UK manufacturers' sales by product (PRODCOM)

Background information to PRODCOM.

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Next release:
To be announced

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1 . Introduction

The UK Manufacturers' Sales by Product Survey (Prodcom) is the most comprehensive annual business survey conducted by ONS covering product sales in the manufacturing industry. It is carried out annually by European Union (EU) member states, under EU regulation.

The Prodcom survey collects information from approximately 21,500 businesses covering 25 manufacturing divisions, 234 industries and approximately 3,800 products manufactured in the UK. Prodcom estimates are published bi-annually, in June and December and cover variables related to:

- value and volume of UK manufacturers' product sales

- unit value (value per unit of volume) for each product heading, where possible

- merchanted goods

- work done

- sales of waste products

- all other income

- total turnover

Although products are classified under an industry classification, production is not limited to businesses classified within the same industry. Businesses outside these industry classifications may also produce these products.

The most recent Prodcom estimates are available on the UK Manufacturers' Sales by Product release page.

2 . Prodcom history and background

The European Economic Community (EEC) Council regulation No 3924/91, which came into effect on 19 December 1991, stated that all European member states should supply the European Statistical Office (Eurostat) with production data, based on a common list of products. This was deemed necessary for the European Commission (EC) to monitor the impact of its community policy regarding trade and industry. With the introduction of the single European market, there was a greater expectation to gather general information such as the size of the market and penetration rates etc. Council regulation No 912/2004 was adopted on 29 April 2004 to further enhance the survey population and create comparability with external trade statistics.

Important events, major initiatives and developments that have been implemented since the inception of the survey in 1993 have been aimed at:

- minimising the burden on data suppliers

- improving public confidence in the integrity and validity of outputs

- improving the quality and relevance of service to customers

- improving value for money

- improving data access

A more detailed description of the development of the survey can be obtained from the Prodcom technical report.

3 . Prodcom publications

Prodcom estimates have been published annually since 2005. Data are published in two formats:

- Excel reference tables

- Open data

The open data format, which is intended to replace the Excel reference tables, is consistent with our policy to provide data to users in a format that:

- is user friendly and more accessible

- enables users to explore the data using our Data Explorer, with the ability to easily filter and customise the data into the structure and format that best fits their needs

- allows the users to download either the full or the filtered data in a range of formats, including Excel (XLS), CSV and Extensible Markup Language (XML)

- enables Prodcom estimates to be interrogated efficiently through an application programming interface (API); this interface allows the user to access data direct from our datasets

Users can also obtain Prodcom microdata and metadata from other sources:

- Virtual Microdata Laboratory (VML)

- UK Data Service (UKDS)

Prodcom estimates from 1993 and for earlier years are available through our library service. Estimates for earlier years relate to data originally published in the annual trade statistics reports.

Further information is available on request from the Prodcom Research, Analysis and Publication team.

Please contact: prodcompublications@ons.gsi.gov.uk or telephone +44 (0)1633 456746.

4 . Prodcom survey quality and methods

Users can obtain information on Prodcom survey quality from the following reports and documentation:

- the [Prodcom Quality and Methodology Information (QMI) report](#) describes the quality of the survey and provides information on quality dimensions such as relevance, timeliness, coherence, accuracy and accessibility

- the new [Prodcom quality summary page](#) Prodcom quality summary page is designed to improve user understanding of Prodcom estimates; together with the QMI report and the [Prodcom statistical bulletins](#), these products are intended to increase accessibility for all users

- the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 gives the UK Statistics Authority statutory powers to carry out assessments of the extent to which Official Statistics comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, it also allows the Authority "to monitor the production and publication of Official Statistics";the UK Statistics Authority published their [assessment report](#) of the Prodcom survey conducted in June 2012

- the [Eurostat quality pages](#) contain information on the quality of Prodcom surveys carried out across EU member states; the information gives insight into the use of Prodcom data outside the UK

- the [Quality indicators pack](#) contains information on standard errors, response rates, revisions and annual product code changes

Other important Prodcom documentation includes the following:

- the [user guide](#) is intended to aid the interpretation of Prodcom estimates; it explains the variables used in the survey and illustrates how the estimates can be used

- the [Prodcom technical report](#), published to complement the user guide, describes the methodological and technical procedures used by us to produce Prodcom estimates

- the [Prodcom list](#) comprises of approximately 3,800 manufacturing products and some services; as Prodcom is carried out across EU member states, the list and detailed product descriptions are provided and updated by the European Statistical Office (Eurostat) each year

The Prodcom questionnaire has been designed to minimise burden on businesses. The questionnaire is pre-filled with specific product questions, which are tailored to the individual business and reviewed annually. The following are examples of the questionnaire:

- [Standard questionnaire without questions][10]
- [A tailored questionnaire][11]

5 . Prodcom user engagement

The Prodcom team would like to improve the way that we engage with the users of our estimates, and we continuously aim to:

- make it easier for users to comment, question and offer feedback on recent Prodcom improvements, such as the new style statistical bulletin, reformatted Excel reference tables, the open data format and quality summary page, as well as any planned developments. This ensures that improvements to our outputs and services respond to user needs

- create a forum for users to share information and experience with one another

- keep users up to date with planned developments

- understand how users make use of Prodcom estimates to inform their work and any changing user needs

How to comment, question or offer feedback on Prodcom

We engage with users via the following methods.

Prodcom/ABS Government User Group: the primary role of the Government User Group is to liaise with government users in order to ensure that Prodcom and ABS surveys can, where possible, meet their requirements. The user group will report to the respective Management Boards.

The role of the Prodcom/ABS Government User Group is to:

- keep government users fully aware of the progress of the surveys

- give government users the opportunity to list their requirements, voice any concerns and communicate their views to the Management Boards

- provide feedback regarding any issues concerning the quality of the survey estimates, with a view to informing the development of the survey

- communicate and provide feedback to government users the introduction of proposed survey methodological changes

- give data users the opportunity to provide information on how the data is being used and the decisions it is informing

Minutes of the meetings and membership list are available on request to prodcompublications@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Regular user engagement surveys: the 2015 Prodcom User Engagement report provides an analysis of user feedback and details our plans to address the issues identified.

Directly via emails: we email new releases and publications directly to users who have signed up to our mailing list, as well as responding to user requests and queries.

Business Statistics Microdata User Group: this is an annual meeting of data producers and users.

The Business and Trade Statistics Community on StatsUserNet is the Royal Statistical Society's interactive site for users of Official Statistics. It enables you to join online communities in your area(s) of interest and even create your own. You can:

- keep up to date, and update others, with developments in your areas of interest

- participate in and start discussions

- share resources such as useful documents and presentations

- connect with other members who share your interests

- comment on Official Statistics publications

- feedback on plans for Official Statistics

Register by clicking "Log in or sign up" at StatsUserNet, locate the Business and Trade Statistics Community through the "Communities" menu, and click join.

You can make direct enquiries or contact us directly via prodcompublications@ons.gsi.gov.uk or telephone +44 (0)1633 456746.

6 . Survey management

The survey is governed through the Prodcom Management Board. The primary role of the Management Board is to communicate to its members any high-level developments affecting the Prodcom survey and associated areas, and to make strategic decisions on Prodcom topics.

The specific role of the Prodcom Management Board is to:

- decide on strategic issues or planned major changes before they are communicated more widely, to the ABS/ Prodcom Government User Group and Business Statistics Micro-data User Group

- be the main forum for communication of Prodcom high-level issues, whether concerning Prodcom directly or in Board member's areas, the main focus is on the Prodcom inter-relationship with areas of the ONS: National Accounts (NA), Eurostat, Business Data Division (BDD), Information Management (IM) and Survey Methodology (SM)

- exchange information between Board members, particularly with a view to alerting each other to future developments that might have an impact on their specific area

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Contact details for this methodology;

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Telephone: +44 (0)1633 456746

You might also be interested in:

- GSS Business statistics - interactive user guide

- HM Revenue and Customs: UK trade info

- Eurostat

- Theme page (ONS) Manufacturing

- Annual Business Survey (ABS)