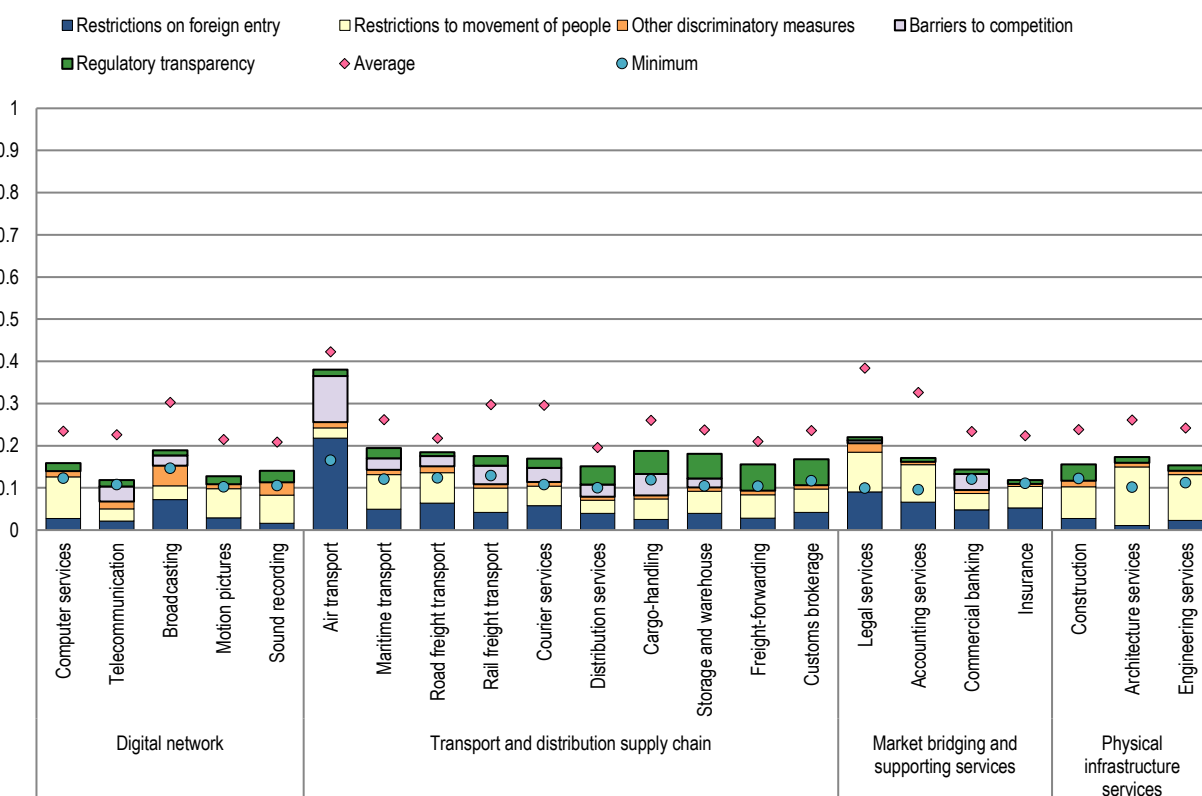


OECD Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI): Ireland

Ireland exported services worth USD 186 billion and its services import value was USD 199 billion in 2017. Technical, trade-related and other business services are Ireland's largest services export and also the largest service import category.

Ireland's score on the STRI index in the 22 sectors is presented below along with the average and the lowest score among the 45 countries included in the STRI database for each sector.

STRI by sector and policy area



Note: The STRI indices take values between zero and one, one being the most restrictive. They are calculated on the basis of the STRI regulatory database which contains information on regulation for the 36 OECD Members, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Russia and South Africa. The STRI database records measures on a Most Favoured Nations basis. Preferential trade agreements are not taken into account. Air transport and road freight cover only commercial establishment (with accompanying movement of people).

Horizontal policy measures

Ireland has a lower score on the STRI than the average in all 22 sectors. A general regulation that contributes to the STRI index in all sectors relates to temporary services suppliers who may stay in the country up to 24 months on their first entry. Labour market tests and wage parity with local employees are required for non-European Economic Area (EEA) nationals seeking to provide services in the country on a temporary basis as contractual services suppliers and independent providers, while only wage parity is required for intra-corporate transferees. The standards for cross-border transfer of personal data are set at the EU level. Transfers to non-EEA economies can take place when these ensure an adequate level of data protection or, in the absence of this, appropriate safeguards (e.g., binding corporate rules or standard data protection clauses) are in place. At least one of the board members must be resident of Ireland or EEA. The steps required to obtain business visas are more numerous than best practice.

The sectors with the relatively lowest STRI scores

Telecommunication, accounting and insurance services are the three sectors with the lowest score relative to the average STRI across all countries. The telecommunications sector is well regulated, and there are no state-owned firms in the sector. Accounting services cover also auditing. Although accounting services in Ireland are essentially liberal, managers of accounting firms must be licensed professionals. In insurance services, commercial presence is required to provide services but other than that, the score is mainly attributed to horizontal regulations across sectors.

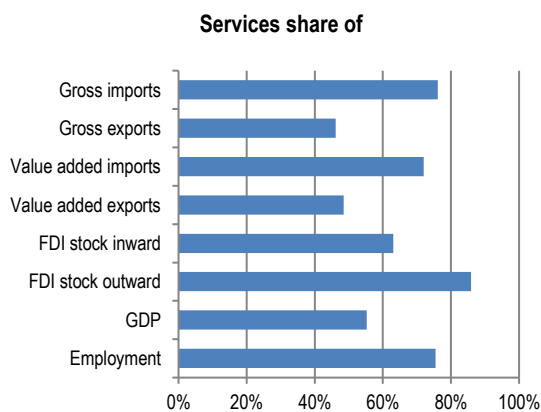
The sectors with the relatively highest STRI scores

Air transport, road freight transport and distribution services are the three sectors with the highest score relative to the average STRI across all countries. In all three sectors, however, the scores remain below the mean. Air transport is the only service sector in which Ireland employs foreign equity restrictions as a result of common European Union (EU) regulation on air services. Pursuant to this regulation, non-EU nationals cannot own more than 49% in Irish airlines. Lease of foreign aircrafts with crew from outside the EU can be refused on grounds of reciprocity or conditioned on approval granted on the basis of economic needs. The EU-wide exemption of certain airline arrangements from competition law and regulations on airport slot allocation and slot trading further contribute to the score in this sector. Road freight transport is subject to EU regulation that requires EEA residency for the manager of a road transport operator and partly exempts road carrier agreements from anti-trust regulation. In distribution services, the score is largely due to horizontal measures. In addition, economic needs tests are applied when granting licenses for the distribution of certain products. Costly and lengthy procedures for obtaining construction permits for warehouses also contribute to the score in this sector.

Recent policy changes

In 2016, Ireland has introduced a period of six months within which the Central Bank of Ireland, the sector regulator, must decide on applications for authorisations to provide insurance services.

Efficient services sectors matter



Services account for over 70% of Ireland's gross imports and of value added exports. The contribution of services to trade in Ireland is one of the largest among OECD economies, reflecting Ireland's specialisation in services activities. The services share of outward investment is also high. The information and communication technology revolution opens new opportunities for inclusive growth in a services economy like Ireland. Innovation and adoption of technology relies on access to knowledge and to the networks, people, goods and services that carry the knowledge around the world. In this context, Ireland could benefit from more open markets for services trade through the temporary movement of natural persons.

More information

- » Access all of the country notes, sector notes and interactive STRI tools on the OECD website at <http://oe.cd/stri>
- » Read more about services trade policies and their impacts in this publication: [Services Trade Policies and the Global Economy](#)
- » Contact the OECD Trade and Agriculture Directorate with your questions at stri.contact@oecd.org