

External Merchandise Trade Statistics

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3. Statistical presentation	
3.1. Data description	
	Crossing a border of the economic territory of the country is the main criterion for determining exports and imports for compilation of External Merchandise Trade Statistics of Georgia. Exports imply both export of domestic production abroad and re-export of imported goods. Imports imply importing of products and re-import of exported goods. Domestic exports include export of goods produced in the country, as well as imported from abroad, the value of which has significantly changed as a result of domestic processing. Data on external merchandise trade do not cover transit goods passing through the country and the data of Simplified Customs Declarations (Form №4) as well as shuttle trade. Database of Customs Declarations (DBCD) is the main information source on external trade transactions. National Statistics Office (NSO) receives DBCD from the Revenue Service of the Ministry of Finance of Georgia on a monthly basis. In addition, information on external trade by natural gas and electric power is obtained from LTD Georgian Gas Transportation Company, JSC Georgian State Electric System and JSC Electricity System Commercial Operator, to complete the data. Data is provided at the 4-digit and 6-digit levels of the Harmonized Commodity Nomenclature System (HS 2022) as well as at the 1-digit and 5-digit levels of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC Rev.4), by regions and 4-digit levels of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC Rev.4), at the 1-digit and 3-digit level of Broad Economic Categories (BEC), by countries and country groups, by mode of transport, by size classes of traders and by kind of economic activities; also, at Foreign Trade (Export/Import) Unit Value Indices (UVI) according to the section of the Harmonized Commodity Nomenclature System (HS 2022). There are the following criteria to determine the partner country: for imports the sending country, while for exports the country of final destination. Exports are valued at FOB (Free on Board), i.e. franco-border prices of the exporting country (includes costs of cargo transportation to the board of exporting country and loading on-board of transport mean), while imports are valued at CIF (Cost, Insurance and Freight) prices i.e. transportation costs to the border of the importing country (international freight and insurance costs are also included in addition to the price).
3.2. Classification system	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS 2022); • World Country and Territory Classification – SK 007-2016 (ISO 3166); • Currency Classification – SK 008-2023 (ISO 4217); • Standard International Trade Classification (SITC, rev.4); 	

- Broad Economic Categories (BEC, rev.4);
- Classification of Economic Activities – GNC (NACE Rev.2) 006-2016 (2016);
- Classification of Types of Transport.

3.3. Sector coverage

The object of the Foreign Trade Statistics is any commodity entering and exiting the economic territory of a country and changing its material inventories.

3.4. Statistical concepts and definitions

External Trade Statistics is compiled according to the international methodology of the United Nations Statistics Department „International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers Manual, Revision 1“ (IMTS 2010-CM)), (United Nations, New York, USA 2013) and on the basis of the most recent recommendations „International Merchandise Trade Statistics, Concepts and Definitions, 2010“ (United Nations, New York, 2011).

The data is processed and disseminated on a monthly basis. All items are presented in value and quantity (weight, supplementary size); as well as in the form of Foreign Trade (Export/Import) UVI, which are processed and published annually by quarterly data.

3.5. Statistical unit

The statistical unit is any natural or legal person (enterprise, local authority, public entity, household) that fills the customs declaration.

3.6. Statistical population

External Merchandise Trade includes all goods that enter (import) or leave (export) statistical territory of a country and increase or decrease inventories of country's material resources, including goods processing.

3.7. Reference area

The information includes External Merchandise Trade between Georgia (except for areas not controlled by the central government, such as the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region (so-called South Ossetian Autonomous Region)) and the rest of the world.

3.8. Time coverage

Since 1995.

3.9. Base period

For the calculation of Foreign trade (Export-Import) UVI - 2019.

4. Unit of measure

Data on External Merchandise Trade statistics are published in US dollars; In addition, information is processed and disseminated in kilograms and additional units (liters, liters of 100% spirit, thousand liters, pieces, one hundred pieces, thousand pieces, thousand kWh, meters, sq. Meters, cubic meters, pairs, etc.); Also, data are dissemination at the Foreign trade (Export-Import) UVI.

5. Reference period

The month of receipt of the customs declaration by the customs authority.

6. Institutional mandate

6.1. Legal acts and other agreements

The Law of Georgia on Official Statistics;

<https://www.geostat.ge/media/56202/The-Law-of-Georgia-on-Official-Statistics.pdf>

Statistical Work Programme (annual);

<https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/307/statistical-work-programme>

Charter of the National Statistics Office of Georgia.

<https://www.geostat.ge/media/67749/New-Chapter-eng-upd.pdf>

6.2. Data sharing

Statistical data on external trade, goods imported and exported for processing and repair are provided to the authority producing official statistics, in particular, the National Bank of Georgia, on regular basis according to agreed timing and format for compilation of the balance of payments statistics.

7. Confidentiality

7.1. Confidentiality – policy

1. The Law of Georgia on Official Statistics:

- According to the article 5 of the law Statistical confidentiality and exclusive use for statistical purposes – individual data collected or received by the producer of official statistics, relating to natural or legal persons, must be strictly confidential and used only for statistical purposes.
- According to the article 34 (Observing Confidentiality of Statistical Data) of the law 1. Data collected, processed, and stored to produce official statistics are confidential if they enable the direct or indirect identification of a statistical unit. In addition, aggregated data are subject to statistical confidentiality: a) Aggregates composed of 1 to 3 units, when the unit is a natural or legal person if one of these units could be identified indirectly, thereby disclosing individual data about this unit. Aggregates composed of more than 3 units may be declared confidential by the Executive Director if required to ensure statistical confidentiality; b) Information declares as a state secret on the basis of the „Law of Georgia on State Secrets“. 2. Confidential data shall be used exclusively for the purposes of producing statistics in accordance with this law. 3. Statistical data about the administrative body cannot be considered confidential information, except for the information determined by the Law of Georgia „On State Secrets“. 4. Individual data obtained from publicly available sources, which are defined as public information in accordance with the legislation of Georgia, shall not be considered confidential information. 5. Confidential (individual) data may be published if there is written consent from the statistical unit regarding the publication of such data. 6. It is not allowed to disseminate and distribute confidential data or use it for non-statistical purposes.
- According to the article 38 (Confidentiality commitments) of the law the confidential statistical data collected and processed for statistical purposes shall not be used or disseminated either for personal, academic, research or any other activities, by the employees of the producers of Official Statistics.

<https://www.geostat.ge/media/56202/The-Law-of-Georgia-on-Official-Statistics.pdf>

2. Data Confidentiality Policy at Geostat

https://www.geostat.ge/media/20860/Data-Confidentiality-Policy-at-Geostat_En.pdf

3. Procedure for providing access to confidential data for research purposes

<https://www.geostat.ge/media/61533/Rule-on-Access-to-Confidential-Data-for-Scientific-and-Research-Purposes....pdf>

4. The Law of Georgia on Personal Data Protection

<https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/1561437?publication=9>

7.2. Confidentiality – data treatment

- Confidentiality guidelines.
- Written undertakings by an employee of Geostat on ensuring confidentiality of gained/collected data as a result of official duties.

8. Release policy

8.1. Release calendar

Data dissemination dates are defined by the calendar developed on the basis of the Statistical Work Programme, which is published on the website of Geostat and is publicly available.

8.2. Release calendar access

<https://www.geostat.ge/en/calendar>

8.3. User access

All users have the equal access to the statistical data simultaneously.

9. Frequency of dissemination

External merchandise trade statistics data are published monthly. Except the trade statistics data by regions and 4-digit levels of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC Rev.4), which are published quarterly. The quarterly data about Foreign trade (Export-Import) UVI are disseminated yearly.

10. Accessibility and clarity

10.1. News release

Monthly press release on External Trade Statistics is available on the following link:

<https://www.geostat.ge/en/relationsOfCategory/35/post>

10.2. Publications

External merchandise trade statistics data are available in following publications:

„External Trade Of Georgia“ (annual):

<https://www.geostat.ge/en/single-categories/99/external-trade-tendencies-of-georgia>

„Statistical Yearbook“:

<https://www.geostat.ge/en/single-categories/95/statistical-yearbook>

10.3. On-line database

Monthly statistics on external merchandise trade are disseminated through External Trade Portal:

<https://ex-trade.geostat.ge/en>

10.4. Micro-data access

Procedure for providing access to confidential data for research purposes (in Georgian):

<https://www.geostat.ge/media/61497/დადგენილება-3.pdf>

10.5. Other

External merchandise trade statistics are also available at the social network (Facebook) and through a special application for Android and iOS system mobile phones.

10.6. Documentation on methodology

Brief methodology of external merchandise trade statistics is available on the following link:

<https://www.geostat.ge/media/76636/EXTERNAL-MERCHANDISE-METHODOLOGY.pdf>

Detailed methodology is available on the following link:

<https://www.geostat.ge/media/19377/2-IMTS%20-%20Concepts%20and%20Definitions.pdf>

10.7. Quality documentation

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11. Quality management

11.1. Quality assurance

To ensure the quality of the statistical processes and products Geostat follows Chapter 10 – Quality of official statistics – of the Law of Georgia on Official Statistics, as well as the European Statistics Code of Practice, the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and Quality Assurance Framework of the European Statistical System (ESS QAF).

11.2. Quality assessment

Methodology and Quality Management Division of Geostat, along with the sectoral departments, is responsible for the quality of the produced statistical products and processes. The Division carries out quality audit, self-assessment of statistical processes and assesses the risks for the quality of statistical processes and products. Geostat has developed policy documents, guidelines and standard routine descriptions. These documents ensure the standardization of statistical processes and products and the establishment of a unified quality assurance system.

Quality policy is available on the following link:

https://www.geostat.ge/media/44380/QP_Geostat_EN.pdf

12. Relevance

12.1. User needs

The main users of the external trade statistics data are: representatives of business sector, researchers and students, international organizations, government agencies, media etc.

Users need data in order to perform various types of statistical analysis, to plan a marketing strategy or to study and evaluate the economic situation.

12.2. User satisfaction

In 2023 user satisfaction survey was conducted, the target of the survey was to analyze the assessment of quality of statistical data by users and explore ways to improve user services. The survey report is available on the website of Geostat:

<https://www.geostat.ge/en/page/customer-service>

12.3. Completeness

The data is relevant to international standards.

13. Accuracy and reliability

13.1. Overall accuracy

Accuracy of data is related to practical data collection during customs administration, which does not exclude quantitative and qualitative gaps. Faults are eliminated through pre-compiled control and adjustment procedures.

13.2. Sampling error

External merchandise trade statistics are fully based on administrative sources, so there are no sampling errors.

13.3. Non-sampling error

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14. Timeliness and punctuality**14.1. Timeliness**

Preliminary data on foreign trade are available on the 13th day and detailed data on the 19th day after the end of the reporting period data by regions and 4-digit levels of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC Rev.4) on the 55th day. Data on Foreign Trade (Export/Import) UVI are published on July 31. The data will be disseminated on the following business day in case of information release date coincides with the day off.

14.2. Punctuality

The data is published according to the date specified in the statistical work program. There has not been any violation of publication dates.

15. Coherence and comparability**15.1. Comparability – geographical**

The data are comparable in geographical terms.

15.2. Comparability – over time

Partly comparable in terms of commodity nomenclature:

- 4-digit level comparable periods – since 1995;
- By 6-digit level – since 2000;
- Foreign Trade (Export/Import) UVI – since 2015.

15.3. Coherence – cross domain

The data is coherent.

15.4. Coherence – internal

The data is coherent.

16. Cost and burden

The data is being received and processed by the basic staff within budget of Geostat budget. The source of information is administrative data.

17. Data revision**17.1. Data revision – policy**

Statistical data revision policy is available on the website of Geostat:

https://www.geostat.ge/media/59824/Data-Revision-Policy-and-Error_Correction-at-Geostat_Eng.pdf

17.2. Data revision – practice

Revision and adjustment of statistical data is made on a regular basis according to the adjusted information received from relevant sources. In addition, a large-scale revision is carried out once a year in order to obtain verified data.

18. Statistical processing**18.1. Source data**

The export-import statistics of goods are conducted on the basis of the following information:

- Database of Customs Declarations (DBCD) from the Revenue Service of the Ministry of Finance of Georgia;
- Data on export/import of natural gas – LTD Georgian Gas Transportation Company;
- Electricity export/import data – JSC Georgian State Electric System and JSC Electricity System Commercial Operator.

18.2. Frequency of data collection

Monthly.

18.3. Data collection

National Statistics Office (NSO) receives DBCD from the Revenue Service of the Ministry of Finance of Georgia on a monthly basis. Data on natural gas and electric power is received via e-mail from relevant sources upon official request.

18.4. Data validation

The following activities are being carried out by National Statistics Office based on obtained information:

- Verification of main indicators of the DBCD – commodity codes, prices, weights, dates of customs declarations, country codes for origin/destination, non-existent codes of country and commodity;
- Control the limits on prices of main commodities and adjustment of quantities, prices or supplementary unit: Price / weight / supplementary unit control (the following codes are checked and corrected: 01 group, 0407, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2402, 2716, 8429, 8430, 8701, 8702, 8703, 8704, 8705, 8711, 8716);
- Exclusion from the database commodities (securities, banknotes and coins in circulation, diplomatic and similar goods) that should not be classified as external merchandise trade according to the internationally approved methodology.

18.5. Data compilation

For the compilation of External Merchandise Trade statistics Georgia uses the “general method”, which means that crossing a border of the economic territory of the country is the main criterion for determining exports and imports. External trade data collection, processing, clarification and correction is carried out in accordance with international standards.

The Foreign trade UVI are calculated on both Paasches formula and on Laspeyres' formula, but the index numbers eventually published are geometric means of these two types of index (Fisher's "ideal" index).

18.6. Adjustment

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19. Comment

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