

Canadian Internal Trade Hub

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Canada has long been known as a trading nation. The Canadian economy is characterized by a significant degree of trade with the rest of the world. Often forgotten in the discussion is the critical importance of internal trade within the Canadian economy. As an essential element of the Canadian economy, internal trade supports economic competitiveness by creating jobs, helping businesses expand, enhancing consumer choice, and increasing Canada's overall economic growth.

Approximately \$528 billion of goods and services moved across provincial and territorial borders in 2022—equal to 18.8% of Canada's gross domestic product. Furthermore, one-third of Canadian businesses participated in internal trade by buying or selling goods across provincial and territorial borders in 2023.

New data hub on internal trade in Canada

The Privy Council Office and Statistics Canada have partnered to provide data that can inform about internal trade available to Canadians in one central and easy-to-access location. The new [Canadian Internal Trade Data and Information Hub \(CITH\)](#), part of the [Federal Action Plan to Strengthen Internal Trade](#) (see Note to readers), provides Canadians with more detailed information on internal trade to help businesses and policy makers make informed decisions, and to conduct research and analyses on internal trade trends and issues. Over time, Statistics Canada will expand the content on the CITH to provide more data sets, tools, and visualizations, which will improve the resources available to those interested in internal trade.

The CITH will allow Canadians to access a wide array of data pertaining to internal trade, which will provide them with deeper insights into interprovincial trade, labour mobility, and many other related issues.

Internal trade a key part of the Canadian economy

The CITH includes new data and visualization products to gauge the value of trade activities between provinces and territories, down to the commodity level and by industry. Moreover, the CITH houses data from recent Statistics Canada surveys looking at Canadian businesses' experiences with internal trade.

In some provinces and territories, internal trade accounted for at least half of total trade (which includes both internal and international trade). This was the case for Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, and the three territories (Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut).



Table 1
Interprovincial trade as a share of total trade, Canadian provinces and territories, 1982 and 2022

	Interprovincial trade as a share of total trade	
	1982	2022
	%	
Newfoundland and Labrador	60.2	32.9
Prince Edward Island	79.4	58.6
Nova Scotia	59.5	51.2
New Brunswick	56.4	40.6
Quebec	53.2	35.7
Ontario	44.9	29.2
Manitoba	65.7	51.9
Saskatchewan	56.9	42.1
Alberta	61.3	37.9
British Columbia	47.1	40.5
Yukon	74.8	67.5
	1999	2022
Northwest Territories	55.5	50.6
Nunavut	57.8	52.6

Note(s): Data are provided for the Northwest Territories and Nunavut for 1999, as Nunavut did not exist separately before 1999.

Source(s): Table [36-10-0697-01](#).

Other jurisdictions are doing more trade internationally than they do internally: Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan. The flow of trade across provinces and territories changed over the past four decades, mostly as a result of multiple [free trade agreements](#) with other countries, and increases in international commodity prices.

Over one in five businesses are selling products or services to other provinces or territories

Another way to quantify internal trade activities is to measure the extent to which businesses are selling products or services to other provinces or territories, or purchasing products or services from other provinces or territories.

According to [results from the Canadian Survey on Business Conditions for the third quarter of 2023](#), over one in five businesses sold to customers in another province or territory during the preceding year, and one-quarter purchased goods or services from suppliers outside their province or territory during that time. Nearly two-thirds of businesses had no form of interprovincial activity.

The larger the company, the more likely it is to conduct internal trade. While 44.9% of businesses with 100 or more employees sold goods or services to a customer in another province or territory, 17.1% of businesses with one to four employees did so. Among businesses that conducted internal trade activities, transportation costs were identified as the most common obstacle.

Several occupations are characterized by a relatively high degree of labour mobility across provinces and territories

The CITH also provides new information about labour mobility, a key internal trade issue in Canada. One way of looking at labour mobility is the percentage of employees who moved from one province or territory to another over the course of a year across various categories of occupations.

In 2023, the occupations that had the highest mobility rate between provinces and territories were managers in public protections services (10.0%), front-line public protection services (4.3%), transportation officers and controllers (3.9%) and university professors and post-secondary assistants (3.8%).

Workers in highly specialized or regulated professions were also characterized by high degrees of mobility. For example, mine service workers and operators in oil and gas were the fifth-most mobile employees in Canada out of 134 occupational categories.

Table 2
Ten occupational categories with highest mobility rates

	Interprovincial mobility rate	
	2016 to 2017	2022 to 2023
	%	
Managers in public protection services	13.4	10.0
Occupations in front-line public protection services	4.8	4.3
Transportation officers and controllers	3.9	3.9
University professors and post-secondary assistants	3.8	3.8
Mine service workers and operators in oil and gas drilling	3.5	3.5
Physicians, dentists and veterinarians	2.6	2.6
Occupations in travel and accommodation	2.5	2.6
Announcers and other performers	2.8	2.6
Occupations in food and beverage service	2.5	2.5
Physical science professionals	2.2	2.5

Note(s): The results for 2022 to 2023 are based on experimental estimates obtained by combining a number of sources, including the 2016 Census of Population and the Labour Force Survey.

Source(s): Table [14-10-0452-01](#).

Table 3
Ten occupational categories with the lowest mobility rates

	Interprovincial mobility rate	
	2016 to 2017	2022 to 2023
	%	
Managers in agriculture, horticulture and aquaculture	0.5	0.4
Mechanical, electrical and electronics assemblers	0.5	0.5
Machine operators and related workers in pulp and paper production and wood processing and manufacturing	0.5	0.5
Machine operators and related workers in mineral and metal products processing and manufacturing	0.6	0.6
Machine operators and related workers in chemical, plastic and rubber processing	0.6	0.7
Other assembly and related occupations	0.7	0.7
Machine operators and related workers in textile, fabric, fur and leather products processing and manufacturing	0.7	0.7
Supervisors, processing and manufacturing occupations	0.7	0.7
Managers in communication (except broadcasting)	0.8	0.8
Public works and other labourers	0.8	0.8

Note(s): The results for 2022 to 2023 are based on experimental estimates obtained by combining a number of sources, including the 2016 Census of Population and the Labour Force Survey.

Source(s): Table [14-10-0452-01](#).

Statistics Canada's commitment to provide additional information on internal trade

The CITH aims to support research, analysis, modelling and policy making in relation to Canadian internal trade. Statistics Canada will continue to work with stakeholders and to enhance the hub with additional information and new data sources as they become available.

Additional sources of data could include specialized aggregations of data from other economic surveys. Work is currently underway to identify areas where Statistics Canada may be able to partner with federal departments, provinces and territories to provide a more comprehensive picture of internal trade in Canada.

Statistics Canada will also undertake the first-ever Canadian Survey on Interprovincial Trade. The results of this survey will be integrated into the Hub, continuing to expand the Hub's inventory of data and insights to support the identification and elimination of top internal trade barriers and help businesses make well-informed decisions.

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Note to readers

Federal action plan on internal trade

In recognition of the critical importance of the free flow of goods, services and labour in economic recovery, the [Federal Action Plan to Strengthen Internal Trade](#) outlines an ambitious strategy to accelerate efforts to remove barriers to trade. It contains five key actions:

- The creation of the Canadian Internal Trade Data and Information Hub (CITH) to provide critical, open and accessible data on internal trade in Canada;
- a review of the [Canadian Free Trade Agreement](#) to reduce federal exemptions;
- stakeholder engagement to better understand what can be done to support internal trade around the country;
- research to identify and address trade barriers; and
- enhanced funding for the Internal Trade Secretariat.

Statistics Canada and the Privy Council Office have co-led the development of the CITH, and over the coming years will work to expand its scope and improve its ability to support the analysis of internal trade issues in Canada.

Available tables: [14-10-0452-01](#) and [36-10-0697-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [1902](#) and [5228](#).

A short video on the Canadian Internal Trade Data and Information Hub can be found here: [Canadian Internal Trade Data and Information Hub video](#).

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).