

STRUCTURAL BUSINESS STATISTICS: ENTERPRISES AND ENTERPRISE GROUPS | YEAR 2024

Services fuel growth in terms of number of enterprises, employment and value added

In 2024, the enterprises are over 4.5 million (+0.5% compared to 2023). This trend is driven primarily by the Services sector (+0.8%).

The value added in nominal value increase is 2.5%: +4.2% in services; +0.6% in manufacturing (including mining and quarrying and supply and sewerage); -0.5% in construction. The growth in value added in the services is driven by professional, scientific and technical activities (+0.9 p.p.) and by accommodation and food service activities, information and communication services, and transportation and storage services (+0.6 p.p. each).

The increase in employment stands at 1.1%, exceeding the average in services sector (+1.3%) and being higher for large (+3.8%) and medium-sized (+2.5%) enterprises.

The enterprises organised in groups (just over 200,000 enterprises) grew by 4.8% in terms of number and generated 66.4% of turnover and 58.7% of value added.

+2.5%

Employees rate growth

+3.8% for large enterprises.
+5.2% for enterprise organised in groups.

+3.1%

Value added growth for micro-sized enterprises

+3.2% for large and +2.8% for medium-sized enterprises

+3.9%

Value added for enterprises of MNEs growth

+3.7% Enterprises in Domestic groups.

www.istat.it

UFFICIO STAMPA

tel. +39 06 4673.2243/44

ufficiostampa@istat.it

CONTACT CENTRE

tel. +39 06 4673.3102



Employment on the rise, particularly in large companies

In 2024 there were just over 4.5 million active enterprises (Nace Rev. 2 sections B to S with the exception of sections K and O and division 94) (+0.5% compared to 2022) employing 18.3 million people (+1.1% on 2023), of which about 13.7 million employees (+2.5% on 2023).

In 2024, 8.1% of enterprises were active in manufacturing. The total number of enterprises in this sector decreased (-1.5%) from the previous year. Manufacturing enterprises employed 23.5% of the workforce and produced 34.7% of the total value added.

The construction sector accounted about 500k active enterprises (11.8% of total), employing 8.9% of persons employed, and generating 8.8% of total value added. The increase in employment compared to the previous year grows, +0.2% for total employment, while a 3.2% increase is recorded for employees.

About 80% of enterprises operated in services (+0.8% compared to 2023), employing 67.6% of total employment and producing 56.6% of total value added. For services, employment growth rate was slightly above average (+1.3%; +2.8% for employees).

Large enterprises (0.1% of the total) increased of 4.1% and generated approximately 35% of the added value in 2024. They employed a quarter of the total employment and about a third of total employees (33.4%), showing an increase of +3.8% for both variables compared to the previous year. Smaller increases were recorded for medium enterprises (+2.5% for total employment; +2.6% for employees).

4.4% of enterprises belonged to groups (200,016 enterprises in 131,212 groups), with over 7.2 million persons employed (+5.1% on 2023) and generating 58.7% of value added. Large enterprises organised into groups increased for 5.7% and generated 57.3% of the groups' value added. Employment growth involved all types of groups: foreign multinationals by 6.0%, domestic groups grew by 4.9%, and Italian multinational groups by 4.6%.

ENTERPRISES MAIN SBS VALUES BY SIZE CLASS. Year 2024

Size class by employment	Enterprises	Total employment	Employees	Turnover (mln euro)	Value added (mln euro)	Value added for empl. (k euro)	Labour cost for employees (k euro)
0-9	4,293,094	7,377,776	3,058,766	893,527	296,367	40.2	27.7
10-19	145,505	1,917,116	1,742,684	372,407	103,025	53.7	34.7
20-49	62,175	1,840,092	1,771,794	458,031	117,604	63.9	40.1
50-249	26,527	2,587,701	2,560,113	854,926	199,505	77.1	46.3
250 and more	4,752	4,585,583	4,582,407	1,498,921	383,872	83.7	48.9
Total	4,532,053	18,308,268	13,715,764	4,077,812	1,100,373	60.1	40.8

Value added increasing and investment intensity decreasing slightly

In 2024, the value-added growth by 2.5%, although to a lesser extent than in the previous years. The growth in value added was associated with a reduction in turnover (-0.5%) and a contraction in costs for purchasing goods and services (-1.8%). In particular, there was a decrease both in costs for purchasing goods (-2.3%) and in costs for purchasing services (-0.7%).

The increase in value added is higher for large enterprise (+3.2%) and micro-enterprises (+3.1%). For medium enterprises the growth was +2.8%. Small enterprises recorded a decrease for the class 10-19 persons employed (-0.7%) and an increase for 20-49 persons employed class (+1.3%).

The growth in value added is driven by enterprises organised in groups (+3.9%), whilst independent enterprises recorded modest growth (+0.6%). Value added is rising for both enterprises belonging to domestic groups (+3.7%) and those belonging to multinational groups (+3.9%), with the increase being more pronounced for foreign multinationals (+4.3%) (Chart 1).

For enterprises belonging to groups, the growth is observed across all size classes, with the exception of the 10–19 persons employed class, which recorded a 1.8% decline. Micro-enterprises belonging to groups grew by 6.8%.

The increase in turnover is for classes with more than 50 employees: +1.6% for medium-sized and +1.2% for large enterprises.

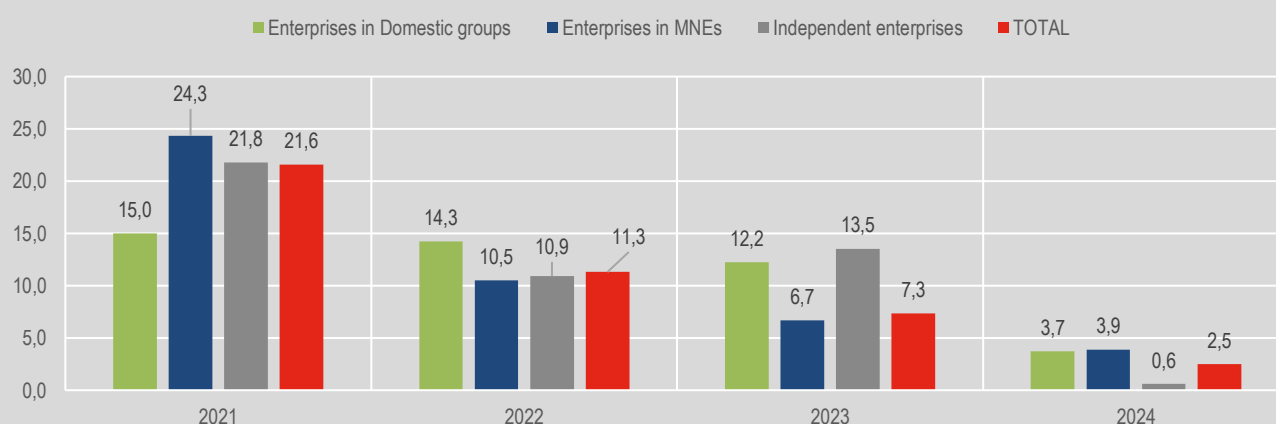
Compared to 2023, the costs for purchasing goods fell across all size classes (-6.4% for micro-enterprises and -0.6% for large companies) with the exception of the medium-sized ones (+1.3%). The costs of purchasing services decreased (-1.9% for micro and -1.3% for medium enterprises) with the exception of the large enterprises (+1.8%).

In 2024, labour costs increased across all size classes: +4.0% for micro, +3.5% in the “10-19” size class, +5.4% in the “20-49” size class, +5.7% for medium e +6.6% for large enterprises.

Gross operating surplus decreased (-0.5%): -6.1% in the “10-19” size class, -4.5% in the “20-49” size class and medium and large enterprises (-1.3 for both the classes). Micro-enterprises in contrast to the general trend, with a +2.7%.

In 2024, investments per employee decreased by 2.6% in nominal terms, from 8.4 thousand to 8.2 thousand euros. Trends varied according to the size of the enterprises; there was a decline for small and medium-sized enterprises and an increase for micro-enterprises (+10.1%) and large enterprises (+6.5%).

CHART 1. VALUE ADDED BY TYPE OF ENTERPRISE. Years 2021-2024, percentage variations compared with the previous year



Services more dynamic in terms of value added and productivity

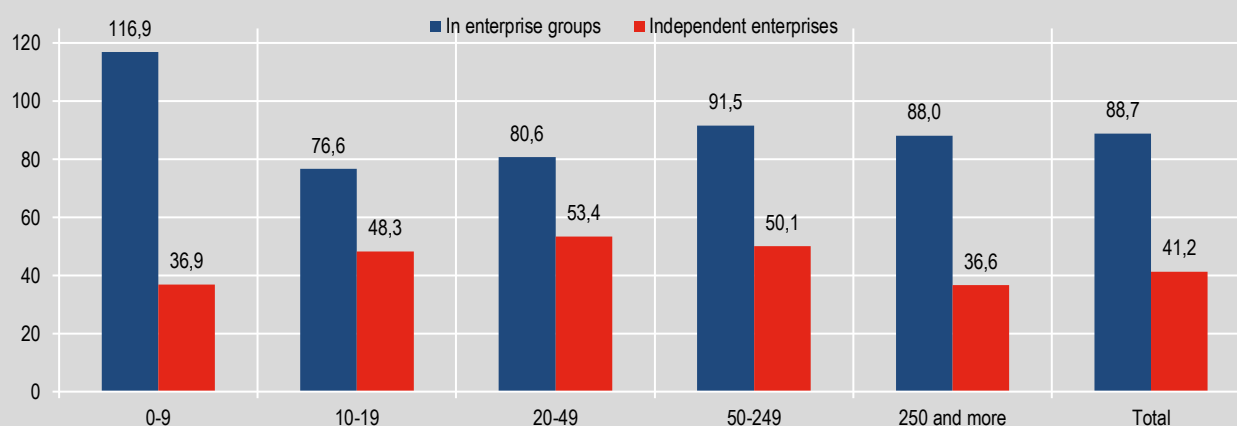
In 2024, manufacturing value added growth was +0.6% with better results for companies belonging to groups (+1.9%) but below average values (+2.5%). Value added increased for micro-enterprises (2.7%) and large companies (+1.7%). Compared to 2023, turnover declined (-1.7%) as well as purchasing of goods (-3.3%) whilst costs for the purchase of services increased (+1.5%). Labour costs rose by 4.7% while the gross operating surplus drop by -3.5%. Investment per employee decreased by -3.4%. In the sector, 9.8% of the companies were organised in group structures, realised 74.3% of the sector's value added and employed 57.4% of the workforce and 62.8% of the employees.

In 2024, construction value added decreased by 0.5% (+3.5% for companies belonging to groups). The other key indicators also showed a downward trend: -7.3% for turnover, -7.1% for gross operating surplus and -8.4% for investments per employee. Large companies in the sector break the trend, posting a 16.6% increase in value added. Costs for purchasing goods and services decreased, -7.9% and -9.5% respectively whilst labour costs rose by +7.3%. In the sector, 4.5% of the companies were organised in group structures, employed 22.2% of the workforce and 31.1% of the employees and realised 33.4% of the sector's added value.

In the services sector, the growth in value added in 2024 compared with 2023 was +4.2% (+5.7% for those in enterprise groups). Turnover increased (+1.4%) whilst costs for the purchase of goods and services decreased by -1.0% and -0.1%, respectively. Investments per employee also declined (-1.1%), while the sector recorded increases compared with the previous year in labour costs (+5.8%) and gross operating surplus (+2.6%). Value added increased with particularly significant figures for medium-sized (+7.3%) and small enterprises in the "20-49" size class (+4.3%). In Services, 3.9% of enterprises of the sector were part of a group representing 35.9% of employment, 50.3% of employees and 53.0% of the value added of services.

Apparent labour productivity increased by 4.2% for services and less in the others sectors (+0.5% for construction and +0.6% for manufacturing). Apparent labour productivity was generally higher for enterprises belonging to enterprise groups (about 89k against 41k and 200 euros for independent enterprises) for all the size classes. The largest gap continued to be observed for micro-enterprises, where the indicator goes from over 117k euros for enterprises in groups to 37k euros for independent enterprises (Chart 2).

CHART 2. APPARENT LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY BY ENTERPRISE SIZE AND GROUP STATUS. Year 2024, thousands of euros



Glossary

Apparent labour productivity: value added divided by the number of persons employed.

Domestic group: a group consisting only of resident legal units.

Enterprise: an organisational unit producing goods or services which has a certain degree of autonomy in decision-making. An enterprise can carry out more than one economic activity and it can be situated at more than one location. An enterprise may consist out of one or more legal units (Council Regulation (EEC) No 696/93).

Enterprise group (EG): an association of enterprises bound together by legal and/or financial links and controlled by the group head (Council Regulation (EEC) No 696/93).

Global decision centre (GDC): a GDC of an enterprise group is the unit where the strategic decisions at enterprise-group level are taken.

Governance of the EG: the country in which the group's GDC is located, either domestically or abroad.

Gross operating surplus: in the context of Structural Business Statistics (SBS), it is defined as value added minus labour costs.

Independent enterprise: an enterprise non belonging to an enterprise group.

Multinational EG with foreign governance: an enterprise group that has at least two enterprises or two legal units located in different countries under foreign Governance.

Multinational EG with Italian governance: an enterprise group that has at least two enterprises or two legal units located in different countries under Italian Governance

NACE: it is the Statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community.

Number of employees: it represents the average number of persons who were, at some time during the reference period, employees of the statistical unit.

Number of persons employed: the sum of the Number of employees and the Number of self-employed persons.

Size class: enterprises are grouped by average annual number of employees into the following categories:

- Micro enterprise: fewer than 10 employees
- Small enterprise: from 10 to 49; subclasses from 10 to 19 employees and from 20 to 49 employees
- Medium enterprise: from 50 to 249 employees
- Large enterprise: 250 employees and more

Value added: it is a composite indicator of net operating income, adjusted for depreciation, amortisation and employee benefits, all components being recognised as such by the statistical unit during the reference period. Its value is given by the formula: + Net turnover + Income from product- or turnover-related subsidies + Capitalised output ± Change in stock of goods - Total purchases of goods and services.

Methodological note

Data Sources and legal framework

Structural Business Statistics (SBS) and Statistical Register on Enterprise Groups (EG) data are produced according to the EU Regulation n. 2019/2152 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European business statistics.

According to the Council Regulation (EEC) n. 696/1993, an enterprise group is an association of enterprises bound together by legal and/or financial links. A group of enterprises can have more than one decision-making center, especially for policy on production, sales and profits. It may centralize certain aspects of financial management and taxation. It constitutes an economic entity which is empowered to make choices, particularly concerning the units which it comprises.

According to the EU Regulation n. 2019/2152 regulation, the control links between the corporations and some salient characteristics of the group to which they belong must be recorded in the Business Register.

Control is defined in the European System of Accounts (ESA 2010): "Control over a financial or non-financial corporation shall be defined as the ability to determine general corporate policy, for example by choosing appropriate directors if necessary" (§2.35); "A single institutional unit secures control over a corporation or quasi-corporation by owning more than half the voting shares or otherwise controlling more than half the shareholders' voting power" (§2.35).

Data population and classifications system

The reference population is provided annually by the Business Register of Enterprises (Asia), which Istat creates starting from both administrative sources and statistical surveys.

SBS coverage: Nace Rev. 2 sections B to S with the exception of sections K and O and division 94

The reference population of the Business Register of Enterprise groups is made up of all corporation belonging to groups and included in the SBS observation field.

Sampling design

Frame SBS microdata registers combine admin data – after appropriate statistical treatments –, SBS sample survey on small and medium enterprises (PMI), SBS census survey on large enterprises (SCI) and sample survey on internal flows within the same enterprise group (RFI).

PMI survey design is a one stage stratified sampling; the strata are defined by the combination of Nace Rev. 2 four-digit codes, size classes by employment (0-1, 2-9, 10-19, 20-49, 50-99, 99-249) and administrative Regions (NUTS 2).

The total SCI survey is aimed at enterprises with 250 employees or more.

The RFI survey is aimed at large Italian enterprise groups selected according to size criteria (number of legal units, number of enterprises and number of employees) and coverage of different sectors of economic activity.

Data collection

For the year 2024, SBS surveys (SCI, PMI and RFI) were conducted by self-filling an online questionnaire accessible from the Istat Business Statistical Portal (single entry point for data collection).

Data processing

The estimates of the variables for legal units with 250 or more persons employed are obtained by sum from the SCI survey. For the rest (less than 250 persons employed), the estimates of the variables are obtained by sum directly from Frame SBS register if administrative sources are available otherwise they are obtained from the estimates produced by the PMI survey on the basis of the methodology of reporting to the universe of 'constrained weighted estimators'. With this methodology, the sample estimates converge to the auxiliary variables of the Asia register (Statistical Business Register) - number of legal units and number of employees - for the different estimation domains required by the SBS Regulation.

The Business Register of EG is set up on the basis of the following administrative sources: 1) the archive of all shareholders of non-listed companies, 2) the archive of all shareholders of listed companies, 3) Consolidated Accounts and financial statements.

Accuracy of the estimates

The sample size for the strata in PMI survey is calculated by solving a multivariate and multi-domain allocation problem where the sample size is the minimum that allows to simultaneously obtain predefined levels of accuracy of the estimates of the parameters of interest within different planned estimation domains (a generalization of the solution of Neyman for the univariate case).

Number of persons employed and turnover are the variables for which the maximum sampling errors (in terms of percent of Coefficient of Variation (CV) have been fixed. The estimation of the corresponding means and stratum variances necessary for the calculation of the optimal allocation is calculated using data from respondents to the previous edition of the survey.

The calculation of the optimal allocation carried out using Istat generalized R2BEAT software returned a total size of 84,467 units (of which 4,471 for legal units with 250 persons employed or more) and the following system of constraints for the maximum sampling errors of the parameters of interest:

Domain	Description	CV	
		Empl.	Turnover
DOM1	Nace Rev. 2 – Class (4 digits)	0,11	0,27
DOM2	Nace Rev. 2 – Group (3 digits) and size class	0.14	0.30

Coverage and territorial detail

Data are available at national level only.

Timeliness

The estimates are produced in accordance with the timeframe required by the EU regulations (t+18 months).

Dissemination

Data are available at IstatData the Istat data warehouse, in the section “Enterprises/Competitiveness”.

Data on SBS surveys will be available at the Laboratory for Elementary Data Analysis (ADELE).

For technical and methodological information

Simone Ambroselli

tel. 06 4673.6220
ambrosel@istat.it

Serena Migliardo

tel. 06 4673.6223
migliard@istat.it