

Consulting services, 2021

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The consulting services industry grew strongly in 2021

The management, scientific and technical consulting services industry group reported \$29.2 billion in operating revenue in 2021, up 9.7% from 2020. This industry group offers consulting services in various sectors, such as human resources, information technology, science and economics, management, and the environment.

The demand for consulting services grew strongly as businesses and governments were dealing with the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the accelerating trends related to the adoption of technologies, e-commerce, digitalization, supply-chain management and labour. Operating expenses rose 10.5% to \$21.8 billion in 2021, resulting in an operating profit margin of 25.2%.

Salaries, wages, commissions and benefits increased 11.3% to \$8.9 billion in 2021. This remained the largest expense item for the industry group, accounting for 41.0% of operating expenses. The next largest expense was costs of goods sold, going from 8.1% in 2020 to 11.8% in 2021. The third-largest expense item for the industry group was subcontracts, which represented 10.9% of operating expenses (up from 10.1% in 2020).

Since 2012, firms in Ontario have accounted for an increasing share of the industry group's total operating revenue. In 2021, Ontario firms accounted for 48.1% of operating revenue, followed by firms in British Columbia (16.6%), Quebec (15.3%) and Alberta (14.8%). Alberta's consulting sector grew in 2021 but at a slower rate than in other large provinces.

Sales of management consulting services (69.0%) accounted for the largest share of the industry group's sales in 2021. Sales of other scientific and technical consulting services accounted for 17.7% of the industry group's sales, while sales of environmental consulting services, such as environmental assessments and audits, represented 10.1% of total sales. Other sales of goods and services accounted for 3.2% of sales.

Business clients (64.6%) represented the largest share of the client base for the industry group, followed by governments, not-for-profit organizations and public institutions (15.6%). Clients outside Canada accounted for 12.3% of the client base in 2021, followed by individuals and households (7.5%).

Looking at 2022

Indicators were positive for the management, scientific and technical consulting services industry group in 2022. The number of paid employees rose 7.7% and the real gross domestic product of the industry increased 5.4%, from the end of 2021 to November 2022. These growth rates are stronger than what was registered in the decade before the pandemic. Detailed financial information and the characteristics of the industry group for 2022 will be provided following survey data collection in 2023.

Note to readers

Data for 2018, 2019 and 2020 have been revised.

The management, scientific and technical consulting services industry group includes management consulting services, environmental consulting services, and other scientific and technical consulting services.

Information on the growth of the number of paid employees in the industry group is taken from Table [14-10-0220-01](#).

Information on the growth of gross domestic product for the industry group is taken from Table [36-10-0434-02](#).

These and other data related to business and consumer services can be found at the [Business and consumer services and culture statistics](#) portal.



Available tables: [21-10-0166-01](#) to [21-10-0168-01](#) and [33-10-0162-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [4717](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).