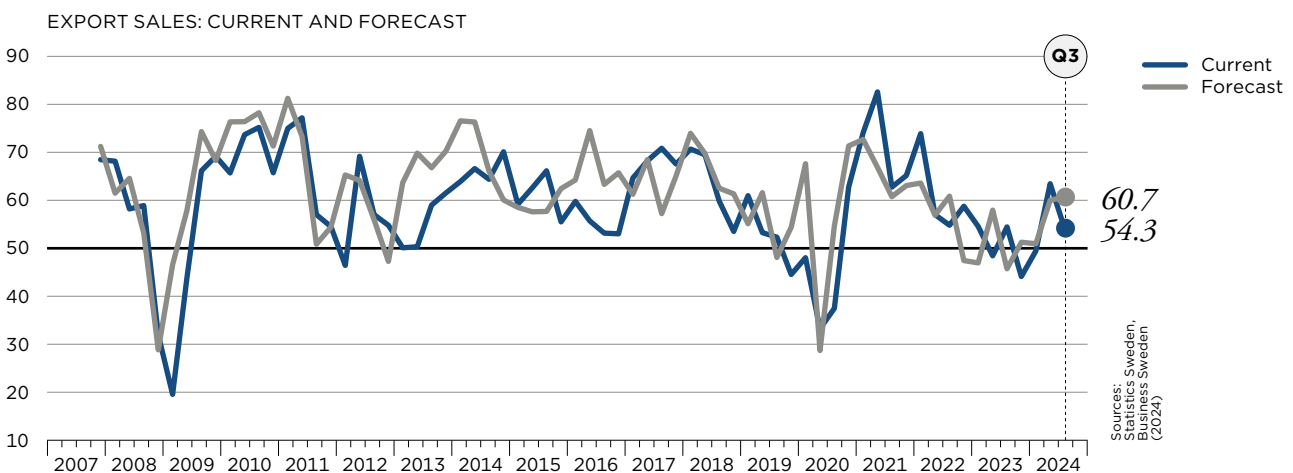
The index for expected export demand fell in all regions in the third quarter. A major decline was seen in several regions with the exception of Western Europe as well as the Middle East, Türkiye and Africa.

The index for expected export demand from Western Europe fell by 4.4 points to 51.1 in the third quarter, from 55.5 in the second quarter. The index for Central and Eastern Europe fell by 14.8 points to 48.3 in the third quarter, from a temporary high of 63.1 in the previous quarter. The index for North America fell by 15.7 points to 53.4 in the third quarter, from 69.1 in the second quarter. The index for South America fell by 15.9 points to 41.7 in the third quarter, from 57.6 in the second quarter. This is the lowest recorded level since the third quarter of 2020.

The index for expected export demand from Asia and Oceania saw a significant drop as well, falling by 13.8 points to 45.3 in the third quarter, from 59.1 in the previous quarter. This is the lowest recorded level since the third quarter of 2023. Meanwhile, the index for the Middle East, Türkiye and Africa fell by just 3.0 points to 49.8 in the third quarter, from 52.8 in the second quarter.

The index for expected export demand is now below the 50-mark in four of the six regions. The indices for expected demand from South America as well as Asia and Oceania are well below the 50-mark, indicating that export companies have a gloomy view of demand from these regions. Despite the decline in the third quarter, export companies have a continued optimistic view of demand from Western Europe and North America, and a more balanced view of Central and Eastern Europe as well as the Middle East, Türkiye and Africa.

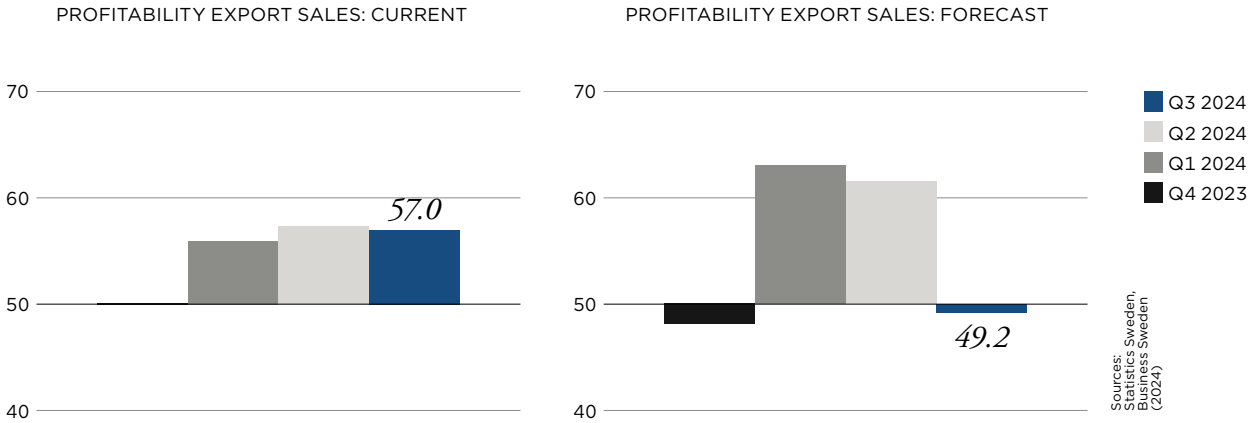
## CONTINUED OPTIMISTIC VIEW OF EXPORT SALES



The index reflecting views of current export sales fell considerably but rose marginally in the three-month forecast. The current subindex fell by 9.2 points to 54.3 in the third quarter, from 63.5 in the previous quarter. The index for export sales in the next three months rose marginally by 0.6 points to 60.7 in the third quarter, from 60.1 in the second quarter.

Despite a significant drop in the current subindex, it remains well above the 50-mark. The fact that both subindices are above the 50-mark indicates that export companies remain optimistic about both the current situation and prospects in the near future.

## VIEWS OF PROFITABILITY OF EXPORT SALES DAMPEN

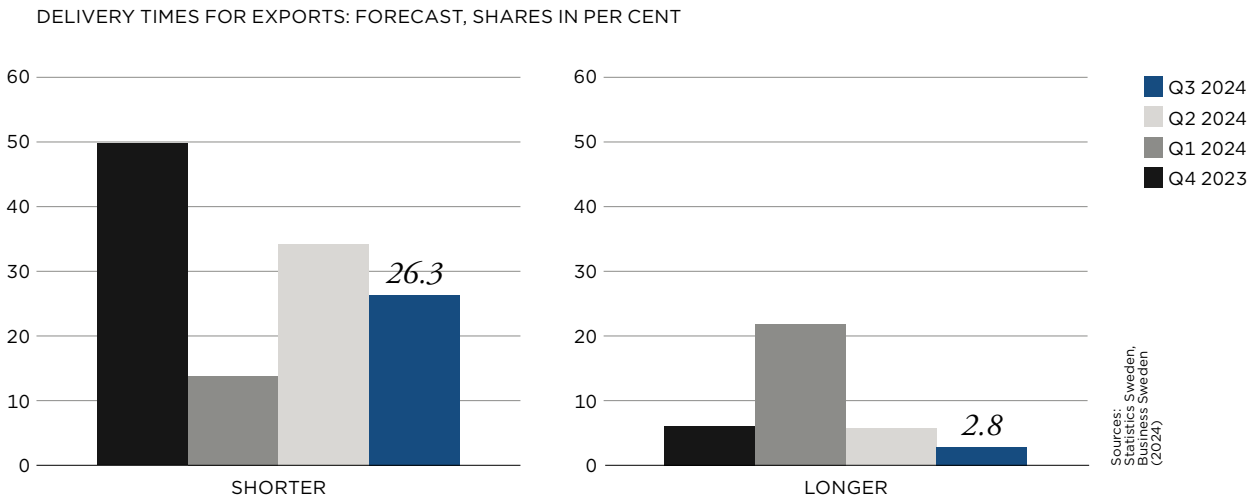


The index reflecting companies' views of the profitability of current export sales fell marginally by 0.5 points to 57.0 in the third quarter, from 57.5 in the second quarter. The index for the next three months fell considerably by 12.3 points to 49.2 in the third quarter, from 61.5 in the second quarter.

The fact that the current subindex for the profitability of export sales remains high, well

above the 50-mark, indicates that export companies remain optimistic when assessing today's profitability performance. Conversely, the decline in the forecast index which fell just below the 50-mark indicates that companies have a dampened optimistic view of the profitability of export sales when assessing future prospects.

## LARGER SHARE OF EXPORT COMPANIES EXPECT UNCHANGED DELIVERY TIMES



The share of export companies expecting longer delivery times for exports in the next three months continued to decline, falling 2.9 percentage points to 2.8 per cent in the third quarter, from 5.7 per cent in the second quarter. At the same time, the share of companies expecting shorter delivery times for exports shrank, falling by 7.9 percentage points to 26.3 per cent in the third quarter, from 34.2 per cent in the second quarter.

Given that both the share of companies expecting longer and shorter delivery times declined makes it difficult to analyse the index. But what can be observed is that the share of companies expecting unchanged delivery times has increased to approximately 70 per cent.

## ABOUT BUSINESS SWEDEN'S EXPORT MANAGERS' INDEX

Business Sweden's Export Managers' Index (EMI) has been published quarterly since 2007. The EMI takes the temperature of Swedish export companies and serves as an important economic indicator in relation to Swedish exports.

The survey is carried out by Statistics Sweden. Respondents are export managers or persons with a corresponding position in Swedish export companies. The survey covers a total of 225 companies, of which 125 have export sales of more than SEK 250 million (large companies) and 100 have export sales of SEK 25–250 million (small and medium-sized companies). The EMI is based on information from the VAT register and includes exports of both goods and services.

The Export Managers' Index consists of two parts; one main index and two subindices of which one describes the current situation and the other describes expectations for the near future. The EMI result is based on the answers to seven questions where three focus on the current situation and four are forward-looking. The seven questions carry equal weight in the survey.

The survey for the third quarter 2024 was conducted during the period 5–23 August. The results are presented in the form of a so-called diffusion index. The dividing line between strengthening and weakening has been set at 50. Values above 50 mean that there are more companies that believe in a strengthening than a weakening, and vice versa. The result is weighted with the companies' export value. The response rate in the third quarter survey 2024 amounted to 79 per cent (weighted).

The National Institute of Economic Research has evaluated the EMI in order to assess its usefulness for forecasting export development. The result shows that the EMI offers information that increases forecasting precision compared to the historical average. This means that EMI is useful for this purpose (see [www.tinyurl.com/l8ebjmx](http://www.tinyurl.com/l8ebjmx)).

Questions asked:

### *EMI current*

- What is your estimate of your company's export sales over the last three months?
- What is your estimate of your company's export order stock?
- What is your estimate of your company's current export profitability?

### *EMI forecast, next three months*

- How do you think market demand for your company's exports will develop over the next three months?
- How do you think your company's export sales will develop over the next three months?
- How do you think your company's profitability in export sales will develop over the next three months?
- How do you think your company's export delivery times will develop over the next three months?

Answers to all these questions form the basis for the main EMI.



# APPENDIX

## DATA: WEIGHTED TIME SERIES

INDICATOR	SELECTION	Q2 2024	Q3 2024	DIFF Q3 24 - Q2 24	
<b>1. EMI total</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>55.3</b>	<b>50.4</b>	<b>-4.9</b>	↘
1. EMI total	MSEK 25-250	53.1	52.1	-1.0	→
1. EMI total	>MSEK 250	55.4	50.3	-5.1	↘
<b>2. EMI current</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>54.5</b>	<b>50.6</b>	<b>-3.9</b>	↘
2. EMI current	MSEK 25-250	53.9	49.7	-4.2	↘
2. EMI current	>MSEK 250	54.5	50.6	-3.9	↘
<b>3. EMI forecast</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>56.1</b>	<b>50.2</b>	<b>-5.9</b>	↘
3. EMI forecast	MSEK 25-250	52.3	54.5	2.2	↗
3. EMI forecast	>MSEK 250	56.3	50.0	-6.3	↘

INDICATOR CURRENT	SELECTION	Q2 2024	Q3 2024	DIFF Q3 24 - Q2 24	
Question 1 - Export sales	Total	63.5	54.3	-9.2	↘
Question 1 - Export sales	MSEK 25-250	57.3	51.9	-5.4	↘
Question 1 - Export sales	>MSEK 250	63.9	54.4	-9.5	↘
Question 2 - Export order stock	Total	42.5	40.4	-2.1	↘
Question 2 - Export order stock	MSEK 25-250	47.2	37.7	-9.5	↘
Question 2 - Export order stock	>MSEK 250	42.3	40.5	-1.8	↘
Question 3 - Export profitability	Total	57.5	57.0	-0.5	→
Question 3 - Export profitability	MSEK 25-250	57.3	59.4	2.1	↗
Question 3 - Export profitability	>MSEK 250	57.5	56.9	-0.6	→

INDICATOR FORECAST	SELECTION	Q2 2024	Q3 2024	DIFF Q3 24 - Q2 24	
Question 4 - Export market demand	Total	67.1	52.6	-14.5	↘
Question 4 - Export market demand	MSEK 25-250	52.7	58.5	5.8	↗
Question 4 - Export market demand	>MSEK 250	67.8	52.3	-15.5	↘
Question 4a - Western Europe	Total	55.5	51.1	-4.4	↘
Question 4a - Western Europe	MSEK 25-250	53.8	53.8	0.0	→
Question 4a - Western Europe	>MSEK 250	55.6	51.0	-4.6	↘
Question 4b - Central & Eastern Europe	Total	63.1	48.3	-14.8	↘
Question 4b - Central & Eastern Europe	MSEK 25-250	48.8	53.6	4.8	↗
Question 4b - Central & Eastern Europe	>MSEK 250	63.6	48.0	-15.6	↘
Question 4c1 - North America	Total	69.1	53.4	-15.7	↘
Question 4c1 - North America	MSEK 25-250	57.4	60.6	3.2	↗
Question 4c1 - North America	>MSEK 250	69.5	53.2	-16.3	↘
Question 4c2 - South America	Total	57.6	41.7	-15.9	↘
Question 4c2 - South America	MSEK 25-250	45.5	64.3	18.8	↗
Question 4c2 - South America	>MSEK 250	57.9	41.1	-16.8	↘
Question 4d - Asia & Oceania	Total	59.1	45.3	-13.8	↘
Question 4d - Asia & Oceania	MSEK 25-250	48.5	60.0	11.5	↗
Question 4d - Asia & Oceania	>MSEK 250	59.5	44.7	-14.8	↘
Question 4e - Middle East, Türkiye & Africa	Total	52.8	49.8	-3.0	↘
Question 4e - Middle East, Türkiye & Africa	MSEK 25-250	37.5	50.0	12.5	↗
Question 4e - Middle East, Türkiye & Africa	>MSEK 250	53.2	49.8	-3.4	↘
Question 5 - Export sales	Total	60.1	60.7	0.6	→
Question 5 - Export sales	MSEK 25-250	60.0	57.5	-2.5	↘
Question 5 - Export sales	>MSEK 250	60.1	60.9	0.8	→
Question 6 - Export profitability	Total	61.5	49.2	-12.3	↘
Question 6 - Export profitability	MSEK 25-250	50.0	53.8	3.8	↗
Question 6 - Export profitability	>MSEK 250	62.1	49.0	-13.1	↘
Question 7 - Export profitability	Total	35.7	38.2	2.5	↗
Question 7 - Export profitability	MSEK 25-250	46.4	48.1	1.7	↗
Question 7 - Export profitability	>MSEK 250	35.2	37.7	2.5	↗

↗ = Δ > +1.0    → = Δ ≤ ±1.0    ↘ = Δ < -1.0





*We help Swedish companies grow global sales and  
international companies invest and expand in Sweden.*

**BUSINESS-SWEDEN.COM**

**BUSINESS SWEDEN** Box 240, SE-101 24 Stockholm, Sweden  
World Trade Center, Klarabergsviadukten 70  
T +46 8 588 660 00 [info@business-sweden.se](mailto:info@business-sweden.se)  
[www.business-sweden.com](http://www.business-sweden.com)