



UNCTAD/STAT/INF/2023/3

INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN SERVICES

2022

World services exports reached 7.1 trillion in 2022 and grew by 15% annually. Transport exports increased especially strongly, by 24%, driven by high transport costs during the first six months. International travel receipts remained at 75% of their 2019 value, despite a solid post-pandemic recovery in 2022.

	World services exports			Growth	
	Trillions of US\$			%	
	2019	2021	2022	2022/ 2021	2022/ 2019
Total	6.315	6.210	7.127	14.8	12.9
Transport	1.031	1.198	1.481	23.6	43.6
Travel	1.486	0.638	1.116	74.8	-24.9

At the regional level, Latin America and the Caribbean recorded the highest annual growth in services exports (+38%), followed by Africa (+31%) and Asia and Oceania (+20%). Its imports also rose faster (+31%) than in the other main regions. The growth of trade, measured in current US\$, was more affected by exchange rates volatility in 2022 than in most preceding years.

US\$7.1 trillion
World services exports
+14.8%


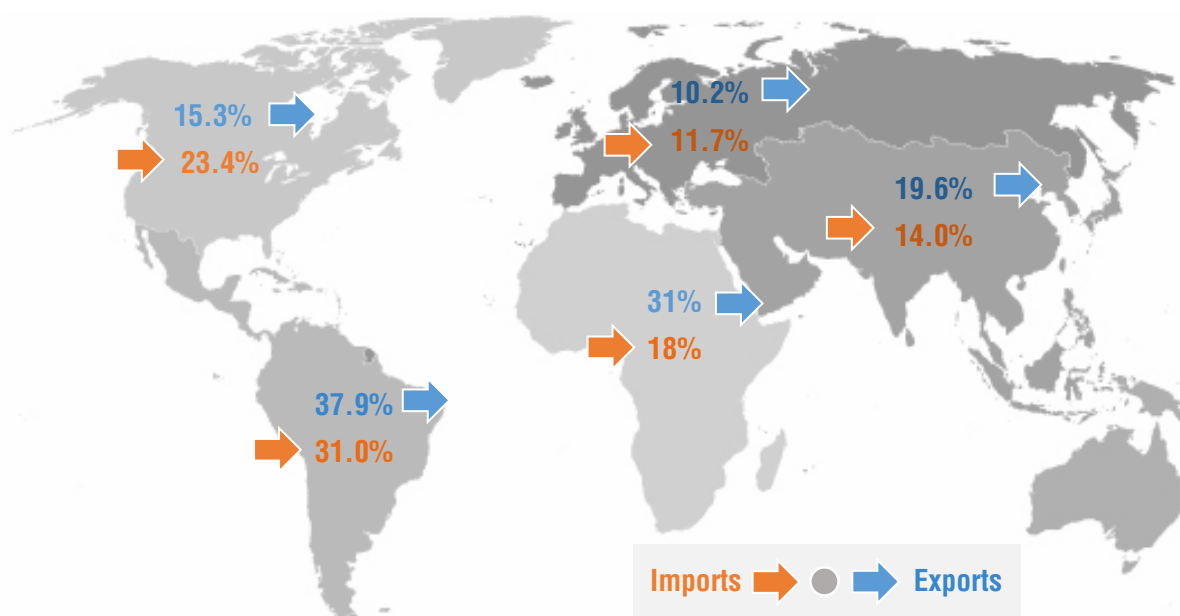


Figure 1. Annual growth rate of total services exports and imports by region, 2022 (percentage)



Structure of world services exports

Travel – formerly the most internationally traded service category – came third in 2022 (US\$1 116 billion). Various business services were at the top, accounting for almost one quarter of total services sold internationally (US\$1 737 billion). Transport came second (US\$1 481 billion), followed by telecommunications, computer, and information services (US\$969 billion).

Services exports in Northern America and Europe were dominated by business, financial, insurance, telecommunication, computer, and IP-related services (67% and 58%, respectively). In Asia and Oceania, those services also surpassed 50% of total services sales.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the most exported category of services was travel (42%). In Africa, travel accounted for 34% of total services exports.

Figure 2. World services exports by service category, 2022
(Billions of US\$)

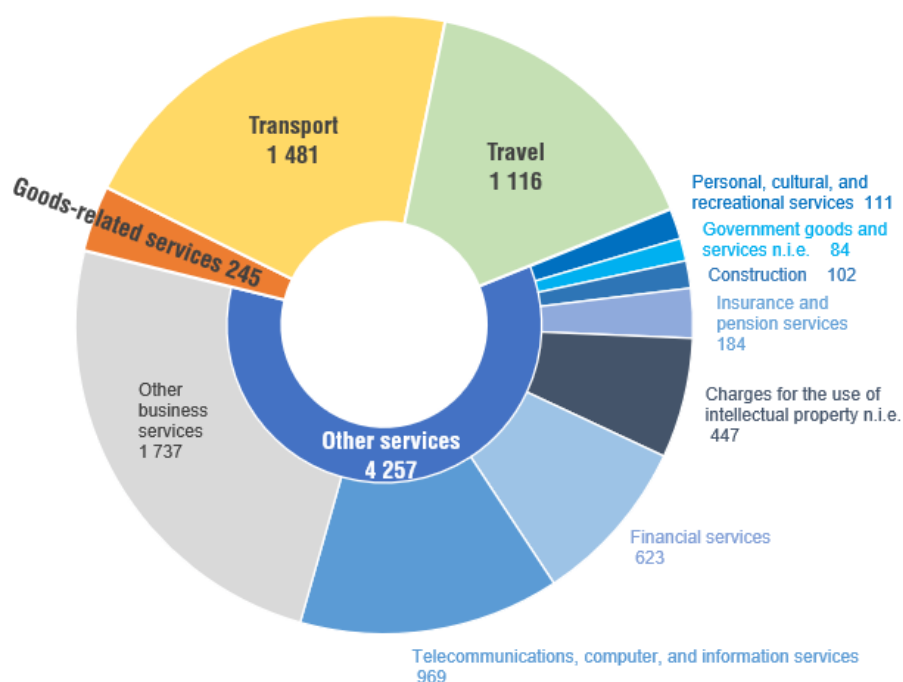
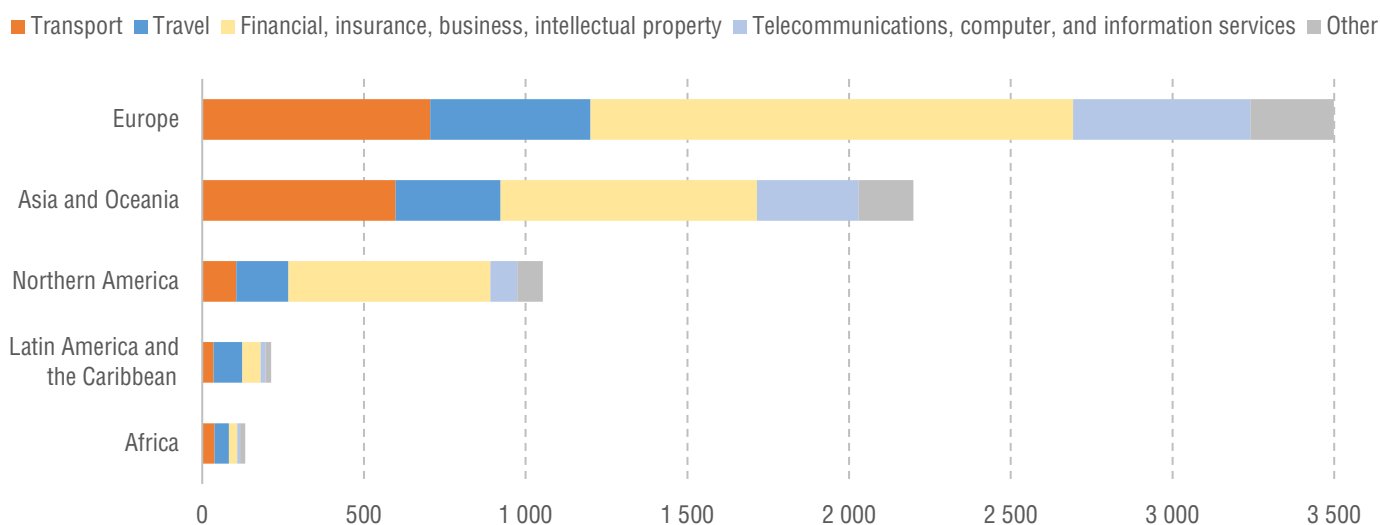


Figure 3. Exports of services by region and service category, 2022
(Billions of US\$)

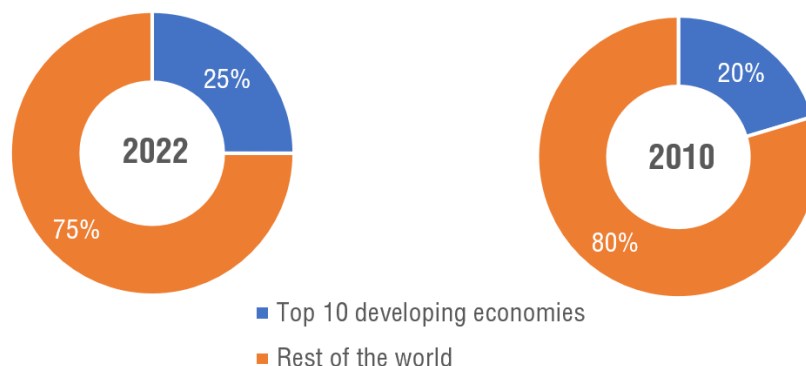


Selected trends

The top 10 services exporting developing economies captured 25% of the global services market in 2022. This represents a rise of 5 percentage points compared to the market share in 2010 and indicates progress in diversifying exports further into tertiary sector international markets. Most of the additional market share was captured in Asian developing economies.

Figure 4. Top 10 services exporting developing economies' market share has risen from 20% in 2010 to 25% in 2022

Total services exports markets share in 2022 and 2010 (percentage)

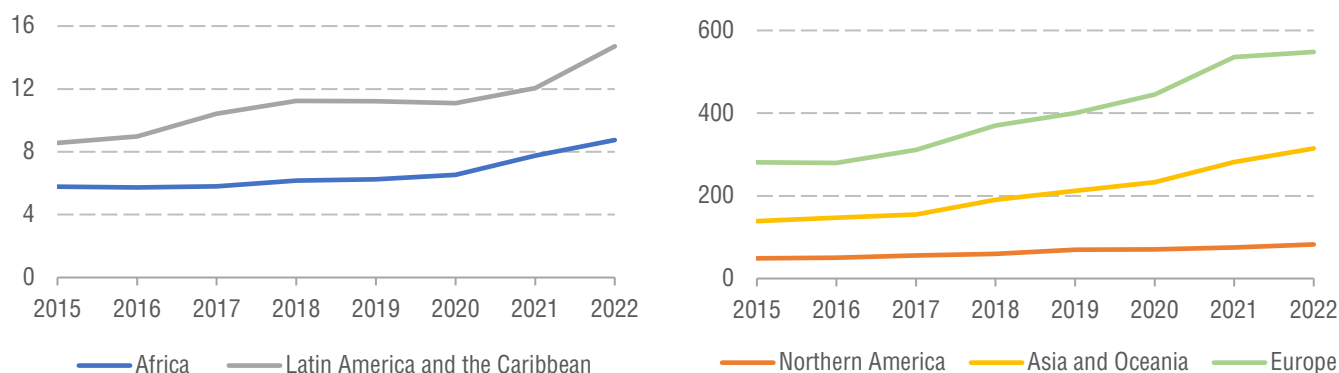


The COVID-19 pandemic shook global trade over recent years. While the international sales of many services suffered, telecommunications and computer services trade expanded, driven by abruptly rising demand during the closedown periods. In 2021 and 2022, all main regions recorded strong growth in exports of telecommunication and computer services, underpinning modern business-to-business and business-to-clients connectivity as well as e-commerce.

European economies sold over US\$548 billion of telecommunication, computer, and information services internationally in 2022, followed by Asia and Oceania, which exported some US\$315 billion. African states registered US\$9 billion in exports, 13% more than in 2021. Latin America and the Caribbean have registered the highest rate of exports growth of those services (+22%), leading to US\$15 billion worth of exports in 2022. Northern American exports of telecommunication, computer, and information services rose by solid 10% and surpassed US\$82 billion.

Figure 5. Hefty growth of telecommunication, computer, and information services' exports in Africa and in Latin America and the Caribbean

Exports by main geographic region, 2015-2022 (billions of US\$)

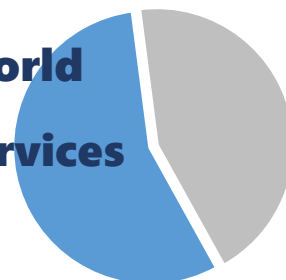


Leading exporters and importers in 2022

Development status groups	Leading exporters	Billions of US\$	Annual % change	Leading importers	Billions of US\$	Annual % change
Developing economies	China	424	8.1	China	465	5.4
	India	309	28.6	Singapore	259	6.5
	Singapore	291	9.3	India	250	27.3
	United Arab Emirates	155	51.9	United Arab Emirates	97	27.3
	Turkey	90	47	Saudi Arabia	83	13
	China, Hong Kong SAR	83	4.8	Brazil	79	36
	China, Taiwan Province of	58	12.2	China, Hong Kong SAR	63	2.1
	Philippines	41	22.3	Thailand	63	8.4
	Thailand	41	59.5	Mexico	47	20.8
	Brazil	39	25.3	China, Taiwan Province of	45	14.3
Developed economies	United States of America	929	15.9	United States of America	697	24.6
	United Kingdom	494	8.7	Germany	459	18.6
	Germany	412	6.2	Ireland	373	7.6
	Ireland	355	2.3	United Kingdom	317	21.6
	France	337	11.9	France	286	10.7
	Netherlands	273	8.6	Netherlands	264	5.9
	Spain	168	41.1	Japan	210	0.5
	Japan	167	-1.9	Switzerland, Liechtenstein	158	-0.8
	Switzerland, Liechtenstein	148	6.5	Belgium	144	5.4
	Belgium	139	1.3	Canada	137	17.9



56% world total services exports



Africa

Figure 6. Share of Africa in world services trade (percentage)

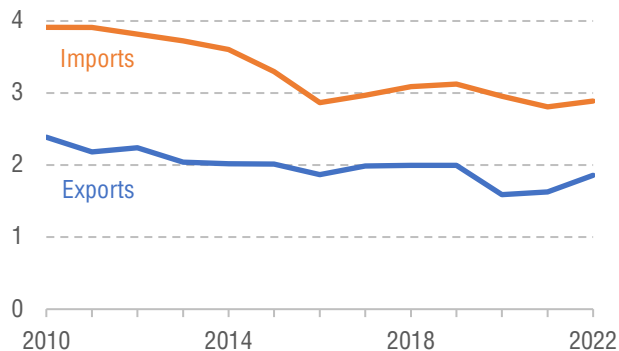
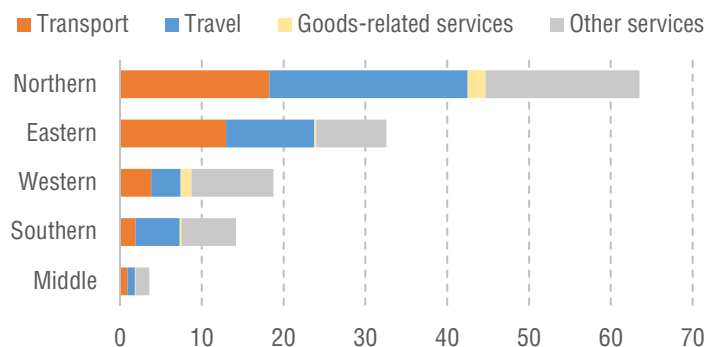


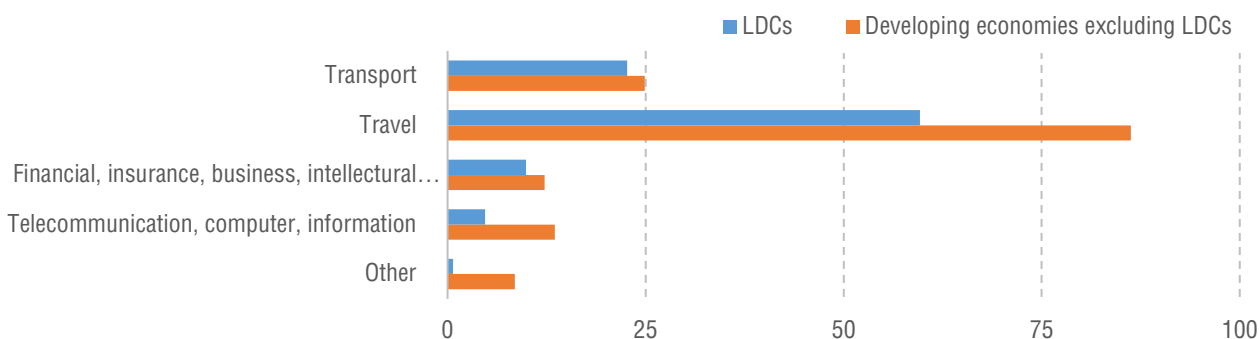
Figure 7. Services exports in Africa by sub-region and service category, 2022 (billions of US\$)



After 2016, Africa's low share in world services trade increased modestly up to 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic pushed African market shares to the lowest in 12 years. Long-distance international travel, transport and related services represent a substantial part in African services exports. As these services' trade improved modestly in 2021, Africa's total services exports recovered only in 2022 to reach US\$132 billion. At US\$45 billion, international travel receipts remained below the 2019 value (US\$52 billion).

Least developed countries (LDCs)

Figure 8. Annual growth rate of exports, by service-category, 2022 (percentage)



In 2022, LDCs exported US\$42.6 billion worth of services and recorded solid growth rates in main service categories. Transport exports rose by 32% to reach some US\$14 billion. Exports of travel services grew by 60% annually, bringing over US\$12 billion in travel receipts to LDCs. Other services exports rose by 4.5% on average in 2022. Although solid, the annual growth of LDCs' services exports, recorded at 22.5%, remained below the rate of other developing economies (+24.8%).

Over the last 15 years, LDCs' share in global services exports stood between 0.6 and 0.8%. Their share in imports gravitated around 1.6% up to 2015, when it started decreasing towards 1.3%, measured for 2022.

Services trade by partner: selected economies and top 5 partners, 2021

Economies	Exports to	Billions of US\$	Share %	Imports from	Billions of US\$	Share %
Germany	World	388	100	World	387	100
	United States of America	72	18.5	United States of America	48	12.4
	United Kingdom	32	8.3	United Kingdom	34	8.8
	Switzerland, Liechtenstein	32	8.2	France	24	6.1
	France	27	6.9	Ireland	22	5.8
	China	23	5.8	Netherlands	21	5.4
China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region	World	79	100	World	62	100
	United States of America	18	23.3	China	25	41.0
	China	13	16.3	United States of America	10	16.0
	United Kingdom	9	11.6	United Kingdom	4	6.9
	Germany	5	5.9	Singapore	4	6.0
	China, Taiwan Province of	4	5.1	Japan	2	3.7

Why are services important?

Figure 9. Contribution of the services sector to economy (Percentage)



Sources: UNCTAD (trade), UNCTAD calculations based on ILO data (employment) and UNSD (value added)

Notes

The definition of services follows the IMF *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual, Sixth Edition (BPM6)* classification. It reads as follows: “Services are the result of a production activity that changes the conditions of the consuming units or facilitates the exchange of products or financial assets. Services are not generally separate items over which ownership rights can be established and cannot generally be separated from their production.”

The BPM6 services include 12 main sub-categories: manufacturing services; maintenance and repair; transport; travel; construction; insurance and pension services; financial services; intellectual property charges; telecommunications, computer and information; other business services; personal, cultural and recreational services; and government goods and services n.i.e. For this presentation, some categories have been grouped.

Goods-related services consist of manufacturing services on physical inputs owned by others, and of maintenance and repair services.

Unless otherwise specified, the figures are sourced from the joint UNCTAD-WTO dataset on international trade in services.

Disclaimer: The publication has not been formally edited