

CASE 03

Market & Competitor Entry Analysis

Turning broad market interest into a focused entry decision, customer priority and validation plan.

Decision question

Should a B2B workflow software company enter the Netherlands and Belgium, which customer segment should it prioritise, and should entry be direct, partner-led or phased?

MARKET SCOPE NL + BE	BUSINESS MODEL B2B SaaS	RESEARCH LENS Market + competitor
PRIMARY UNCERTAINTY Segment fit	DECISION Entry route	OUTPUT Market brief + playbook

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

1 Question Define the decision	2 Evidence Structure inputs	3 Analysis Test issues	4 Priorities Rank exposure	5 Options Support action
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Illustrative demonstration case

This case is a fictionalised scenario created to demonstrate analytical method, decision structure and deliverable design. It does not represent a named client engagement.

01 / ENGAGEMENT FRAME

From market size to decision usefulness

The question is not whether the market exists. The decision is whether a specific company can win in a specific segment at an acceptable acquisition cost and implementation burden.

Illustrative client position • Proven product in home market but limited local brand recognition. • Product works best where teams have repeatable approval and evidence workflows. • Sales motion currently combines founder-led selling with remote product demos. • Local-language support is limited but technically feasible. • Budget allows one focused market-entry experiment, not a broad regional launch.	Research questions • Which buyer segments have the strongest problem intensity? • Where are established competitors strongest and weakest? • How sensitive are buyers to local integrations and language? • What evidence is required before committing a local sales hire? • Can partners reduce market-access cost without weakening product control?
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RESEARCH ARCHITECTURE

Evidence streams

Stream	What is tested	Typical evidence
Demand	Problem intensity and buying triggers	Buyer interviews, job postings, procurement signals
Competition	Positioning, proof points, pricing logic	Websites, demos, reviews, public tenders
Customer fit	Segment economics and workflow complexity	ICP interviews, workflow mapping, case patterns
Route to market	Direct versus partner economics	Partner landscape, sales cycle, channel incentives
Execution friction	Language, integration, legal / procurement burden	Buyer requirements, implementation needs

Analytical principle Market attractiveness and company fit are separate questions. A large market can still be a weak entry decision if the required sales motion, integrations or trust signals do not match the company's current capabilities.

Portfolio note: all company names, figures and operating details in this demonstration case are illustrative.

02 / SEGMENT ANALYSIS

Where the opportunity is concentrated

The analysis ranks segments using problem intensity, reachable buyers, product fit, implementation burden and competitive pressure rather than market size alone.

Segment	Problem intensity	Product fit	Sales friction	Competition	Priority
Regulated professional services	High	High	Medium	Medium	1
Mid-market e-commerce operations	High	Medium-high	Low-medium	High	2
Large enterprise shared services	High	High	High	High	3
Small agencies / consultancies	Medium	Medium	Low	High	4

COMPETITIVE OBSERVATIONS

Illustrative findings

- 01 Enterprise competitors lead with governance, integrations and procurement credibility but require longer implementations.
- 02 Lightweight workflow tools are easy to buy but weak on evidence traceability and complex exception handling.
- 03 Local-market specialists compete on implementation support and language rather than deep product differentiation.
- 04 A defensible position exists between generic workflow tools and heavyweight enterprise suites if the offer is framed around auditability, structured decision flows and rapid implementation.
- 05 The highest-value segment is not the one with the most potential users; it is the segment where the product solves a costly control problem without requiring enterprise-level deployment.

White-space hypothesis

Position as a focused decision-workflow layer for evidence-heavy teams: stronger control than generic automation, lower implementation burden than enterprise suites.

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03 / COMPETITOR & POSITIONING LOGIC

How to compete without copying the category leaders

The recommended position must be specific enough to influence product, sales messaging and prospect selection.

Positioning axis	Generic workflow tools	Enterprise suites	Recommended position
Implementation	Fast	Slow / complex	Fast with controlled setup
Evidence traceability	Basic	Strong	Strong for selected workflows
Customisation	Broad but shallow	Deep	Focused, modular
Procurement burden	Low	High	Low-medium
Target buyer	Team lead / SMB	Enterprise transformation	Operational / risk owner
Core message	Automate work	Transform enterprise process	Make evidence-heavy decisions reliable

CUSTOMER PRIORITY

Illustrative ideal customer profile

Positive signals • Multiple approval or review steps • Material cost of missing evidence • Recurring exception handling • Need for auditable decision history • Buyer can deploy without major IT programme	Negative signals • Purely ad hoc collaboration use case • No budget owner for the problem • Requirement for dozens of bespoke integrations • Procurement cycle exceeds validation horizon • Low consequence of process failure
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Go-to-market implication

The first campaign should target a narrow operational problem and buyer role. Broad "workflow automation" messaging would put the company into a crowded category on competitors' terms.

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04 / ENTRY OPTIONS

Direct, partner-led or phased validation

The decision should preserve capital and information optionality until customer evidence is strong enough to justify irreversible local investment.

Option	What it means	Information gained	Cost / risk	Assessment
A - Direct launch	Local sales hire + broad outbound	Fast market coverage	Highest fixed cost before fit is proven	Too early
B - Partner-led	Use consultants / implementers as channel	Access and local credibility	Partner dependency; weaker customer learning	Secondary route
C - Phased validation	Remote founder / senior seller, narrow ICP, 8-12 week test	Highest direct learning per euro	Slower scale; requires discipline	Preferred

VALIDATION GATES

Evidence required before scaling

- At least two repeatable buyer pain patterns from the same target segment.
- Demonstrated willingness to pay within the planned pricing range.
- Sales-cycle and implementation effort consistent with unit economics.
- No critical local integration or language requirement that changes the product economics.
- Clear win / loss reasons against the same competitor set.
- Evidence that one acquisition channel can be repeated beyond founder network effects.

Recommended decision

Enter through a narrow Netherlands-first validation programme, use Belgium as a second-stage adjacency, and defer local fixed-cost investment until explicit validation gates are met.

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05 / DELIVERABLES

Market-entry decision pack

The work product connects research to a concrete commercial experiment and defines what evidence would justify the next investment step.

Deliverable	Content	Decision use
Executive market brief	Market structure, buyer logic, opportunity constraints	Entry decision
Segment scorecard	ICP ranking and rationale	Target selection
Competitor matrix	Position, proof, pricing logic, strengths / gaps	Messaging and sales enablement
Buyer evidence log	Quotes / signals mapped to hypotheses	Evidence quality
Entry-options memo	Direct, partner and phased routes	Capital allocation
Validation playbook	Interview, outreach and conversion gates	8-12 week execution

WHAT THIS CASE DEMONSTRATES

Capabilities evidenced

Research • Market structure analysis • Competitor intelligence • Customer segmentation • Evidence-based hypothesis testing • Information-gap identification	Strategy • Entry-route comparison • Capital-light validation design • Positioning logic • Decision gates • Translation of research into action
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Portfolio value This case demonstrates research that ends in a decision architecture: what to do, what not to do yet, what must be validated, and what evidence would justify the next commitment.

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