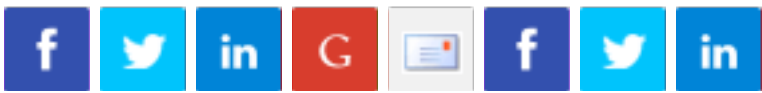


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## Export Statistics Scotland - Frequently Asked Questions

### Trade Statistics – Frequently Asked Questions

This document provides answers to some of the most common questions received on Scottish trade statistics. For additional queries or feedback on this document, please contact [exports.statistics@gov.scot](mailto:exports.statistics@gov.scot).

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### What is the Export Statistics Scotland publication?

The Scottish Government produces a National Statistics publication, [Export Statistics Scotland](#) (ESS), which estimates the value of Scottish exports at sector level. It includes estimates for goods and service exports and is the only source of estimates for exports from Scotland to the rest of the UK. It is published in January each year, with the [2017 publication](#) published in January 2019.

### How are the figures from the Export Statistics Scotland publication produced?

The main source for the ESS is the [Global Connections Survey](#) (GCS). The GCS is administered by the Scottish Government and sent to 6,000 business in Scotland each year, targeted at the most export intensive companies. Other data are used to enhance the GCS including surveys such as the Office of National Statistics (ONS) [Monthly Business Survey](#).



also to enhance the ESS including surveys such as the Office of National Statistics (ONS) [Retail Price Index](#), [International Trade in Services Survey](#) (ITIS) and various administrative data sources, including the HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) produced [Overseas Trade Statistics](#).

ESS is designated as a National Statistics product, which means that it is produced independently of Scottish Ministers. The ESS has been assessed by the [UK Statistics Authority](#) as being produced in line with the [Code of Practice](#) for Official Statistics. This means the statistics have been found to meet user needs, to be methodologically sound, explained well and presented clearly, and free of political interference.

### **Are Scottish goods which are exported via ports from the rest of the UK counted as international Scottish exports?**

Yes. The ESS publication measures the destination of goods exported from Scotland regardless of the port from which they leave the UK.

### **How are Scotch Whisky exports treated?**

All international exports relevant to Scotch Whisky are counted as Scottish exports, irrespective of the port at which they depart the UK. The data is sourced from the HMRC [Overseas Trade Statistics](#) report.

Scotch Whisky exports to the rest of the UK are estimated based on GCS responses, as HMRC do not collect information on trade within the UK.

### **How does ESS treat the situation where Scottish goods are initially exported to the rest of the UK, and subsequently re-exported?**

The ESS estimates only capture the first point of export. This means if a good is exported to a company in the rest of the UK and that company then exports it somewhere else, ESS will only capture the export to the rest of the UK.

Direct sales from Scottish companies to international destinations are counted as international exports regardless of whether they leave the UK.

### **What proportion of exports to the rest of the UK are then re-exported internationally?**

While undoubtedly some exports to the rest of the UK will be re-exported, including as part of other products, it is not possible to say exactly what this proportion is. However over half of Scottish exports to the rest of the UK are services (such as financial services) and are unlikely to be re-exported abroad. Also, many of the goods exported to the rest of the UK are in sectors where re-exporting is unlikely (utilities, retail and wholesale).

### **Why do we end up with the “Rotterdam Effect” if the statistics are measuring the end destination?**

Although it does not matter which port in the UK that Scottish goods leave from in counting export statistics, the port of Rotterdam acts as a major distribution hub as well as a port. This means that Rotterdam is often the destination of goods exported from Scotland (and the rest of the UK) which are then subsequently re-exported to other destinations. This results in what is known as the “Rotterdam Effect” – where the amount of exports to the Netherlands is artificially inflated.

### **Do the statistics take account of supply chains or value added products?**

For some companies operating in Scotland, their products are feeding into a global supply chain. For example, the company may sell a good to a company in England who subsequently incorporate it into a product which is exported internationally. In such a situation, only the sale from the Scottish company to their customer in England would be counted as a Scottish export. It would be recorded as a Scottish export to the rest of the UK.



**What other sources of Scottish export statistics are available?**

ESS is the only official source of Scottish exports which includes estimates for both goods and services.

The Scottish Government also produce the [Index of Manufactured Exports](#) (IME). This is a quarterly publication measuring the growth, in real terms, of overseas export sales by the manufacturing sector in Scotland. These figures are now published within the [Quarterly National Accounts](#) report.

The HMRC [Regional Trade Statistics](#) (RTS) are published on a quarterly basis. This is a National Statistics publication which provides a breakdown of the flows of imports and exports between regions and countries of the UK and other countries. RTS includes trade of goods only. It excludes trade in services (e.g. banking, tourism) and intangibles (e.g. financial investments or transfers). Further information on their methodology is available [here](#).

ONS also produce [experimental statistics](#) estimating international exports of services from Scotland, based on the UK ITIS publication. Their figures for Scotland were different from those produced in ESS due to differences in methodology and data sources. Further information on their methodology can be found [here](#).

**How can I compare the Scottish export statistics with equivalent figures for England or the UK?**

There are no equivalent UK or English figures to ESS. Comparisons can be made using HMRC RTS but, as mentioned, this will only include exports of goods and also excludes trade within the UK.

**Where can I find statistics on imports for Scotland?**

There are no statistics on the total value of imports to Scotland on a comparable basis to ESS. Estimates of imports on a Balance of Payments basis are produced in Scottish Government [Quarterly National Accounts](#) publication, along with the trade balance for the onshore economy. HMRC also publish statistics on imports of goods from overseas to Scotland in their [RTS](#).

