

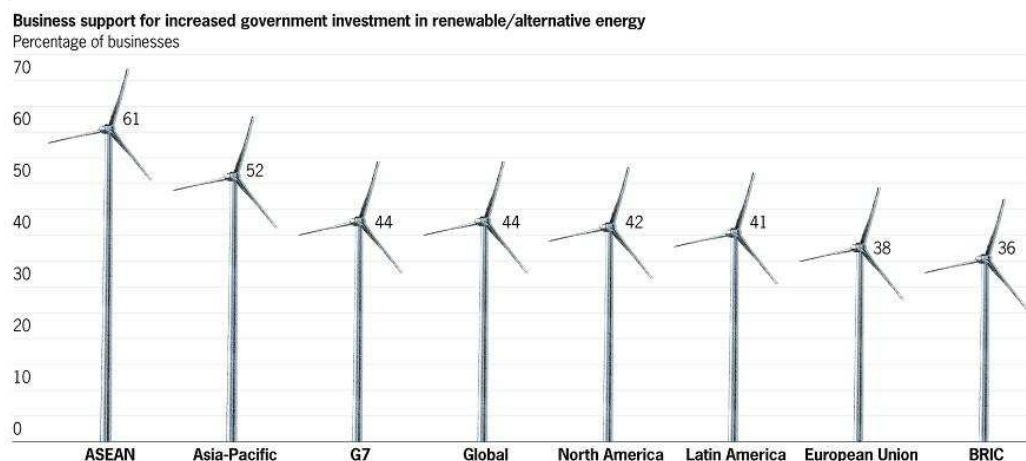
## News release

# Arab Spring reignites renewable energy debate

Following the unrest in the Middle East and North Africa, and its impact on oil prices, 44% of businesses would now support increased government investment in renewable/alternative energy according to the latest research from Grant Thornton's International Business Report (IBR).

As the intensity of the Arab Spring\* has risen, so has the price of oil: Brent Crude climbed to US\$125 a barrel in April, up from US\$85 a barrel at the start of the year, and remains above US\$110 a barrel today. Disagreement amongst OPEC nations on increasing supply persuaded the International Energy Agency to release more than 60 million barrels from emergency stocks, but this research suggests that businesses are keen to explore more sustainable sources of energy.

Indeed, many businesses would be willing to endure the short-term pain such investment might create: 51% of respondents said they would accept higher energy costs in the short-term in order to reduce their economy's reliance on oil and have more stable prices in the longer-term. However, whilst this stance was supported by 60% of businesses in North America and 53% in the G7, just 35% of those in the BRIC economies agreed.



Source: Grant Thornton IBR 2011

Cal Hackeman, global leader of Grant Thornton's Cleantech industry group said: "The Arab Spring is the key issue in global energy security. The region holds well over half of known global oil reserves so a dramatic increase in the price of oil was to be expected.

"However, this seems to have sharpened the minds of businesses to the challenge of moving towards more sustainable sources of energy. At a time when the global recovery remains fragile it is encouraging to see that so many businesses would support extra investment in renewables even if this caused energy costs to rise in the short-term. These results should serve as a reminder to governments and international organisations that reliance of economies on oil needs to be addressed."

- ends -

For further information please contact:

**Christine Hobart**

International communications manager

**T** +44 207 391 9548

**E** christine.hobart@uk.gt.com

#### **Notes to editors**

The Grant Thornton International Business Report (IBR) provides insight into the views and expectations of over 11,000 businesses per year across 39 economies. This unique survey draws upon 19 years of trend data for most European participants and nine years for many non-European economies. For more information, please visit:

[www.internationalbusinessreport.com](http://www.internationalbusinessreport.com).

#### **Data collection**

The research is carried out primarily by telephone interview lasting approximately 15 minutes with the exception of Japan (postal), Philippines and Armenia (face to face), mainland China and India (mixture of face-to-face and telephone) where cultural differences dictate a tailored approach. Telephone interviews enable Grant Thornton International to conduct the exact number of recommended interviews and to be certain that the most appropriate individuals are interviewed in an organisation which meets the profile criteria.

Data collection is managed by Grant Thornton International's core research partner - Experian. Questionnaires are translated into local languages with each participating country having the option to ask a small number of country specific questions in addition to the core questionnaire. From 2011, fieldwork takes place on a quarterly basis every quarter with fieldwork lasting approximately one month and a half.

### Sample

IBR is a survey of medium to large privately held businesses\*\*. The data for this release are drawn from interviews with 2,697 businesses across the globe conducted in May 2011.

The target respondents are chief executive officers, managing directors, chairmen or other senior executives (title dependent on what is most appropriate for the individual country) from 39 economies primarily across five sectors: manufacturing (25 per cent), services (25 per cent), retail (15 per cent) and construction (10 per cent) with the remaining 25 per cent spread across all sectors.

Locally, the sample tends to cover the sectors mentioned previously, with some countries being able to have local valid data for specific sectors or regions when the sample size is large enough.

Group/region	Economies included in IBR
Asia-Pacific (APAC)	Australia, Hong Kong, India, Japan, China (mainland), Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)	Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam
BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India, China (mainland)
European Union (EU)	Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom
G7	Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, United States of America
Latin America	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico
Nordic	Denmark, Finland, Sweden
North America	Canada, United States of America

\*a wave of demonstrations and protests in the Middle East and North Africa taking place since December 2010.

\*\*some counties may include a small proportion of listed businesses in their sample when reporting locally.

Any and all references to Grant Thornton International are to Grant Thornton International Ltd. Grant Thornton International is one of the world's leading organisations of independently owned and managed accounting and consulting firms. These firms provide assurance, tax and specialist business advice to privately held businesses and public interest entities. Services are delivered independently by the member and correspondent firms within Grant Thornton International, a non-practicing, international umbrella entity organised as a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. Grant Thornton International does not deliver services in its own name or otherwise. Grant Thornton International and the member firms are not a worldwide partnership.