

One Year Later: Revisiting the Contributions of Syrian Entrepreneurs in Turkey

A Report by Building Markets

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Building Markets

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PREFACE

This report has been produced by Building Markets and was made possible due to the generous support of The Government of Canada's Department of Global Affairs. Field research and data collection was led by Güler Kaya and Building Markets' local partner, Syrian Economic Forum (SEF). Additional research and writing support was provided by Işık Oğuzertem, Kavya Raman, and Selen Uçak. Building Markets also gratefully acknowledges the Syrian business owners and other stakeholders who contributed their time, experience, and insights to this report.

Building Markets has been working to bring visibility and opportunity to Syrian-owned small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Turkey since 2016 as a core component of its work to create jobs, stability, and localize the aid response in the Syrian crisis. The principal objective of this report is to provide a snapshot of 210 Syrian businesses,¹ surveyed in 2017 and 2018, and review their status and performance over the course of nearly one year.

Building Markets, headquartered in New York, United States, is a nonprofit organization that creates jobs and encourages economic growth in crisis-affected countries by connecting local micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) to new opportunities. Through its approach, the organization has built a network of 24,000 local SMEs and CSOs, assisted those businesses and organizations in winning \$1.3 billion² in contracts, and helped create over 69,000 jobs.

Building Markets welcomes any case studies or best practices that would strengthen this report. These can be submitted, along with any questions and comments, to reports@buildingmarkets.org.

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¹According to Turkey's Direct Foreign Investor Law (2003, No.4875, Art.3), companies established by foreigners in Turkey are afforded the same rights and privileges as all other Turkish businesses. This means all businesses in Turkey are, in effect, Turkish businesses. Strictly for clarity, this report will refer to businesses owned by Syrians in Turkey as "Syrian businesses", and businesses owned by Turkish citizens as "Turkish businesses", though they are the same before the law.

²All monetary values reported are given in United States currency (USD), unless otherwise specified.

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2017, Building Markets conducted its first business survey of Syrian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Turkey. The purpose of the research was to bring visibility to Syrian entrepreneurs, better understand their capabilities, and contribute to strategies that would expand their positive economic and social impacts on the Turkish economy. The survey also set a baseline so that business changes could be tracked overtime. This report, along with anecdotal evidence from key stakeholders, follows up on that early research, providing an update on the performance and evolving needs of Syrian-led enterprises in Turkey.

Overall, survey data shows that Syrian SMEs continue to exhibit positive performance and are confident in their future, with over 90 per cent reporting to be doing somewhat or much better over the past six months. In terms of sectoral performance, Syrian SMEs operating in the areas of accommodation and food service, administrative and support service activities, construction, and real estate have been able to meet or exceed their hiring expectations.

At the same time, one year has not changed much in terms of overcoming certain barriers to long-term growth: they are still generally not bidding for tenders, accessing loans, or receiving business support. They are also not establishing new partnerships with Turkish companies at scale, which could facilitate faster, better market integration that is mutually beneficial to both Turkish and Syrian companies. One notable difference from the previous baseline survey is that the Turkish language barrier may be eroding with time, with new ancillary services emerging within the Syrian business community. Instead, the most pressing challenges expressed by Syrian businesses are competition and taxes.

Other Key Findings Include:

- Despite a continued lack of experience with loans, 18 per cent of Syrian SMEs indicated interest in borrowing for geographical expansion, additional inventory, and new hiring. Nearly half also have staff dedicated to managing finances, indicating capacity to manage loans. Facilitating access to debt capital for Syrian SMEs will be important to their continued growth and contributions in Turkey.
- On paper, Syrian businesses in Istanbul seem to be performing better than those in Gaziantep, with more reporting growing profits and new hires. As Turkey's financial and business hub, Istanbul offers a large and vibrant market with over half a million Syrians in addition to other Arabic-speaking customers.
- Gaziantep received the initial influx of Syrians, which led to a natural surge of Syrian commercial activity. However, with new arrivals slowing and the city's relatively smaller economy, businesses in Gaziantep may have more limited opportunities for future growth.³
- The rate of new Syrian businesses being established has slowed considerably. Continuing to attract and retain Syrian investment in Turkey requires greater certainty and stability with regard to their future, and access to available support and opportunities.
- To encourage job creation, more support should focus on the expansion of existing promising Syrian businesses, including helping them integrate with the Turkish commercial ecosystem, and become more domestically and internationally competitive.

Syrian SMEs at a glance

In the past six months...

39% had an international client
40% invested in fixed assets
65% increased profits
28% increased number of employees

Opportunities for Growth for Syrian SMEs

Only 19 submitted tender bids but had a high success rate with 78% winning tenders.

Only 2 took out loans but 18% are interested in borrowing in the future.

Only 6 have partnerships with Turkish companies but 37% are interested in a business partner or investor.

³ Important to note that Turkey's informal economy has been notoriously hard to measure; Gaziantep's figures may only be the formal tip of a large informal iceberg.

2. BACKGROUND

Building Markets⁴ published its first assessment of Syrian SMEs in Turkey, *Another Side to the Story*, in June 2017.⁵ In that study (referred to going forward as “the baseline survey”), 230 Syrian businesses in Istanbul and Gaziantep were interviewed and assessed across 160 data points. Since that time, Building Markets, and its local partner Syrian Economic Forum (SEF), have surveyed a total of 756 formally registered Syrian-owned SMEs in Istanbul, Gaziantep, and Mersin. In order to better understand how these businesses are adapting and growing in the Turkish economy, Building Markets reviewed the performance of 210 companies. Topics covered in the survey update ranged from management structure and expenditure details to marketing practices and business challenges.

2.1 Local Context

The Government of Turkey recently announced spending over \$30 billion on assistance for Syrian refugees and urged the international community to increase its support – particularly as tensions around social and economic issues continue to simmer within Turkish society.⁶ However, alongside the effort to ensure both Turkish and refugee communities have access to needed resources, a surprising and powerful trend has emerged. Syrians, many of whom are refugees, have established over 7,000 formally registered companies in Turkey with \$380m of capital since the war began. As elaborated in a new Building Markets report on Turkish-Syrian business partnerships,⁷ beyond creating jobs, this has helped revitalize local industries, create significant export businesses, and introduce new products to the Turkish market.

Table 1 - Recent Facts and Figures on Syrian Refugees in Turkey

Population⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none">As of May 2018, Turkey hosts over 3.5 million Syrians registered as refugees, with 94 per cent residing in host communities.Istanbul, the largest city in the country, ranks first as home to over 560,000 Syrian refugees, followed by cities in the southeast region such as Şanlıurfa, Hatay, and Gaziantep.
Citizenship Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In July 2017, Turkey started naturalizing certain Syrian refugees based on education levels, professional skills, and investments.⁹As of April 2018, at least 12,000 Syrians have already been naturalized.¹⁰For Syrian business owners, citizenship brings several advantages: greater stability and certainty regarding their future status, ability to purchase property, flexibility to travel, and relatively easier access to financial services.

4 Building Markets maintains a database of over 150 data points on 756 formal Syrian businesses. Syrian SMEs are surveyed using the organization's business verification methodology, which includes in-person interviews and site visits. Reverifications take place on a periodic basis and help maintain data accuracy and track business growth and needs over time. An online platform featuring business profiles is available at <https://refugees.buildingmarkets.org>.

5 Building Markets. 2017. “Another Side to the Story: A Market Assessment of Syrian SMEs in Turkey.” June. http://buildingmarkets.org/sites/default/files/pdm_reports/another_side_to_the_story_a_market_assessment_of_syrian_smes_in_turkey.pdf

6 Kirisci, Kemal, Brandt, Jessica, Erdogan, M. Murat. 2018. “Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Beyond the Numbers”. The Brookings Institution. June. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/06/19/syrian-refugees-in-turkey-beyond-the-numbers/>

7 Building Markets. 2018 “Turkish-Syrian Business Partnerships: A Nascent Opportunity.” June. http://www.buildingmarkets.org/sites/default/files/pdm_reports/20180612_syrian-turkishbusinesspartnerships_en_1.pdf

8 Republic of Turkey's Ministry of the Interior. Temporary Protection Statistics. 2018. Distributed by Director General of Migration Management. Accessed July 11, 2018. http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik3/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713

9 Al-Jablawi, Hosam. 2017. “Return to Syria Less Likely as Syrian Refugees Receive Turkish Citizenship.” Atlantic Council, October 13. <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/syriasource/return-to-syria-is-less-likely-as-syrian-refugees-receive-turkish-citizenship>

10 CNNTürk. 2017. “Son 10 yılda Türk vatandaşları olan Suriyeli sayısı açıklandı”. May 10. (Turkish) <https://www.cnntrk.com/ekonomi/son-10-yilda-turk-vatandasi-olan-suriyeli-sayisi-aciklandi?page=6>

Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syrian refugees continue to be eligible for work permits through their employers, as well as by establishing their own businesses.¹¹ • As of April 2018, over 54,000 work permits have been issued, including 19,925 permits for Syrians under temporary protection and 20,993 to Syrians with residence permits. 13,776 work permits have been granted to Syrian entrepreneurs who established their own business.¹² Cases of accessing work permits through non-operational shell companies have also been observed. • However, formal employment figures continue to fall significantly short of the number of Syrians working informally in Turkey, estimated to be between 750,000 and 950,000.¹³ The unemployment rate among Syrian refugees is 21 per cent, twice the rate of local unemployment.¹⁴
Enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 7,200 companies have been formally established by Syrians in Turkey as of the end of May 2018.¹⁵ • However, in January – May 2018, the rate of growth slowed compared to the same period in 2017, with the number of new Syrian businesses opened and the amount of Syrian capital invested down 21 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively.¹⁶ • During this period, Istanbul ranked first with over 50 per cent of new Syrian businesses established, compared to Gaziantep in fifth place with five per cent.¹⁷ • With the number of Syrians in Turkey increasing at a slower pace, and the ongoing uncertainties about their future in Turkey, both the number of Syrians able to invest in new companies and their willingness to do so may be shrinking, unless new incentives and facilities can draw Syrian investors from other countries to Turkey.¹⁸

3. CHANGES IN SYRIAN SMES

3.1 Company Demographics

The 210 SMEs included in the survey update are all registered companies, located in Istanbul or Gaziantep,¹⁹ with majority ownership by Syrians. They have been in operation for 2.9 years on average and 42 per cent operate in wholesale and retail industries, followed by 15 per cent in manufacturing. Food, clothing, rubber & plastic, and paper are some of the top products manufactured by Syrian businesses.

¹¹ UNHCR, "Key Information for Syrians: Livelihoods." Accessed May 24, 2018.

<http://help.unhcr.org/turkey/information-for-syrians/livelihoods/>

¹² European Union, Conference Document for Brussels II Conference, 2018. "Assistance to Syrian Refugees in Turkey," April 24. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/34146/turkey-partnership-paper.pdf>

¹³ International Crisis Group, 2018. "Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions." p. 5.

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/western-europemediterranean/turkey/248-turkeys-syrian-refugees-defusing-metropolitan-tensions>

¹⁴ UNDP, ILO, WFP, 2017. "Jobs Make the Difference: Expanding Economic Opportunities for Syrian Refugees and Host Communities." p. 22. <https://www.jobsmakethedifference.org>

¹⁵ Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey, 2018. "Company Establishment/Liquidation Statistics". Accessed July 3, 2018.

<https://www.tobb.org.tr/BilgiErisimMudurlugu/Sayfalar/KurulanKapananSirketistatistikleri.php>

¹⁶ The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), 2018. "Suriye Sermayeli Şirketler Bülteni - Mayıs," July 2. (Turkish)

http://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/1530518121-3.TEPAY_Suriye_Sermayeli_Sirketler_Bulteni____Mayis_2018.pdf

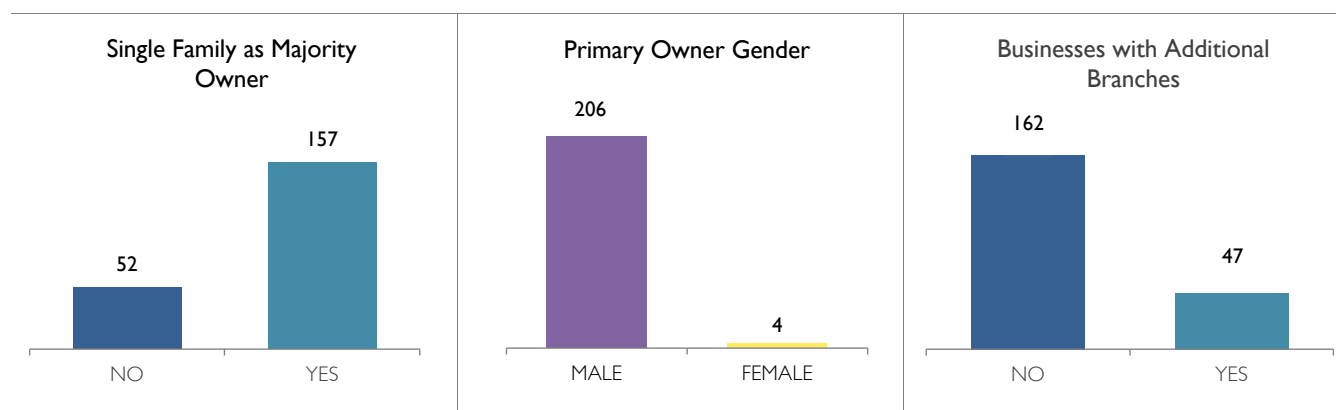
¹⁷ Building Markets' calculation based on TOBB, Company Establishment/Liquidation Statistics, 2018.

¹⁸ UNDP, ILO, WFP, 2017. "Jobs Make the Difference: Expanding Economic Opportunities for Syrian Refugees and Host Communities." <https://www.jobsmakethedifference.org>

¹⁹ The 2017 assessment only included businesses from Istanbul and Gaziantep. Building Markets started verifying businesses from Mersin later.



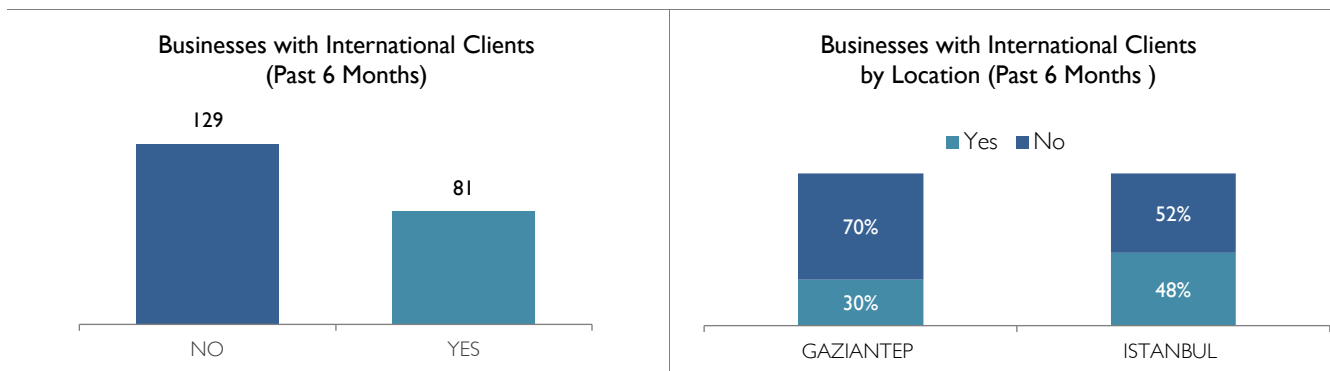
Location: Within Turkey, Syrian businesses tend to remain local in terms of the cities where they operate, though they are slowly beginning to expand. Overall, 78 per cent do not have a branch other than their main office. At the time of the baseline survey, 33 businesses communicated plans to expand geographically within the next 12 months. The current survey shows that 47 companies (40 in Istanbul) have branches, and 21 companies (15 in Gaziantep) serve additional cities in Turkey. Of the companies based in Gaziantep, 14 per cent also serve other cities, including Istanbul, Adana, Hatay and others, whereas only five per cent of companies based in Istanbul also do business in other cities. The area of operations for businesses based in Gaziantep is more geographically diverse than those based in Istanbul. The large economy and market size of Istanbul may be sufficient for businesses there whereas companies in Gaziantep have a greater need to reach additional markets. Broader geographical expansion may be facilitated by greater access to information about opportunities in new markets, collaboration with Turkish businesses, and financing.



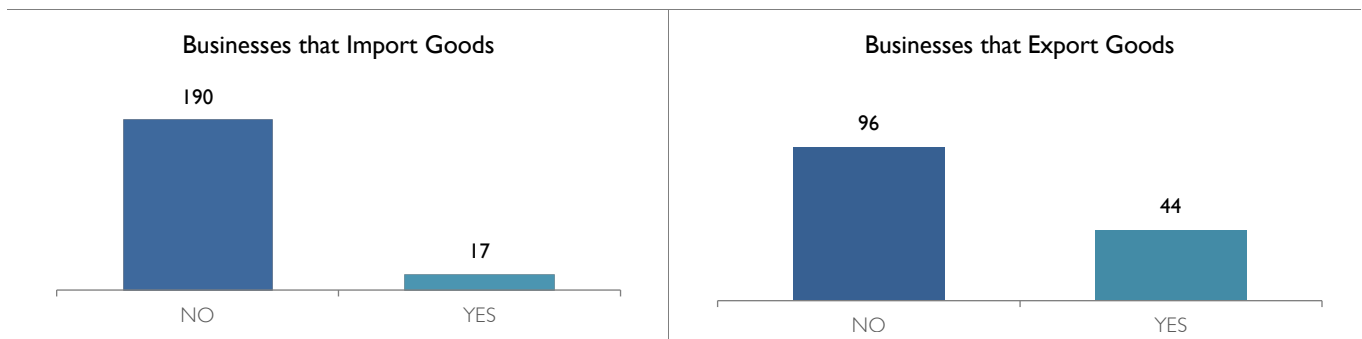
Clients: When asked whether their business had international clients in the past six months, 59 per cent of Syrian SMEs in the manufacturing sector reported selling internationally, followed by 55 per cent of firms that operate in real estate activities and administrative and support services.²⁰ Forty per cent operating in the largest Syrian business sector, wholesale and retail, reported international clients in the past six months. Looking at the geographic split, 30 per cent of businesses in Gaziantep and 48 per cent in Istanbul reported having international clients in the past six months.

Eighty-seven per cent of businesses in Gaziantep and 64 per cent in Istanbul indicated their primary (principal) client to be Syrian. Thirty-six per cent of businesses in Istanbul indicated their principal client as non-Syrian nationals. These firms are positioning themselves as more competitive and more easily able to penetrate the local market.

²⁰ The share of companies operating in real estate and administrative services is low (at only five per cent each).

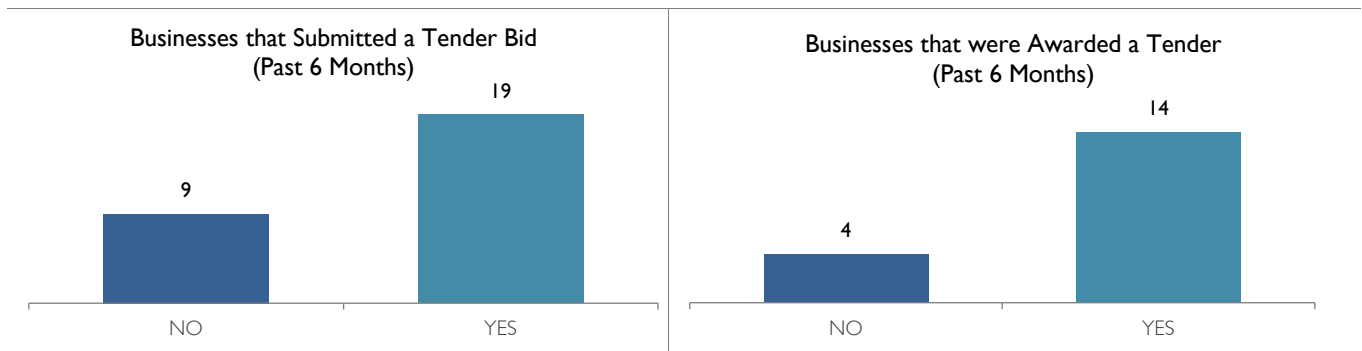


Exporters constitute a sizable portion of Syrian businesses. Thirty-one per cent of companies surveyed (44 out of 140 that responded) indicated that they export: 35 per cent in Gaziantep and 29 per cent in Istanbul export their products. Of these, 76 per cent of businesses export to Iraq or Syria, followed by other Arab and Gulf countries.



Business Expenditure: On average, Syrian businesses reported spending eight per cent of their overall budget on imported goods and 31 per cent on domestically sourced and produced goods. In addition, 92 per cent do not import directly. Only two per cent of overall expenses of Syrian businesses go to services from international suppliers and 21 per cent to services from domestic suppliers. The higher share of expenditures on domestic goods and services shows the potential contributions of Syrian businesses to the local market, and the potential business opportunities of collaboration.

Opportunities: Syrian businesses interested in applying for tenders have yet to turn this into an opportunity. In the baseline survey, 23 per cent of companies surveyed reported they were not submitting tender bids, but indicated an interest in doing so in the future. In the survey update, 19 companies indicated experience with bidding on tenders and 14 reported winning a tender in the past six months. With greater exposure to tender opportunities, companies can expand their access to new markets and buyers.

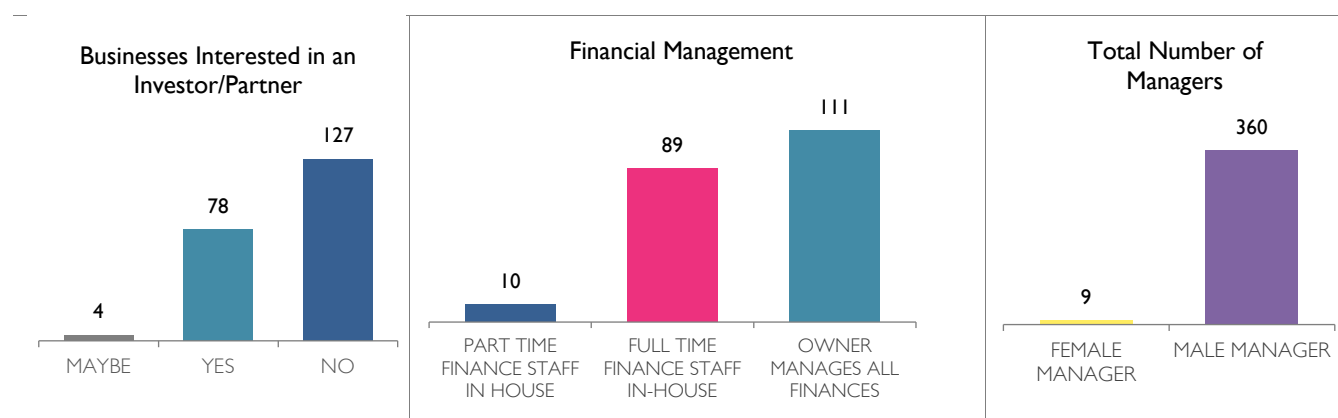


3.2 Management Capacity and Support

Syrian entrepreneurs continue to lack support systems and resources. Despite the advantages, integration with the local business ecosystem through strategic partnerships remains low. Companies with existing strategic partnerships with Turkish companies represent less than 10 per cent of the sample in both baseline and current surveys – however, partnerships represent a key opportunity for both Syrian and Turkish businesses to succeed given their complementary assets.

Overall, 37 per cent of businesses expressed interest in a Turkish or foreign business partner or investor. When breaking down by geography, 56 per cent of companies in Gaziantep were interested compared to just 16 per cent in Istanbul. Higher numbers in Gaziantep may reflect a desire or need for more assistance in navigating the Turkish business environment; whereas businesses in Istanbul are more experienced, integrated, and are generally able to thrive on their own. These findings necessitate further understanding of the barriers to sustainable and successful partnerships between Turkish and Syrian companies and ways to facilitate them, as anecdotal evidence and research both suggest mutual benefits of these ties.²¹

As an indicator of their entrepreneurial capacity and appetite, the baseline survey in 2017 asked Syrian business owners whether they were interested in starting another business in the future. At that time, 41 per cent of business owners surveyed reported an interest in starting a second business in Turkey at some point in the future. However, less than five per cent responded that they had achieved this goal within the year following the baseline survey.



Syrian businesses generally evaluate themselves favorably across several measures: 93 – 98 per cent of survey respondents consider their financial management, access to finance, technical expertise, human resources, and administrative capacities to be “good” or “very good.” In terms of their financial management capacity, 42 per cent of businesses have a full-time staff member in charge of managing finances and five per cent rely on part-time support. Fifty-three per cent of business owners manage their finances on their own. On average, companies have 1.8 managers on their payrolls and salaries constitute 38 per cent of their total expenses.

Companies generally do not offer specialized training to their staff. On the job technical training ranked first at 52 per cent, followed far behind by sales and marketing offered by only 27 per cent of companies surveyed.

Perhaps as a result of their confidence in their capacities, as well as due to their limited access to available resources, only seven companies (out of 203, or three per cent) report having received support in Turkey for their businesses from a variety of sources

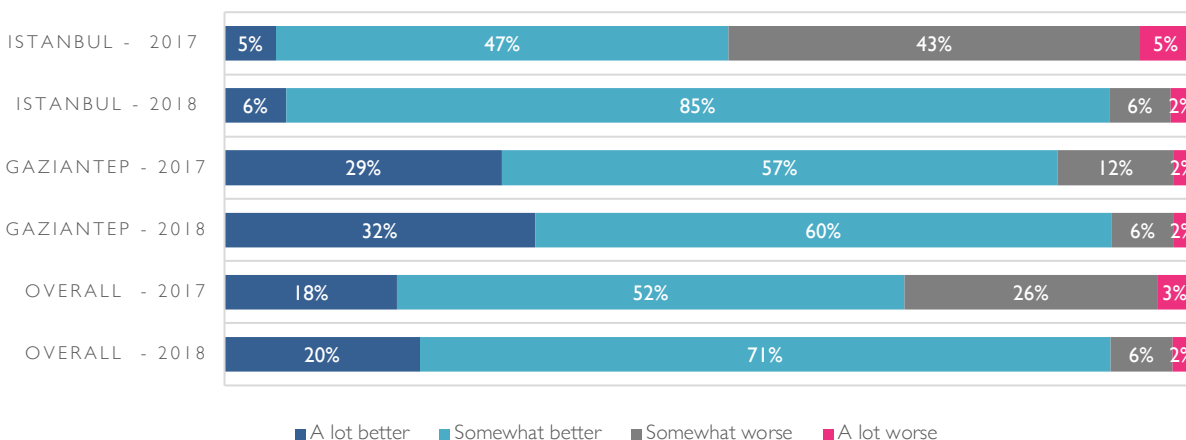
²¹ For a more detailed discussion of joint business opportunities for Syrian businesses in Turkey, see recent Building Markets report, “Turkish-Syrian Business Partnerships: A Nascent Opportunity” (June 2018). http://www.buildingmarkets.org/sites/default/files/pdm_reports/20180612_syrian-turkishbusinesspartnerships_en_1.pdf

listed, including public agencies and local and international organizations. This situation has not changed much since the baseline survey: in 2017, only seven per cent of businesses indicated they had received such support.

3.3 Business Performance Challenges

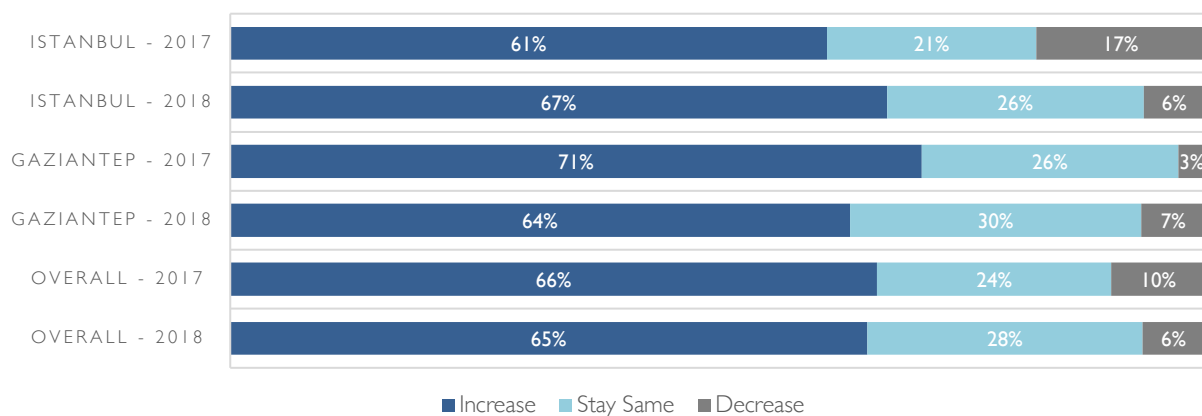
Syrian businesses generally consider themselves to be doing better than a year ago. When asked how they would describe their business performance over the last six months, 20 per cent indicated “a lot better,” 71 per cent “somewhat better,” six per cent “somewhat worse,” and two per cent “a lot worse.” This compares with the 2017 baseline survey results where 18 per cent responded, “a lot better,” 52 per cent “somewhat better,” 26 per cent “somewhat worse,” and three per cent “a lot worse.”

Syrian Businesses Report Strong Performance



Disaggregated by province, positive responses (“somewhat better” and “a lot better” together) increased by six percentage points for businesses in Gaziantep, and 39 percentage points for businesses in Istanbul. The finding suggests businesses in Istanbul had a more positive experience over the past year than those in Gaziantep.

Profits of Syrian Businesses Growing as Expected



Sixty-five per cent of surveyed businesses reported that their profits increased in the past six months. Profits of 28 per cent of the companies remained unchanged while six per cent reported a decline. Firms in Istanbul demonstrated better than expected growth while those in Gaziantep fell short of expectations.

As another indicator of general business confidence, when asked about equipment and fixed assets in the last six months, 40 per cent of respondents reported making purchases. This compares similarly with projections shared in the baseline survey, where 49 per cent indicated an interest in purchasing fixed assets and equipment in the coming year.

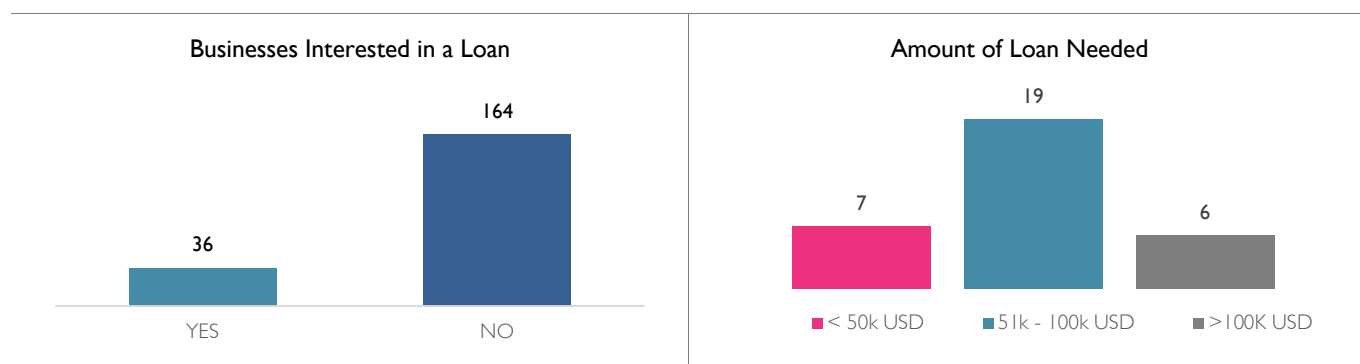
When asked about challenges Syrian businesses will face in the next six months, the top five were:

1. "Competition" (36 per cent)
2. "Taxes" (22 per cent)
3. "Exchange rate/currency fluctuations" (nine per cent)²²
4. "Difficulty Accessing Finance" (five per cent)
5. "Government Laws, Policies and Bureaucracy" (five per cent)²³

Syrian enterprises can face competition from both Turkish and Syrian businesses, depending on their sector of operations. In sectors such as tourism and retail, where Syrian businesses are more integrated with the local market, their competitors are Turkish and Syrian alike. However, Syrian businesses, which primarily serve Syrians and provide a new service to the local market, such as Syrian restaurants, compete primarily against other Syrian companies.

Conversations with Syrian business owners in Turkey indicate that many challenges they experience relate to operating in an unfamiliar, developed business environment and economy, including a more formal tax structure and banking sector. The challenges highlighted by Syrian SMEs in this survey confirm the ongoing need for training and advisory to help navigate Turkish tax laws and other regulatory requirements, as well as greater awareness of available financing options.

As an ongoing growth constraint, Syrian businesses continue to lack access to and experience with loans. When asked whether they had received any loans, only two businesses indicated borrowing from friends and family (no formal loans were reported). On the other hand, 36 companies in the sample responded that they would be interested in loans in the future, with an average loan need of approximately \$70,000. The top three purposes for loans were geographical expansion (20 companies); purchasing additional inventory and inputs (16 companies); and hiring more staff (12 companies).



In the baseline survey, 37 per cent of surveyed businesses noted that their primary challenge operating in Turkey was language, but eleven months later, it did not even make it into the top 5 challenges. After a year, with maturing businesses already in operation for over three years, business owners may have found a way to overcome language barriers through Turkish-speaking employees and new professional support services catering to the Syrian business community. Interest in greater integration with the Turkish society, including citizenship, may have also accelerated Syrian business owners' interest in improving their Turkish language proficiency.

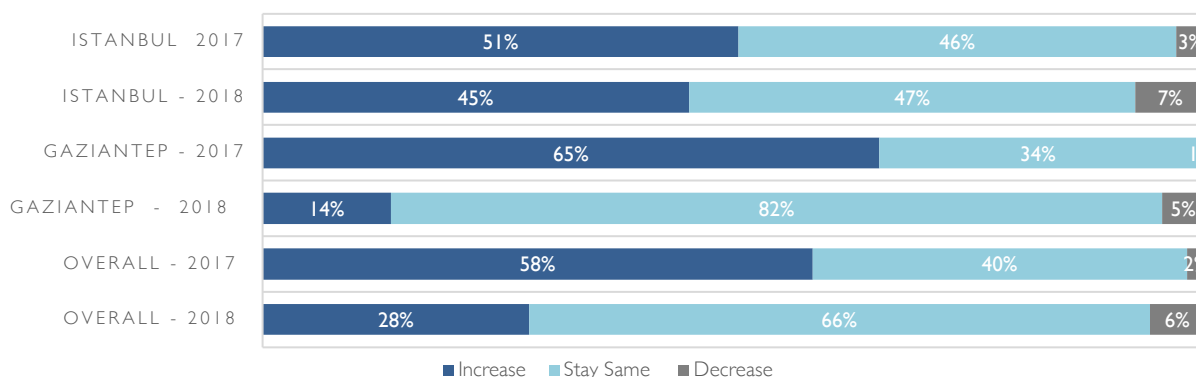
²² Responses were collected from businesses prior to the rapid devaluation of the Turkish Lira in May 2018.

²³ Twelve per cent indicated no challenges.

3.4 Job Creation

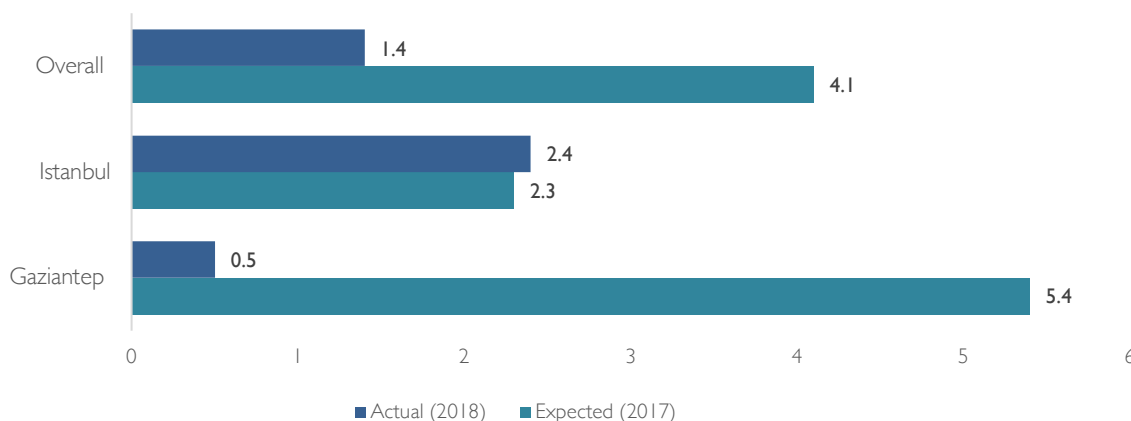
While still creating jobs, Syrian businesses have not met their previous hiring projections. Fifty-eight per cent of companies in the baseline survey intended to hire more employees in the coming year. When asked about their actual hiring in the past six months, 28 per cent of companies hired new employees, while 66 per cent indicated that employee numbers remained the same. There were significant differences in the hiring performance of companies in Gaziantep versus those in Istanbul. Only 14 per cent of surveyed businesses in Gaziantep reported hiring additional staff in the past six months, while 82 per cent retained the same employee numbers. In Istanbul, those figures were 45 and 47 per cent, respectively. In other words, more businesses in Istanbul were able to make additional hires in the preceding six months, in line with the generally better reported performance.

**28% of Syrian Businesses Increased Number of Employees
(Past 6 Months)**



In the baseline survey, Syrian businesses projected they would hire on average four employees in the coming 12 months. When revisited, they added on average 1.4 new full-time employees in the last six months. In Istanbul, employment expectations largely matched performance: they expected to hire 2.3 employees over the next year and were able to do so in the past six months alone. However, performance of businesses in Gaziantep lagged last year's projections: 0.5 employees were hired on average in the past six months, trailing behind their plans for 5.4 new employees reported in the baseline study for the year ahead. Particularly of note in the sample were six companies in Gaziantep for which hiring was significantly below expectations: when asked in the baseline study, they projected to cumulatively hire 235 employees in the coming year (31 per cent of the total anticipated recruitment). However, when revisited, those businesses had only hired 10 new employees in the past six months. While all were experienced and had operated firms in Syria, they either struggled with projections in a new business environment or with expanding their operations. In addition, informality may be a greater challenge in Gaziantep, skewing formal hiring numbers reported by companies.

In the Past 6 Months, Syrian Businesses Hired 1.4 New Employees & Istanbul Leads Job Creation



Sectorally, businesses operating in accommodation and food service; administrative and support service activities; construction; and real estate activities were able to exceed their earlier annual hiring expectations within the past six months alone. These sectors and businesses experienced some of the highest hiring rates in the sample (see Table 2 below).

Table 2 - Sectors with Highest Job Creation and Profits (Past 6 Months)

	n=	Average Number of New Employees	% with Higher Profits	% with International Clients
Accommodation and Food Service	19	5.4	76%	16%
Construction	6	3.7	83%	33%
Admin and Support Service Activities	11	2.0	82%	55%
Manufacturing	32	1.4	52%	59%
Real Estate Activities	11	1.3	73%	55%
Financial and Insurance Activities	2	1.0	50%	0%
Prof./Scientific/Technical Activity	10	1.0	80%	30%
Information and Communication	17	0.9	63%	29%
Transportation and Storage	5	0.8	60%	0%
Wholesale/Retail; Vehicle Repair	88	0.7	63%	40%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	1	0.0	100%	0%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	2	0.0	0%	0%
Education	6	0.0	50%	0%

4. CONCLUSION

As part of both the baseline and updated surveys, Syrian business owners were asked for their advice for other Syrian entrepreneurs in Turkey. The top recommendation was to ensure you are familiar with laws and regulations so you can remain compliant. Additional advice Syrian entrepreneurs offered included applying for citizenship, working legally, building a brand in the Turkish market, and expanding across the country. Alongside this advice, anecdotal evidence suggests that business owners continue to be concerned about their long-term status in the country, access to banking services, and navigating, and benefiting from incentives.

These recommendations reflect a need for greater certainty that will allow Syrian businesses to forecast, plan, and succeed in the Turkish market. In addition to policies that help support those pathways, strategies that focus on integration, including increased partnerships with Turkish companies, will not only help facilitate this stability, but will ensure continued economic benefits for Turkish, Syrian, and refugee communities.

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