

# Trade by exporter and importer characteristics: Services, 2023

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Monday, December 8, 2025

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The year 2023 was marked by strong growth in exports and imports of commercial services by enterprises in Canada. Exports increased 12.0% year over year to \$134.7 billion, while imports rose 8.8% to \$125.0 billion. In comparison, movements in the value of goods exported and imported in 2023 were more moderate, with exports down by 1.6% and imports up by 1.0%.

The primary focus of this release is to look at commercial services trade from the lens of the enterprises in Canada involved in this growing activity and provide further insights on the nature of these firms that are not reported through the regular international trade in services and balance of international payments releases.

## Professional, scientific and technical services sector accounts for the highest share of international commercial services exports

Enterprises operating in the professional, scientific and technical services sector accounted for 38% of the value of all commercial services exports in 2023, the highest share of any sector. These enterprises generated \$50.6 billion of the \$134.7 billion dollars of receipts from this activity, up 21.3% from 2022. This growth was concentrated in companies within the computer systems design industry.

Meanwhile, enterprises of the professional, scientific and technical services sector imported \$31.2 billion worth of commercial services from trading partners, accounting for 25% of the \$125.0 billion dollars of payments in 2023.

Within this sector, \$21.1 billion worth of exports and \$16.6 billion worth of imports of commercial services were made by large enterprises (500 employees or more) in 2023, while \$29.3 billion worth of international sales and \$14.6 billion worth of international purchases of commercial services were made by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Canada (fewer than 500 employees).

Major gains in exports and imports were also reported by enterprises within the manufacturing, wholesale and financial sector, as well as in holding companies serving as head offices.

## Canadian multinational enterprise exports' growth outpaces that from foreign multinationals

Exports of commercial services from Canadian multinational enterprises (MNEs) rose 11.6% to \$43.1 billion dollars in 2023, outpacing growth in exports from foreign MNEs operating in Canada (+10.7% to \$67.5 billion).

Meanwhile, imports of commercial services by Canadian MNEs rose by 2.7% to \$31.3 billion in 2023. Foreign MNEs imported \$79.7 billion worth of commercial services, accounting for 63.8% of all commercial services imports and 83.8% of the increase in imports.

## Digitally delivered commercial service exports rise

Digital delivery is one of the primary modes of supplying services to another country, alongside in-person delivery, which requires the customer or the supplier to travel to their counterpart. Typically, digitally delivered services are provided through the use of platforms, applications and other means of transmission of materials online.

The value of commercial services exports delivered digitally to foreign countries increased 7.4% to \$70.3 billion in 2023. Overall, the share of Canada's commercial services exports digitally delivered to customers abroad—also called digital intensity—stood at 52%.



The value of digitally delivered services exported by large firms increased 20.1% to \$42.6 billion in 2023, while decreasing 7.6% by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In contrast, SMEs' exports by other modes of delivery grew 30% to \$37.8 billion.

### Canadian multinational enterprises' increase in exports focused outside the United States

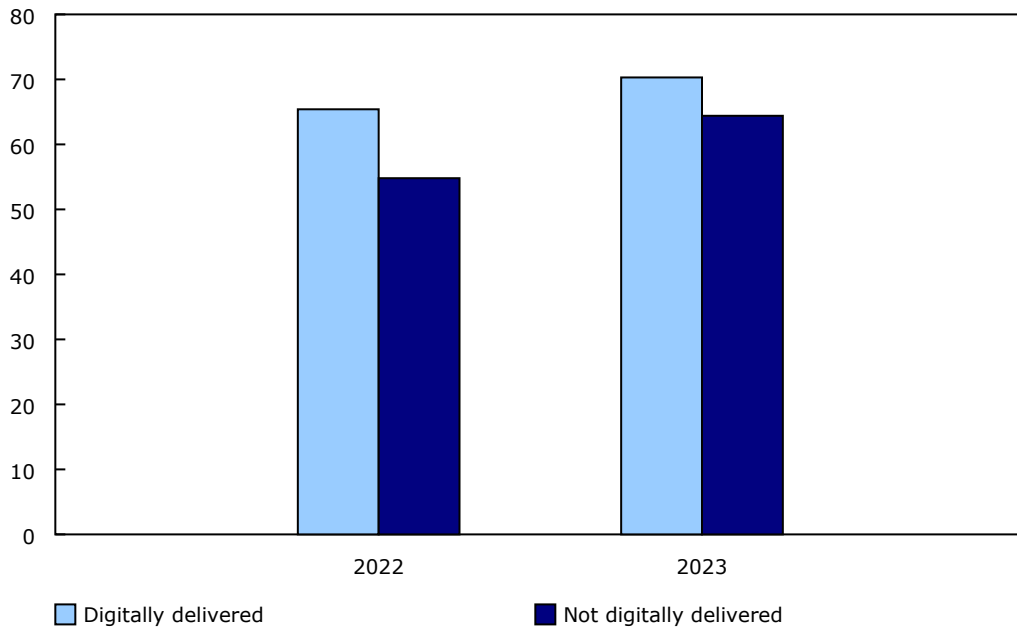
Of the \$14.4 billion increase in exports of commercial services from 2022 to 2023, 74.2% (\$10.7 billion) of these sales were to the United States. The largest increase in exports to the United States originated from foreign MNEs.

Canadian MNEs saw a larger increase in exports to the rest of the world (+21.0%) than to the United States (+6.6%). Overall, Canadian MNEs accounted for 75% of the increase in exports to countries other than the United States.

MNEs, both Canadian and foreign, accounted for \$9.3 billion of the \$10.1 billion increase in imports of commercial services in 2023.

**Chart 1**  
**Digitally delivered services exports, 2022 and 2023**

billions of dollars

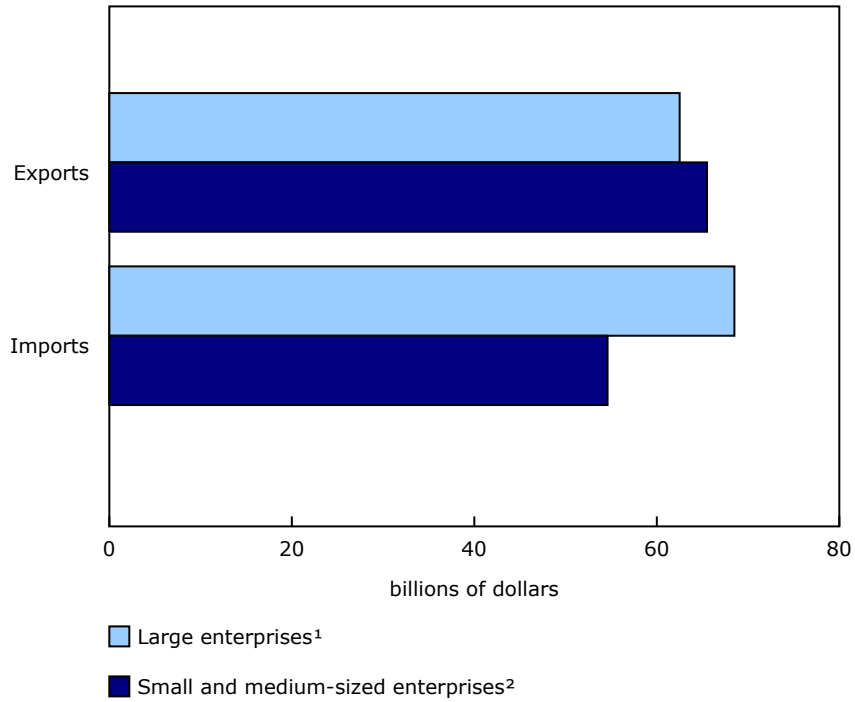


Source(s): Table 12-10-0146-01.

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**Chart 2**  
**Exports and imports, commercial services, by employment size class, 2023**

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1. Enterprises with 500 or more employees.

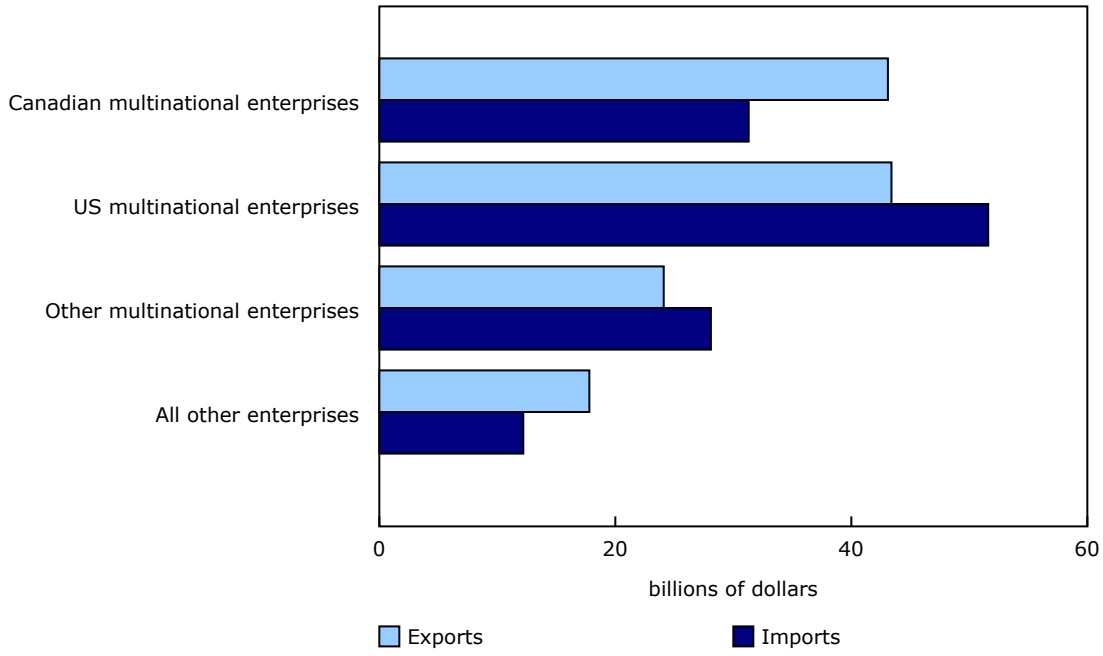
2. Enterprises with 0 to 499 employees.

Source(s): Table 12-10-0142-01.

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**Chart 3**  
**Exports and imports, commercial services, by type of enterprise, 2023**

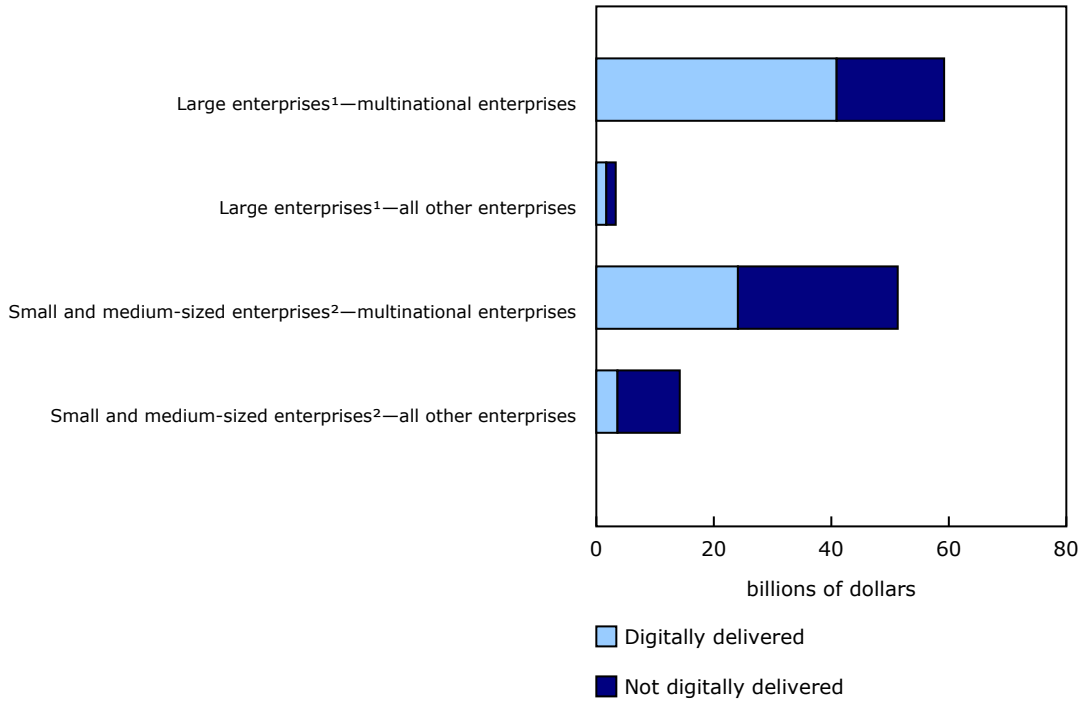
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Source(s): Table 12-10-0146-01.

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**Chart 4**  
**Digitally delivered commercial services, exports of small and medium-sized and large enterprises by multinational enterprise status, 2023**

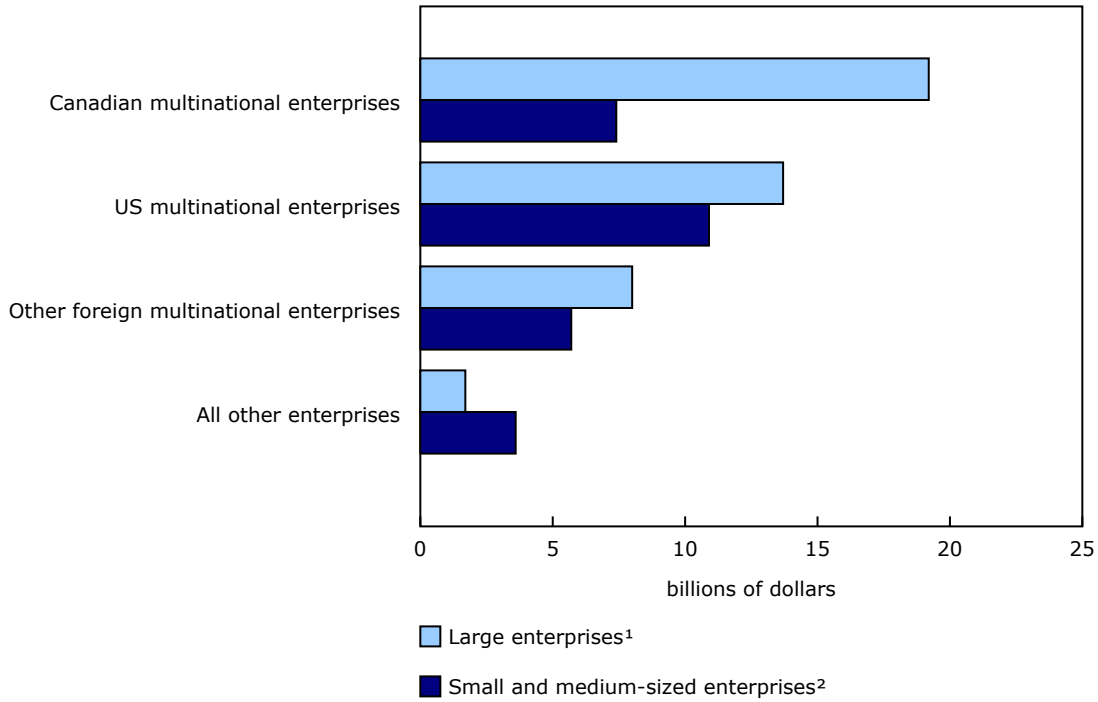


1. Enterprises with 500 or more employees.

2. Enterprises with 0 to 499 employees.

Source(s): Table 12-10-0146-01.

**Chart 5**  
**Digitally delivered services exports by exporter characteristics, 2023**



1. Enterprises with 500 or more employees.

2. Enterprises with 0 to 499 employees.

Source(s): Table 12-10-0146-01.

**Table 1**  
**Commercial services exports and imports by industry, 2022 and 2023**

	2022 total exports	2023 total exports	2022 total imports	2023 total imports
	billions of dollars			
<b>All industries</b>	<b>120.3</b>	<b>134.7</b>	<b>114.9</b>	<b>125.0</b>
Professional, scientific and technical services industries	41.7	50.6	28.0	31.2
Finance and insurance industries	19.7	21.3	21.8	22.6
Information and cultural industries	25.0	25.3	24.2	23.7
Manufacturing industries	8.4	9.9	9.8	12.7
Wholesale trade	6.3	7.3	6.0	7.8
All other industries	19.1	20.2	25.0	26.9

Source(s): Table [12-10-0142-01](#).

### Note to readers

*This release includes information on international trade in services by exporter and importer characteristics, providing further insights on the profile of Canadian enterprises engaged in cross-border commercial services trade from 2010 to 2023.*

*In this release, a certain share of export values and import values could not be linked to a particular employment size class or multinational status because of limitations in data sources used to compile data on certain commercial services.*

*Multinational enterprises (MNEs) are corporations with majority-owned operations in more than one country. The ownership of more than 50% of voting shares by enterprises outside the country is used to identify foreign MNEs. Canadian MNEs are enterprises based in Canada that own more than 50% of the voting shares of an enterprise abroad. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Canada can be part of a larger multinational framework. As a result, the analysis of the data by multinational status reflects the activities of these SMEs.*

*Data on digitally delivered services exports are provided for the dimensions of multinational status and enterprise size class for 2023. Digitally delivered services exporters are primarily identified through Statistics Canada's International Transactions in Commercial Services survey, in which respondents are asked to identify the share of their exports that are digitally delivered per services category, combined with administrative data sources.*

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5386](#).**

**Available tables: [12-10-0142-01](#) and [12-10-0146-01](#).**

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)).