

1. Political

- How do the policies of the current government support or hinder my business development ideas?
 - Tax rates and incentives
 - Trade barriers or restrictions
 - Competition
 - Trade union or wage agreements
- Is the current government pro-business development and are there specific policy supports that might be of help?
 - Credit guarantees
 - Export incentives
 - Employment supports
 - Research and development grants
- How long is left of the current term of office and how likely is a change of government at the next election?
 - How likely is it that current policy supports would be changed?
 - How likely is it that current policy hindrance would be removed?

3. Social

- What emerging lifestyle trends might hinder or support the development of your business?
 - Is there a growing environmental awareness and does this impact consumer spending
 - Are consumers more health conscious and does this impact their behaviour
- What are the demographic trends and how will they affect your business?
 - Is the rural population increasing or decreasing
 - What is the trend for the specific consumer subset that your business targets
 - Increasing or decreasing in size
 - Education levels past, present and future
 - Have you considered the impact of immigration and emigration
 - Have you considered the proliferation of ethnic minority groups and their religious or ethical beliefs or habits
 - Have you considered the impact of population ageing at a macro level and how it may affect local market trends
- What are the key trends where consumer attitudes and habits are concerned?
 - Is there a concerted effort to support local produce and are people consciously buying more as a result
 - Are more people holidaying at home for economic, political or environmental reasons
 - What is the consumer attitude to product quality and customer service
 - How will the growth of online shopping impact your business

5. Environmental

- What national environmental policies are directly relevant to your business?
- What EU environmental policies are directly relevant to your business?
- What is the influence of global environmental protocols on your business or industry sector?
- What is the impact of climate change on your industry?
- What is the likely impact of environmental or carbon taxation policy on your product or service?
 - Recycling charges
 - Transport taxes
 - Excise duties
- Are there environmental standards that will govern your business activity?
- Is there a business compliance standard that you will need to achieve?
- Are there special licences that you will need to acquire and maintain in order to conduct your business or provide your service?

2. Economic

- What stage is the home economy going through at present?
 - Heading into a downturn
 - In recession
 - In recovery
 - Growing year on year
- What stage is the global economy going through at present?
 - Heading into a downturn
 - In recession
 - In recovery
 - Growing year on year
- What is likely to happen where financial policy is concerned?
 - Is the government likely to stimulate the market or try to cool it down
 - Are interest rates rising, falling or steady and what is the likelihood for change moving forward
 - What is the inflationary trend and how might this impact labour and material costs
 - What are exchange rate trends and how will they impact on the cost of raw materials
- What are employment prospects like and how is this likely to impact on consumer spending?
- What is the level of consumer credit availability?

4. Technological

- How susceptible is your business to technological change?
 - At your individual business level
 - Developments within your industry sector
 - Changes in consumer habits or levels of expectation where technology is concerned
- How expensive will it be to future proof your business technology infrastructure to keep up with new developments?
 - Hardware
 - Software – proprietary or open source
 - Training – continuous professional development of staff
- How prepared are you to take advantage of developments or advances in technology and do you have the capacity to innovate?

6. Legal

- What categories of law do you need to consider that will impact on your business or service?
 - Company law
 - Employment law
 - Health and safety
 - Consumer protection and e-commerce
 - Data protection
 - Competition law
 - Copyright and patents and intellectual property rights