



DOING BUSINESS WITH BOAT SECTOR IN EUROPE

LEVERAGE ON SKYMINDER SOLUTIONS

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Boat Sector Overview



The boat industry, often referred to as the marine or recreational boating industry, includes the design, manufacturing, sale, operation, and servicing of watercraft, as well as the infrastructure and services that support boating activities.

In the European Union, the boat (recreational marine) industry encompasses the full ecosystem of leisure boating activities, including:

- Boat and yacht manufacturing
- Marine engines, equipment, and components
- Marinas and nautical infrastructure
- Charter, rental, and boating-service providers
- Trade, repair, and refit services

At EU level, the sector is formally represented by European Boating Industry (EBI) and is recognised by the European Commission as a strategic maritime and blue-economy industry.

Core segments and business characteristics

Boatbuilding and manufacturing

- Predominantly composed of small shipyards and specialised builders, alongside a limited number of large international groups
- Production ranges from series manufacturing to custom and semi-custom vessels
- Europe holds a global leadership position in technologically advanced yachts and recreational craft

Marinas and infrastructure

- A structurally stable segment due to constrained waterfront availability and long-term mooring contracts
- Increasing focus on modernisation, shore power, and sustainability
- Key beneficiary of EU-level blue-economy and green transition policies

Charter and access-based models

- Strongly developed in Mediterranean countries
- Growing relevance of charter, boat sharing, and subscription models, driven by tourism and changing ownership patterns

Regulatory and compliance environment

The EU boat industry operates within a harmonised regulatory framework, primarily governed by the EU Recreational Craft Directive, which defines:

- Technical safety requirements
- Environmental and emission standards
- Market-surveillance obligations for boats sold within the EU/EEA

Key EU-specific features:

- Boats are high-value, mobile assets with long life cycles
- Cross-border sales and ownership are common
- Regulatory focus is increasing on sustainability, decarbonisation, and lifecycle impacts

Business information and risk profile (EU lens)

From a business-information perspective, the European boat industry shows:

- Strong reliance on official and harmonised data sources (company registries, financial filings, VAT, ownership)
- Limited financial disclosure depth, due to SME dominance and family ownership
- Moderate to high seasonality and economic sensitivity, especially for dealers, charter companies, and service providers

Risk and monitoring considerations:

- Credit risk is generally cyclical rather than structural
- Infrastructure operators (marinas) show more stable risk profiles
- AML and ownership transparency become more relevant in high-value yacht segments and cross-border structures
- Risk assessment is mostly based on quantitative and formal indicators, rather than investigative sources

Challenges

- Unfair competition: Sectorial stakeholders have demanded the reinforcement of market surveillance to protect business against unfair competition. The responsibility for market surveillance lies with EU countries and activity has sometimes been uneven
- Need for improved regulation: The industry emphasises the need for a stable and smart regulatory environment, in line with international standards
- Environmental issues: The health of the end-user must be considered, as well as the reduction of exhaust and noise emissions
- Access to markets: Barriers to trade and other administrative obstacles to accessing international markets require attention

Source: European Boating Industry (EBI), Boating Industry Canada, European Commission

Boat Fun Facts

1. Boats were used in Sumeria, ancient Egypt, and in the Indian Ocean between 4000 and 3000 BC.
2. Laura Dekker is the youngest individual to sail around the world. She's a 14-year-old who went off to sail around the world in 2012 when she was 16 and finished her trip 518 days later.
3. If a boat has more than 500 tones, it is known as a ship. A boat can be carried out by ship.
4. The first ship to reach America had only 40 people on board, including Christopher Columbus. It was the size of a bus and did not exceed 70 feet.
5. Vasa is a Swedish warship known to have sunk in 1628 and recovered in 1961. After spending centuries in the water, this ship was still completely undamaged and in good shape. It's actually the only vessel left in the 17th century. This ship is now located in the Vasa Museum in Stockholm, which was built as a tribute to this ship.
6. Renaming boats, historically, changing the name of a ship was considered bad luck. However, before the name is revealed or anything with a new name enters the boat, the purging and renaming ceremony is conducted if you need to change the name of the boat.
7. Bananas on a boat are seen as bad luck particularly in fishing boats. It is thought that the fish will not bite on a hook if the bananas are nearby boat. On the other hand, finding a cat on a boat is considered good luck, even if it's a black cat. Cats eat rats, keep the boat clean and safe.
8. A study was published in 2004 showing that retiring to a cruise ship was often as cost-effective as retiring to a retirement home and was more efficient in ensuring the quality of life.
9. It is said during the Battle off Samar, a single American destroyer charged forward against a huge Japanese force. The ship did so much damage to the Japanese that when she sank, a passing Japanese ship saluted the sinking vessel.
10. Over a period of 200 years, three ships were killed at the same location on the coast of Wales on the same day (December 5th) and all three had only one survivor. All three of the survivors had the same name: Hugh Williams.

11. In 2013, after taking refuge in the air pocket of the ship, the head of a sunken ship survived for three days beneath the ocean.
12. A flight by Air Canada took a detour in 2012 to find a stranded Australian sailboat. Only 25 minutes after the distress signal was activated did the passengers of the Boeing 777 find the yacht.
13. A Chinese female prostitute named Ching Shih was one of the mightiest pirates who ever lived. There were 1,800 ships and 80,000 sailors under her control.
14. Steamboat Willie was the first Disney cartoon with sound, released on November 18, 1928, and is also celebrated as the birthday of Mickey Mouse.
15. To prevent capture, a Dutch warship was disguised as a tropical island during World War II. It was the only ship to survive in its own class.

Source: Boat Names Australia



Facts and Figures: Europe

In the EU, the boat industry is a strategically important, SME-dominated sector combining manufacturing excellence, tourism linkage, and infrastructure services. While well structured and regulated at EU level, company-level analysis is often challenged by fragmentation, limited disclosure, and seasonal volatility, making official data, harmonised registries, and continuous monitoring essential for credit-risk and compliance assessment.

The boating industry in Europe is a dynamic and competitive sector and a significant contributor to the European economy. The total industry is made up of boatbuilders, engine manufacturers, equipment manufacturers, trade and service providers and consists of approximately:

The maritime recreational craft industry is important because of its impact on the environment and its economic significance for the EU:

- The recreational craft manufacturing industry mainly consists of small and medium-sized enterprises (97% of businesses are SMEs), a few large companies (over 1,000 employees), as well as numerous 'family companies' (up to 10 people)
- The manufacturing sector accounts for 4,500 companies and 35,000 jobs
- The sector represents approximately 32,000 businesses with at least 280,000 employees
- It produces €20 billion in annual revenue
- The sector is dynamic and shows great potential for growth, despite a temporary downturn between 2009 and 2013

The boating industry is also a highly internationalised sector. Traditionally, European companies have exported mainly to other countries within the EU and to the US. New markets are emerging, however, and European companies are increasingly exporting to Asia, South America and Russia.

With over 37,000 km of inland waterways and more than 70,000 km of coastline, Europe offers the perfect environment for the 48 million European citizens who regularly participate in recreational marine activities (36 million of whom are boaters), as well as countless numbers of tourists. Over 6 million boats are kept in European waters while 10,000 marinas provide over 1 million berths both inland and in coastal areas.

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Strategic role in the EU economy

The European Commission recognises the recreational boating sector as:

- A high-value industrial segment
- An enabler of nautical tourism and regional development
- A contributor to innovation in clean propulsion, materials, and circular economy models

Source: European Boating Industry (EBI), ICOMIA Statistics Book



European Boating Industry

The European Boating Industry (EBI) represents the recreational boating and nautical tourism industry in Europe, which encompasses the following subsectors:

- boatbuilders (building motorboats, sailing boats, yachts, personal watercraft, and other recreational boats)
- engine manufacturers
- equipment manufacturing
- refit and maintenance companies
- boat dealers and importers
- marinas and yacht harbours
- boat charter and rental companies
- water sports rental companies
- other related companies

EBI Strategy 2026-2028

In January 2026, EBI adopted a new strategy for the period until 2028 to better represent the boating industry in a fast-changing environment characterised by a push towards sustainability, changing consumer trends, digitalisation and global market challenges.

EBI works on a set of key strategic areas for the future of the boating industry, under the following three clusters:

- 1-Industry and competitiveness
- 2-Decarbonization, circularity and environment
- 3-Nautical Tourism

Source: European Boating Industry (EBI)



SKYMINDER AT A GLANCE FOR BOAT SECTOR

Solutions available for more than **240** countries
and jurisdictions

Best in class information thanks to more than **40**
providers, both local and global

13 available products and solutions

Web and **API** integration



SKYMINDER SOLUTIONS

SkyMinder is the worldwide CRIF platform helping you to take decisions based on high-quality information. If you are required to evaluate a business partner in Boat Sector, a customer or a supplier, in a risk evaluation process or for compliance requirements or a cyber risk assessment, SkyMinder is the right solution.

Requirement	SkyMinder Solution	Description
Know business partners and risk level - have on board new suppliers - understand in depth customers creditworthiness	Executive Report, Full Report, Quick Report, Slim Report	Information, with different level of details, related to all companies in the world, including AI summary, firmographics, credit limit, risk indicator, management, shareholders, negative events etc.
Receive immediate notification with related details if a change affects a company	Full Monitoring	Detailed information about changes affecting a company as soon as happened. Combined possibility to request for free updated report.
Be alerted if there is change in company's information	Alert	Information related to the area involved by a change as soon as an event happened.
Periodically checks if there are changes involving companies	Planned Revision	Scheduled revision with updated report including company's changes if applicable
Obtain documents from Official Registry and LEI repository	Official Registry and LEI	Product range including documents coming from public sources or from LEI Registry
Company ownership overview	Verification Report	List of shareholders to understand company's structure
Compliance requirements and fraud checks	Compliance Report and Extended Check Report	Anti-Bribery and Money Laundering lists checks related to financial crimes.
Risk of Cyber attack	Cyber Risk Report	Assess the level of risk related to a business partner in being involved in a cyber attack