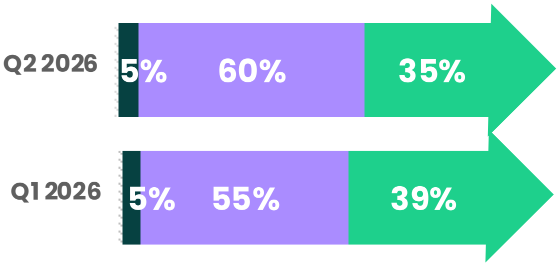
Q2 2026 BUSINESS MONITOR

InterTradeIreland

BUSINESS POSITION

// Businesses were asked about their business position

BY QUARTER



GROWTH

QUARTERLY CHANGE
↓ 4 pts

ANNUAL CHANGE
↓ 4 pts

STABLE

QUARTERLY CHANGE
↑ 5 pts

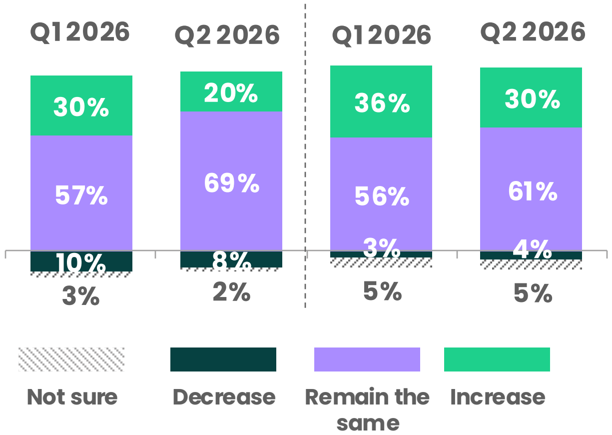
ANNUAL CHANGE
↓ 7 pts

In Q2, stability remained the dominant feature at 60% with just over a third of businesses reporting growth.

SALES AND PROFITABILITY

// Businesses were asked about their sales and profitability

SALES



SALES NET DIFFERENCE – PAST 3 MONTHS

QUARTERLY CHANGE
↓ 8 pts

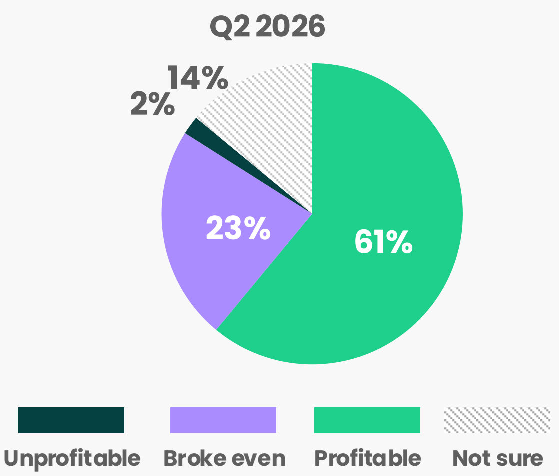
ANNUAL CHANGE
↓ 5 pts

SALES NET DIFFERENCE – NEXT 6 MONTHS

QUARTERLY CHANGE
↓ 7 pts

ANNUAL CHANGE
↓ 2 pts

PROFITABILITY



*Rounding may cause the total percentage to fall between 99% and 101%

PROFIT MARGINS

Profit margin uncertainty

2019
1 in 10

→

2026
Almost
1 in 2

Almost half (47%) of businesses are now unsure about their profit margins

BUSINESS ISSUES

// Businesses were asked about their current business issues

% RATING THE FOLLOWING AS AN ISSUE (rating 3,4,5 out of 5)

- **49%** Rising energy costs
- **26%** Rising wages/ staffing costs
- **24%** Rising costs of other overheads
- **19%** Difficulties recruiting people
- **13%** Difficulties in retaining/ recruiting skills

RESPONSE TO RISING ENERGY COSTS

36% have absorbed the higher costs and reduced profitability

29% passed the costs on to customers through higher prices

18% invested in energy efficiency measures

7% are changing products, services or operating procedures to reduce energy use

4% delayed or reduced investment elsewhere in the business

4% are considering renewable energy generation or storage

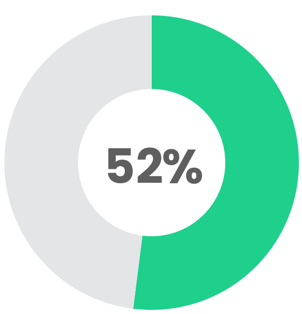
33% have considered none of the above

*% of those experienciing difficulties with rising energy costs
**Multiple choice question, therefore percentages add to more than 100%

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

// Businesses were asked about any actions they have taken to prepare for future opportunities and challenges

% OF THOSE PLANNING TO OR ALREADY TAKEN ACTION



52% of businesses plan to or have already taken actions to prepare for future opportunities and challenges

Build financial resilience	23%
Adopt AI tools within the business	22%
Invest in technology, automation or new ways of working to improve productivity/efficiency	20%
Invest in staff to retain key employees and skills	19%

InterTradeIreland is committed to supporting SMEs in dealing with the current challenges, with our expert teams on hand to provide businesses with the right supports, funding and advice to help unlock their export potential. By tapping into our range of supports and networks, we can boost the innovation power of your business through cross-border collaboration and help you to identify new market and funding opportunities. Visit www.intertradeireland.com today or call 028 3083 4100 (048 from Ireland)

A telephone survey of 762 businesses was conducted on an all-island basis, with the aim to provide a deeper understanding of the needs, experiences and issues facing businesses. The survey was conducted between the 23rd June – 30th July 2026.