

# Monthly trade in goods by exporter characteristics, December 2020

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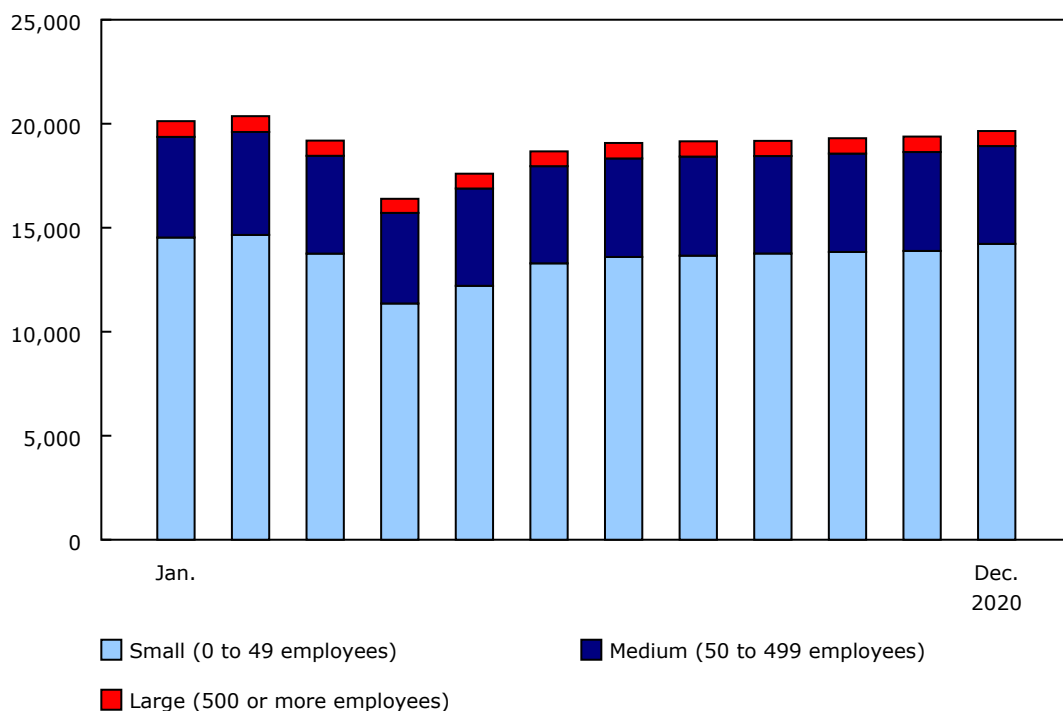
The number of exporting enterprises in Canada rose 1.4% in December to 19,649, the largest month-over-month growth since July. This occurred against the backdrop of tightening restrictions on business activity in several provinces to contain the spread of COVID-19.

By the end of the year, the number of exporting enterprises was up 19.9% from the low in April, but it was still 3.5% below pre-pandemic levels observed in February.

December's rise in goods exporters was led by enterprises with fewer than 50 employees (+2.4%). These exporters, which are generally less integrated in global supply chains, had been among the most impacted during the initial months of the pandemic.

**Chart 1**  
Number of exporting enterprises, by employment size, January to December 2020

number of exporters



Note(s): Data are seasonally adjusted.

Source(s): Trade by Exporter Characteristics: Goods (5124).

## Number of exporters to the United States almost reaches pre-pandemic levels

The number of enterprises that exported goods to the United States rose 3.9% in December to reach 16,627. After an almost 20% decline from February to April, the number of exporters to the United States in December had almost fully recovered to February levels (16,632). However, in terms of value, exports were still 7.2% below their February levels on a balance of payments basis.



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Canada

Among other major trading partners, the number of exporters to Spain (+9.3%), Italy (+3.5%), Japan (+3.5%) and China (+3.5%) also grew month over month in December. The number of exporters to each of these countries was above February levels at year-end.

At the global level, a region that has been relatively less affected by the pandemic is Oceania. When the number of Canadian exporters is compared between December 2019 and December 2020 by region of destination, Oceania was the only region showing an increase (+2.8%). This slight growth was primarily attributable to small exporting enterprises (fewer than 50 employees)—their number went up 10.9% over this period, led by exporters of electronic and electrical equipment and parts.

**Table 1**  
**Number of exporting enterprises, by region of destination, December 2019 to December 2020**

	December 2019	December 2020	% change
<b>All countries</b>	<b>20,939</b>	<b>19,361</b>	<b>-7.5%</b>
North America	17,355	15,979	-7.9%
Europe	3,840	3,660	-4.7%
Asia	3,627	3,543	-2.3%
Central America, South America, and Caribbean	1,645	1,520	-7.6%
Oceania and Antarctica	1,165	1,198	2.8%
Middle East	1,166	1,115	-4.4%
Africa	861	861	0.0%

**Note(s):** Data are not seasonally adjusted.

**Source(s):** Trade by Exporter Characteristics: Goods (5124).

## Alberta and British Columbia see the largest monthly increase in exporters

An enterprise can have multiple establishments located in different provinces or territories and operating in various industries. Most provinces posted month-over-month growth in the number of exporting establishments in December, with the largest increases observed in the western provinces of Alberta (+98) and British Columbia (+80). This growth was led by establishments from the mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction sector and was mainly among those exporting to the United States. The number of exporters in Quebec (+38) and Ontario (+28) also went up, but to a lesser extent.

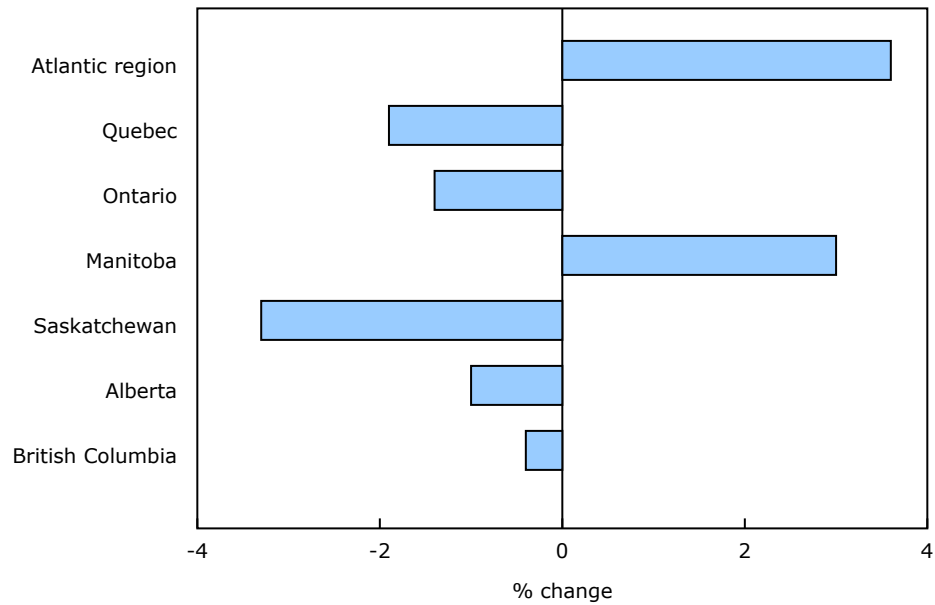
In relative terms, only the Atlantic region (+3.6%) and Manitoba (+3.0%) were above their February levels by the end of the year. The growth in the Atlantic region was tied to the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector, while Manitoba's increase was related to wholesale trade.

Several of Manitoba's wholesale trade establishments export agricultural products such as wheat, soybeans, and rape or colza seeds. Amid strong global demand and rising prices, the total value of Manitoba's exports of these products has gone up significantly year over year.

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**Chart 2**  
**Percentage change in number of exporting establishments, by selected province or region, February to December 2020**

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**Note(s):** Data are seasonally adjusted.

**Source(s):** Trade by Exporter Characteristics: Goods (5124).

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## Note to readers

The monthly trade in goods by exporter characteristics program will be discontinued following the release of reference month December 2020.

### Seasonal adjustment

With this release, the monthly trade in goods by exporter characteristics program incorporates data that have been seasonally adjusted to track the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Canadian exporters on a month-to-month basis. Seasonal adjustment techniques that remove the effect of seasonal and calendar influences from the original data can sharpen the extent to which a time series can be used to evaluate meaningful changes in economic conditions over time. Seasonally adjusted data are available at aggregated levels, such as the number of exporters by province, by major country of destination, by enterprise employment size, etc. For more detailed information such as the number of exporters at the industry level by province, data are available on an unadjusted basis only. The analysis in this text, unless stated otherwise, is conducted using seasonally adjusted data. For more information on seasonal adjustment, consult [Seasonally adjusted data – Frequently asked questions](#).

The term **major trading partners** refers to Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Russia, the United States, Brazil, Japan, China and India. These countries represent a subset of the countries defined as Canada's principal trading partners as per the Canadian International Merchandise Trade program and the Balance of International Payments program and are among those that have been the most impacted by COVID-19 in terms of confirmed cases.

### Methodology

The monthly trade in goods by exporter characteristics release is a special product that is being published specifically to provide Canadians with timely information on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Canadian exporters.

Seasonally adjusted data are available from January 2019 to December 2020 at aggregated levels only. For more detailed levels, data are available from January 2019 to December 2020 on a customs basis and unadjusted for seasonal variation.

Monthly export data for reference year 2019 are derived from the annual production database, while data for January to December 2020 are newly developed based on a similar linkage methodology used for the annual Trade by Exporter Characteristics – Goods (TEC–Goods) program. Prior to January 2020, data on exports to non-US destinations were collected by Statistics Canada. In January 2020, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) began collecting non-US export data and transmitting them to Statistics Canada on a daily basis. Exporters were gradually transitioned to the CBSA collection system, and collection by Statistics Canada was phased out completely later in 2020. Data collection remains unchanged for exports to the United States; the US Census Bureau collects and transmits the data to Statistics Canada each month under the terms of the Canada–US data exchange. Overall, a very similar linkage methodology is applied to this 24-month monthly time series as to the annual data, ensuring that consistency between monthly and annual data is maintained.

For each month from January 2019 to December 2020, the total number of identified exporters accounted for 99% of the total domestic export value. The **number of exporters** corresponds to the number of exporters identified in the Business Register (2020). The **total value of exports** refers to all transactions that can be linked from the monthly domestic exports (customs basis) database.

In this release, data disseminated at the provincial level are conceptually different from customs-based merchandise export data. Provincial data for the TEC–Goods program are based on the province where the exporters are located. Goods can be shipped to other provinces for final consumption or can be shipped from other provinces when leaving Canada. Customs-based merchandise exports are based on the province of origin, which is the province in which the goods are grown, produced, extracted or manufactured. Monthly domestic export (customs basis) data can be obtained from [Canadian International Merchandise Trade \(Customs Basis\)](#).

### Data availability

Unadjusted and seasonally adjusted data on monthly trade in goods by exporter characteristics are available upon request.

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5124](#).**

For more information, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)).

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