

Trade by exporter and importer characteristics: Goods, 2023

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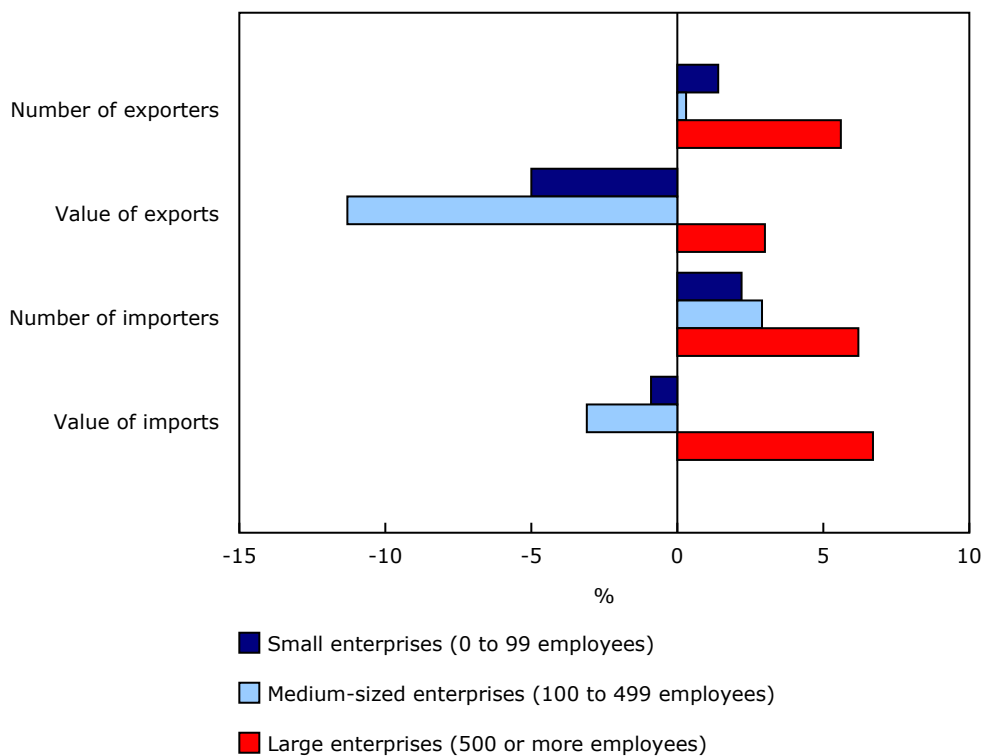
The number of enterprises exporting goods rose by 1.4% to 48,718 in 2023, the highest level since 2005. Meanwhile, the number of enterprises importing goods increased by 2.3% to 163,881. Large enterprises, which have 500 or more employees, had the highest year-over-year growth for exporters (+5.6%) and importers (+6.2%).

The value of goods exported by large enterprises rose by 3.0% to \$420.8 billion in 2023. Conversely, the value of goods exported by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) decreased by 8.6% to \$282.5 billion, primarily among medium-sized enterprises, which have 100 to 499 employees.

A similar pattern was observed for goods imports in 2023; large enterprises (+6.7%) increased their import value, while SMEs (-1.9%) decreased theirs.

Chart 1

Year-over-year percentage change in the number of enterprises and value of trade, by exporters and importers, by enterprise size, 2022 to 2023



Source(s): Tables [12-10-0071-01](#) and [12-10-0091-01](#).

Half of large and medium-sized enterprise traders are two-way traders

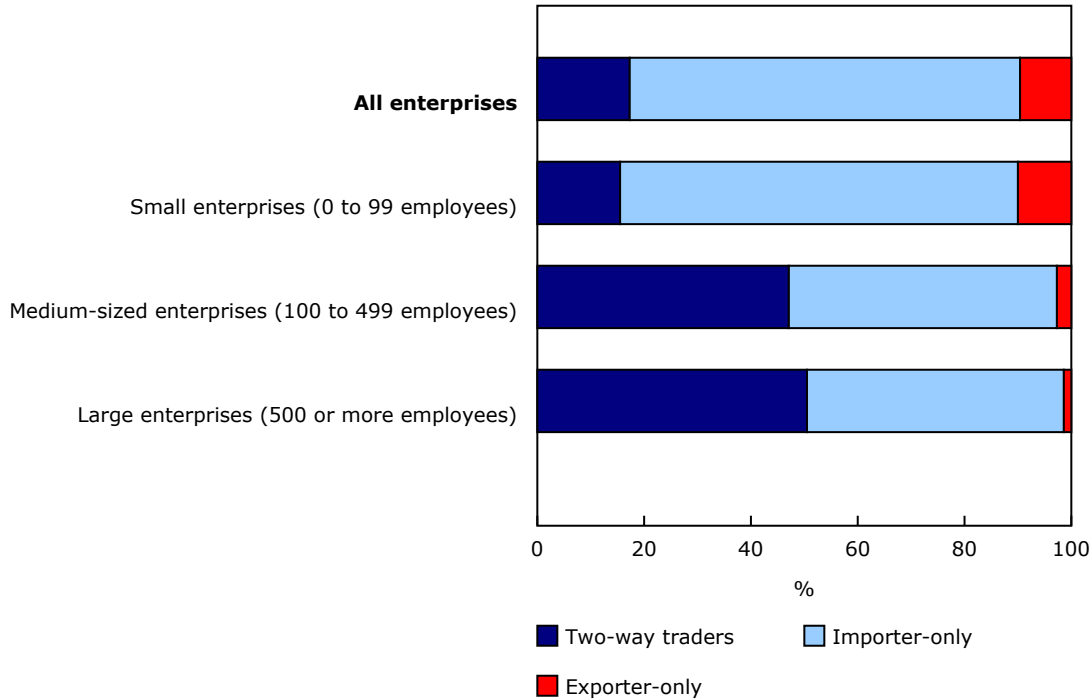
In 2023, 181,273 Canadian enterprises traded goods internationally. Of these, 31,326 (17.3%) were two-way traders, defined as enterprises that export and import. By comparison, the share of enterprises that were importers only was much higher, at 73.1%.



An enterprise's trader status varied depending on its size. In 2023, approximately half of large (50.5%) and medium-sized (47.1%) trading enterprises were two-way traders, compared with 15.5% of small trading enterprises.

Year over year, the value of international trade in goods by two-way traders rose by 1.5% to \$1.3 trillion in 2023, representing most of Canada's international merchandise trade. By contrast, the value of international trade in goods went down for exporter-only and importer-only enterprises.

Chart 2
Share of trading enterprises, by trading status and enterprise size, 2023



Note(s): Trader types include two-way traders and one-way traders. Two-way traders are enterprises that engage in exports and imports. Exporter-only and importer-only traders are enterprises that either only export or only import goods.

Source(s): Trade by Exporter Characteristics – Goods database (5124); Trade by Importer Characteristics – Goods database (5237).

More businesses are exporting goods to the United States and the Middle East

The number of businesses exporting goods to the United States rose by 695 to 41,482 in 2023. Conversely, there were 36 fewer exporters to non-United States destinations, the fourth consecutive annual decline, mainly because of fewer exporters to Africa (-131) and Asia (-103).

As the conflict in Ukraine continued, the number of exporters to Russia fell by 302 in 2023, following a decline of 558 in 2022. While the number of enterprises exporting to Ukraine (-20) also declined in 2023, the value of goods exported to Ukraine more than tripled, led by enterprises in the manufacturing sector.

More enterprises exported goods to the Middle East (+58) in 2023, primarily to the United Arab Emirates (+253) and Saudi Arabia (+147). These increases were partially offset by fewer exporters to Lebanon (-107).

The number of importers increased by 3,643 in 2023, mostly because of more enterprises importing goods from Asia (+3,419), namely China (+2,920) and India (+1,253). Over half (56.8%) of Canadian importers purchased goods from the broader Indo-Pacific region, which encompasses 40 economies in Asia and Oceania. By comparison, 19.1% of Canadian exporters sold goods to this region.

The number of exporters and importers in services-producing sectors goes up

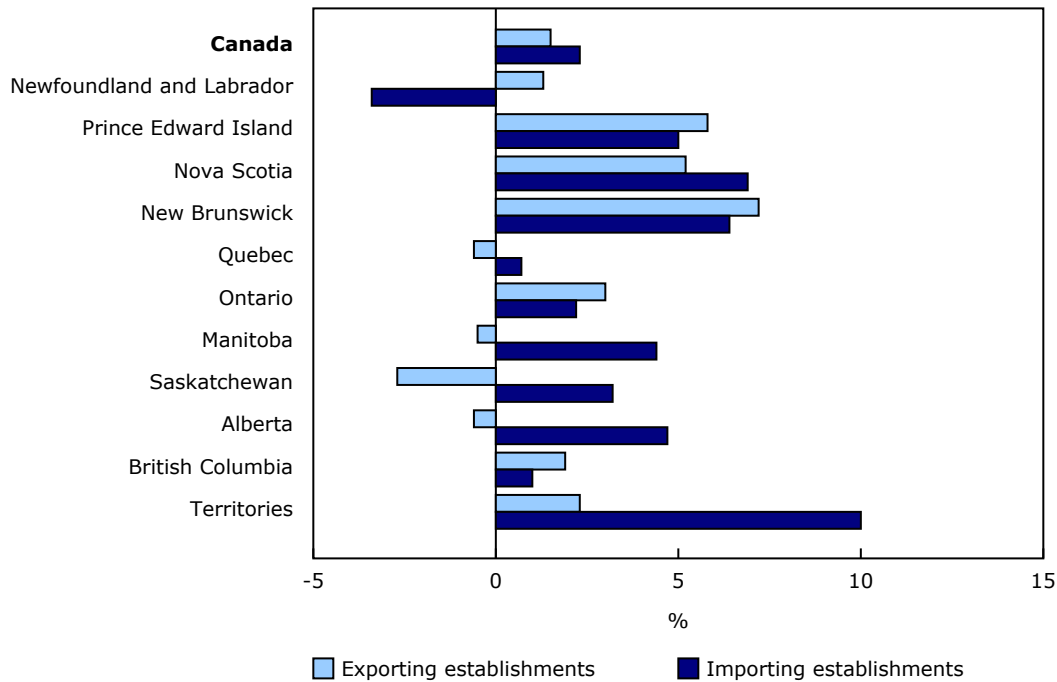
An enterprise can have multiple establishments located in different provinces or territories and operating in various industries.

In absolute terms, the number of exporting establishments rose the most in Ontario (+670) in 2023, followed by British Columbia (+147). The number of exporters in Ontario increased in several services-producing sectors, such as retail trade (+234), wholesale trade (+175) and transportation and warehousing (+82).

On a relative basis, all Atlantic provinces posted year-over-year growth in the number of exporters, headed by New Brunswick (+7.2%). By contrast, there were fewer exporters in Saskatchewan (-2.7%), Alberta (-0.6%) and Manitoba (-0.5%), led by fewer exporters within the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector of these provinces.

Across Canada, the number of importers in services-producing sectors rose at a faster pace than in goods-producing sectors, led by health care and social assistance (+12.2%) and educational services (+9.7%). Every province except Newfoundland and Labrador (-3.4%) reported year-over-year growth in the number of importing establishments.

Chart 3
Year-over-year percentage change in the number of exporting and importing establishments, by province or region, 2022 to 2023



Source(s): Tables [12-10-0098-01](#) and [12-10-0112-01](#).

Most trading establishments are located in a census metropolitan area

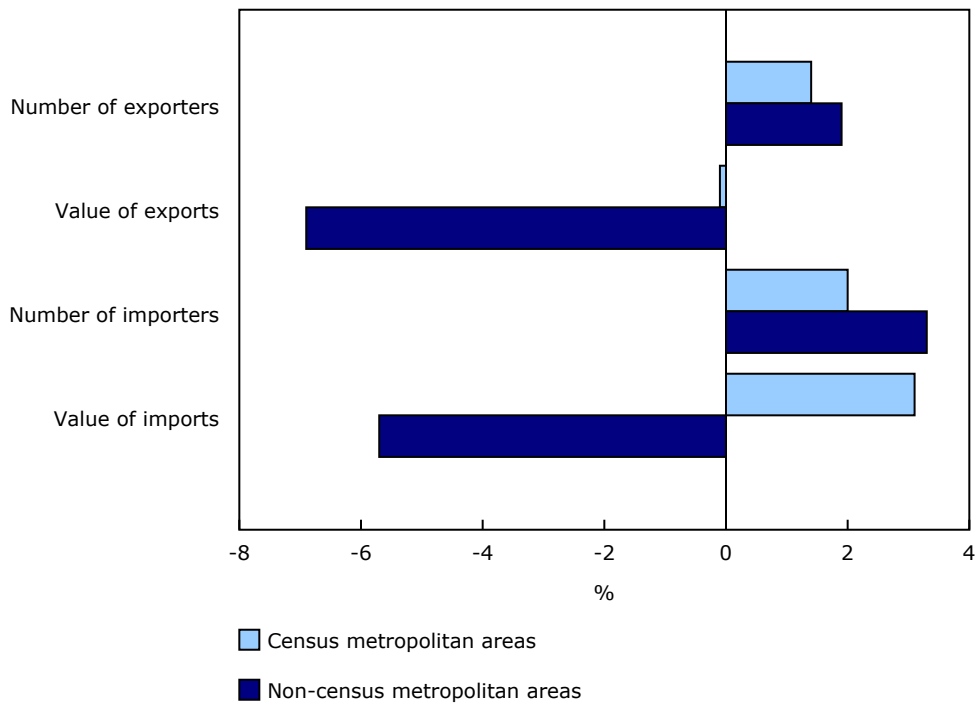
Over three-quarters of Canadian exporters (77.4%) and importers (77.3%) were located in a census metropolitan area (CMA) in 2023. Over half (52.2%) of all exporting establishments were concentrated in five CMAs, led by Toronto.

Year over year, the number of exporters in Toronto rose by 235 to 12,156 in 2023, mainly in the retail trade sector (+143). Several other CMAs in Ontario had more exporters than in the previous year, including Hamilton (+67) and Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo (+53).

In 2023, the growth in the number of exporters (+1.4%) and importers (+2.0%) in CMAs was slightly lower than that for exporters (+1.9%) and importers (+3.3%) outside CMAs. However, driven by an increase in the value of trade by establishments within the manufacturing sector, primarily from motor vehicles, exporters and importers in CMAs posted an increase in their total trade value, while those outside CMAs saw a decline.

With respect to the geographical diversification of suppliers, importers in CMAs (51.1%) were more likely to import from multiple partner countries than importers outside CMAs (41.7%) in 2023. Overall, Montréal importers (56.2%) had the highest propensity to import from multiple partner countries.

Chart 4
Year-over-year percentage change in the number of trading establishments and value of exports and imports, by census metropolitan area and non-census metropolitan area, 2022 to 2023



Source(s): Tables [12-10-0138-01](#) and [12-10-0139-01](#).

Table 1
Number of exporting and importing enterprises and year-over-year percentage change, by enterprise size, 2022 and 2023

	Exporting enterprises			Importing enterprises		
	2022	2023	2022 to 2023	2022	2023	Percentage change
	number		% change	number		%
All enterprises	48,036	48,718	1.4	160,238	163,881	2.3
Small enterprises (0 to 99 employees)	43,162	43,767	1.4	150,964	154,266	2.2
0 or unreported employees	11,815	11,891	0.6	43,373	44,447	2.5
1 to 9 employees	13,742	13,875	1.0	59,049	60,021	1.6
10 to 49 employees	13,706	13,979	2.0	40,302	41,221	2.3
50 to 99 employees	3,899	4,022	3.2	8,240	8,577	4.1
Medium-sized enterprises (100 to 499 employees)	3,678	3,688	0.3	7,015	7,215	2.9
100 to 249 employees	2,706	2,710	0.1	5,167	5,336	3.3
250 to 499 employees	972	978	0.6	1,848	1,879	1.7
Large enterprises (500 or more employees)	1,196	1,263	5.6	2,259	2,400	6.2

Source(s): Tables [12-10-0071-01](#) and [12-10-0091-01](#).

Table 2
Number of exporting and importing enterprises, by selected region, 2022 to 2023

	Exporting enterprises			Importing enterprises		
	2022	2023	2022 to 2023	2022	2023	2022 to 2023
	number		change in number	number		change in number
All regions	48,036	48,718	682	160,238	163,881	3,643
United States	40,787	41,482	695	112,183	112,871	688
Europe	9,121	9,112	-9	54,374	55,135	761
Africa	2,652	2,521	-131	6,102	6,093	-9
Central America, South America, and Caribbean	4,548	4,557	9	11,618	11,539	-79
Asia	8,043	7,940	-103	88,788	92,207	3,419
Middle East	3,798	3,856	58	7,117	7,185	68
Oceania and Antarctica	3,727	3,688	-39	5,999	6,092	93

Note(s): The number of enterprises is not additive in this table.

Source(s): Tables [12-10-0095-01](#) and [12-10-0108-01](#).

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Note to readers

The *Trade by Exporter Characteristics: Goods* and *Trade by Importer Characteristics: Goods* programs are an initiative at Statistics Canada undertaken to analyze the business characteristics of exporters and importers in Canada. These estimates are formed by linking customs trade data records to business entities in Statistics Canada's Business Register.

Survey definitions

This release contains information at both the enterprise and establishment levels. An **enterprise** is defined as the statistical unit that directs and controls the allocation of resources relating to its domestic operations, and for which consolidated financial statements are maintained. An **establishment** is the smallest statistical unit within an enterprise structure and better reflects the primary industrial activity and the province of the exporter and importer. The two measures generate a different number of exporting and importing units, as well as a different industry allocation of these units.

Small enterprises have fewer than 100 employees, including those that did not report any employment. **Medium-sized enterprises** have 100 to 499 employees, while **large enterprises** have 500 or more employees.

Country of origin is the country of production or the country in which the final stage of production or manufacture occurs.

A **census metropolitan area (CMA)** is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities clustered around a population centre (known as the core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more must live in the core, based on adjusted data from the Census of Population Program. In the 2021 Census there were 41 CMAs in Canada.

A **non-CMA** is an area not part of the 41 CMAs. The sum of CMA and non-CMA data represents Canada. Therefore, adding the trade values of CMAs and non-CMAs produces the national total. The same concept applies for the number of traders.

Detailed information on concepts and methodology relating to this release is available on the [Trade by Exporter Characteristics: Goods](#) survey page and the [Trade by Importer Characteristics: Goods](#) survey page.

Survey coverage

In this release, the total value of exports and imports refers to the part of the annual domestic export and import value (customs basis) that can be linked to specific entities in the Business Register each year. Annual domestic export and import values (customs basis) can be obtained from the [Canadian International Merchandise Trade Web Application](#) and Table 12-10-0175-01. Additional information and definitions related to domestic merchandise exports and imports are available on the survey page for [Canadian International Merchandise Trade \(Customs Basis\)](#).

Export data are available for the reference period of 2000 to 2023, while import data are available for the reference period of 2005 to 2023.

Available tables: [12-10-0071-01](#), [12-10-0091-01](#) to [12-10-0098-01](#) , [12-10-0103-01](#) to [12-10-0115-01](#) , [12-10-0131-01](#), [12-10-0137-01](#) to [12-10-0139-01](#) and [12-10-0158-01](#) to [12-10-0160-01](#) .

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [5124](#) and [5237](#).

The data visualization product "[Trade in Goods by Exporter and Importer Characteristics: Interactive Tool](#)," which is part of *Statistics Canada – Data Visualization Products* ([71-607-X](#)), is now available.

The updated [Canada and the World Statistics Hub](#) ([13-609-X](#)) is available online. This product illustrates the nature and extent of Canada's economic and financial relationship with the world using interactive graphs and tables. This product provides easy access to information on trade, investment, employment and travel between Canada and a number of countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Mexico, China and Japan.

The *Methodological Guide: Canadian System of Macroeconomic Accounts* ([13-607-X](#)) is available.

The *User Guide: Canadian System of Macroeconomic Accounts* ([13-606-G](#)) is also available. This publication will be regularly updated to maintain its relevance.

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).