

# Business innovation and growth support, 2021

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In 2021, as Canada recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government provided over 33,000 businesses with innovation and growth support valued at \$4.5 billion through 134 federal programs.

In partnership with the Treasury Board Secretariat, Statistics Canada produces information about these programs via the Business Innovation and Growth Support (BIGS) database, which is now available for the 2021 reference year.

## **Small- and medium-sized businesses are main beneficiaries of business innovation and growth support**

Across Canada, BIGS mainly went to small- and medium-sized enterprises, which accounted for 96% of all recipients in 2021. The BIGS database defines small and medium enterprises as those with fewer than 500 employees. These enterprises received over three-quarters (77%) of the total support value.

While most BIGS recipients were corporations with employees (64%), some beneficiaries were sole proprietorships (7% of all BIGS recipients).

## **Revenues are increasing for business innovation and growth support recipients**

The year 2021 was characterized by the reopening of many small- and medium-sized enterprises after a difficult pandemic year. Several indicators support the notion that BIGS programs helped businesses recover from the effects of the pandemic.

For example, in 2021, 9% of BIGS recipients reported that they now had employees after not employing anyone the year before, in 2020. Meanwhile, the payroll of BIGS recipient corporations grew by 16% year over year in 2021, compared with a 5% increase from 2019 to 2020. The total payroll of sole proprietorships supported by BIGS programs also increased in 2021 (+19%) relative to 2020 (-5%).

In terms of revenue, BIGS supported corporations also saw a year-over-year increase, up 18% in 2021, three times higher than that in 2020 (+6%). Export revenue increased by 15% during the same period, after declining by 4% from 2019 to 2020.

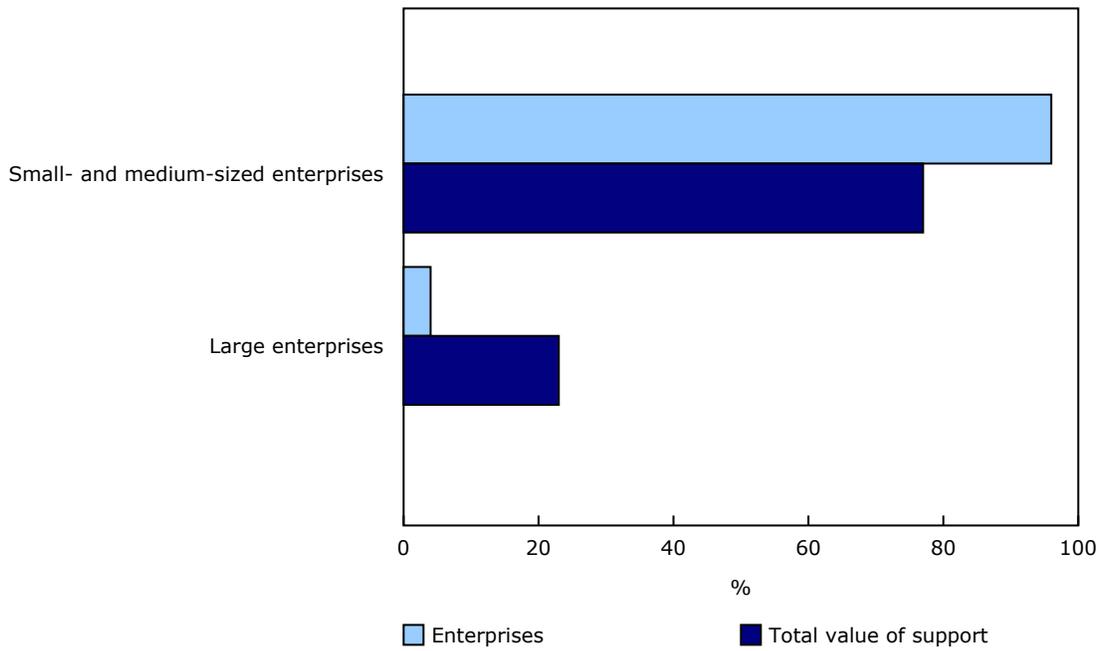
BIGS recipients continued to innovate in 2021, as their research and development spending grew by 12% on a year-over-year basis, which was comparable with the 11% increase seen for this type of expense from 2019 to 2020.



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**Chart 1**  
**Business innovation and growth support by employment size, 2021**

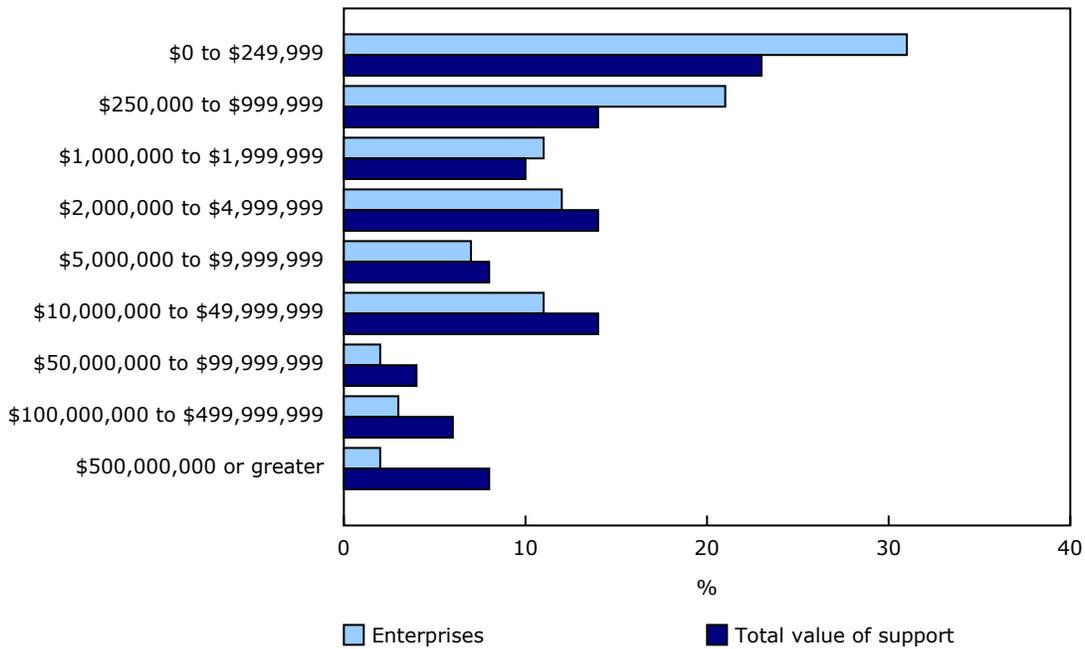
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Source(s): Table 33-10-0219-01.

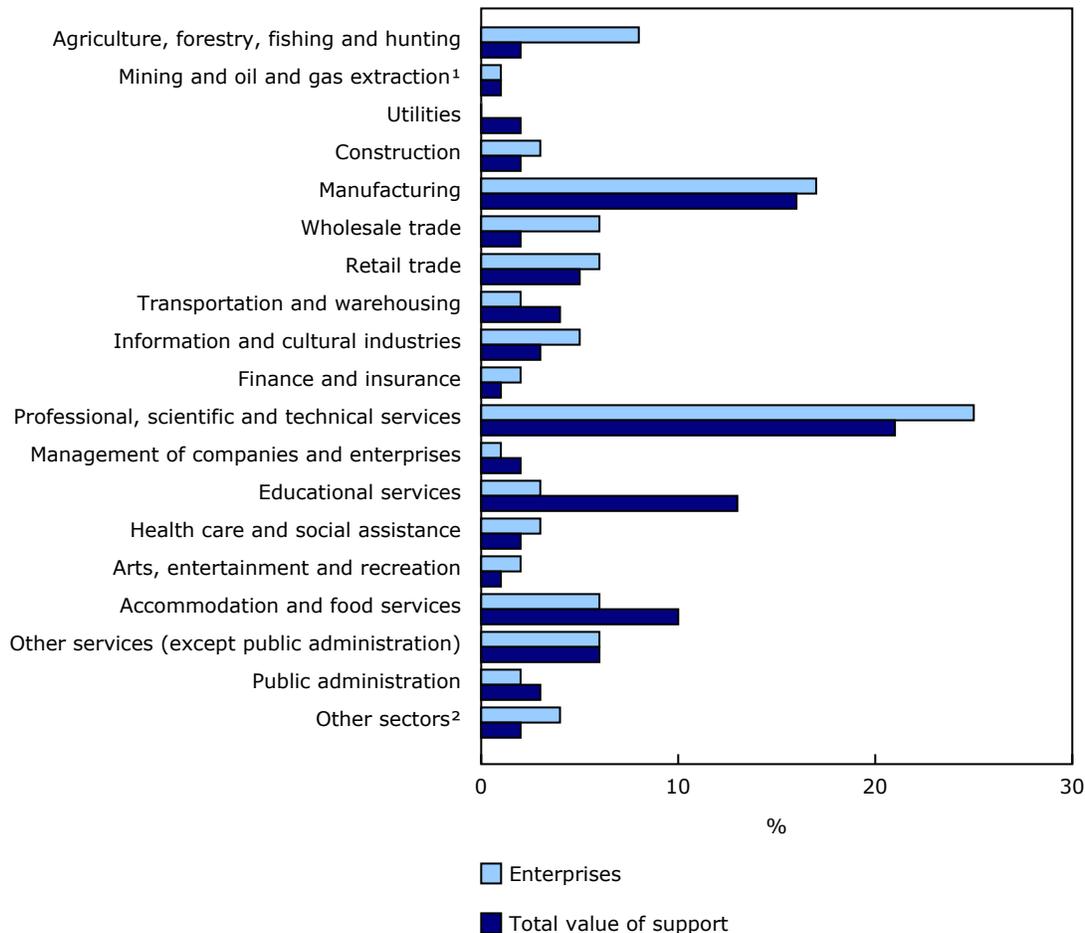
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**Chart 2**  
**Business innovation and growth by revenue size, 2021**



**Note(s):** Percentages do not always sum up to 100% due to rounding.  
**Source(s):** Table 33-10-0220-01.

**Chart 3**  
**Business innovation and growth support by industry, 2021**



1. Includes quarrying.

2. Includes administrative services, support, waste management and remediation services and real estate and rental and leasing sectors.

**Note(s):** Percentages do not always sum up to 100% due to rounding.

**Source(s):** Table [33-10-0221-01](#).

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5304](#).**

**Available tables: [33-10-0219-01](#) to [33-10-0221-01](#) .**

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](mailto:infostats@statcan.gc.ca)) or Media Relations ([statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca)).