

BRICS Trade in Services Report 2022



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BRICS Trade in Services Report 2022

About the paper

BRICS countries (Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa) have a fast-growing share in global services markets. Improving services regulations and reducing trade costs will help them tap into their potential, especially for high value-added services and digital trade.

With new data on sectors, mode of supply and intra-BRICS trade, the report updates ITC's 2017 report on *BRICS* countries: Emerging players in global services trade. This second edition provides inputs to 2022 BRICS trade policy meetings. It was prepared at the request of the Chinese presidency for these meetings.

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Foreword

Services trade is an important driver of economic growth, job creation and value chain participation. BRICS countries (Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa) are increasingly important players in global services trade. Competitiveness in services trade is key to their future growth.

This report collects the latest available data on services trade from various sources and presents a comprehensive review of services trade for BRICS countries. New datasets used for this report include the Balanced Trade in Services Statistics database produced by OECD and WTO, and WTO's Trade in Services data by Mode of Supply dataset.

The report shows how the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on global services trade: world exports of commercial services fell by 18.16% between 2019 and 2020. The impact on BRICS countries varies widely: China's and India's services trade declined only by 4% and 5%, respectively, whereas Brazil saw a fall of 16%, the Russian Federation saw a fall of 24% and South Africa witnessed a decline of nearly 46%. These decreases are largely due to the pattern of their services exports, such as the role of tourism and travel and engagement in digital trade.

The report is useful to analyse where BRICS stand in global services trade. It examines growth trends and trajectories; sector and mode of supply analysis for each individual BRICS country; and intra-BRICS trade. It takes a close look at the most dynamic segments in services trade, such as digital trade and investment in services, as well as key sectors such as travel and education. It shows which sectors, such as transport, travel and other business services, represent the largest shares in services exports and imports of BRICS countries.

Most importantly, it demonstrates that services trade deficits are not necessarily a 'loss' to an economy, as imported services allow domestic companies to participate more efficiently in international value chains and generate important gains for consumers.

The report has important policy lessons as well. It suggests initiatives that BRICS countries could consider to enhance services trade – improving services statistics, implementing regulatory impact assessments, lowering services trade costs and leveraging regional initiatives on transport and connectivity to promote development of key backbone services, such as transport, logistics and telecommunications.

ITC supports developing countries with technical assistance on services trade. These range from supplying trade data and intelligence, developing national export strategies with services-specific strategies, building knowledge and capacity for policymakers, sector associations and alliances, to implementing targeted technical assistance projects for SMEs in key sectors such as tourism, IT services and e-commerce.

We stand ready to work with our partners to help SMEs around the world, including in BRICS countries, to engage and benefit from global services trade.

Pamela Coke-Hamilton Executive Director

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International Trade Centre

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