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Building permits, March 2008

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Foreign direct investment, 2007

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Building permits

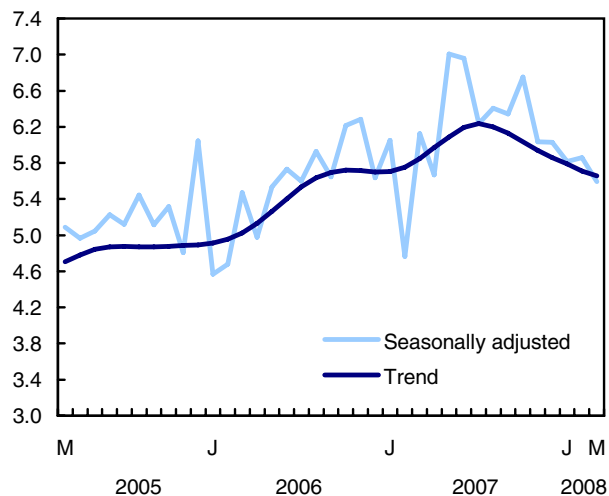
March 2008

Construction intentions in Canada continued to cool. As a result of a marked decline in Alberta, the total value of building permits in Canada dropped 4.5% in March to \$5.6 billion. This was the fourth decrease in five months. Both residential and non-residential sectors declined in March.

The total value of permits reached \$17.3 billion for the first quarter of 2008, down 8.2% from the fourth quarter of 2007 and a third consecutive quarterly retreat.

The total value of permits is on a downward trend

\$ billions



Construction intentions continue to soften in the housing sector

In the residential sector, the value of building permits decreased 5.7% to \$3.6 billion. This was the second lowest value in 13 months. It was generated by drops in values of both multi-family (-7.8%) and single-family (-4.4%) permits.

The number of multi-family units approved increased 4.6% while single-family units decreased by 8.5% in March. This was consistent with a general tendency observed over the last five years, where the demand has shifted from the more expensive single-family dwellings toward the more affordable multi-family units. The overall number of residential

Note to readers

Unless otherwise stated, this release presents seasonally adjusted data, which ease comparisons by removing the effects of seasonal variations.

The Building Permits Survey covers 2,400 municipalities representing 95% of the population. It provides an early indication of building activity. The communities representing the other 5% of the population are very small, and their levels of building activity have little impact on the total.

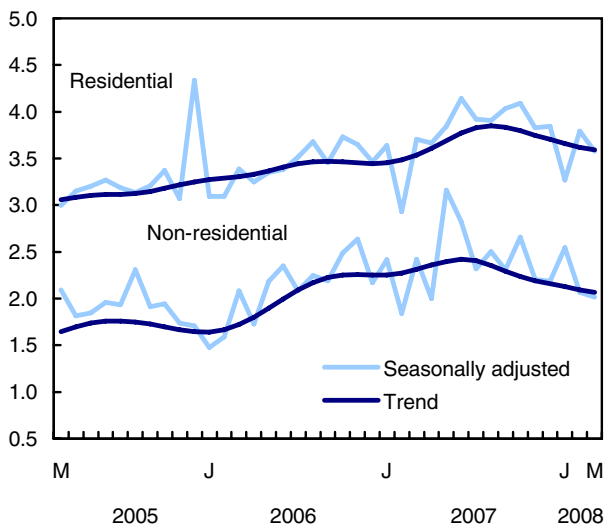
The value of planned construction activities shown in this release excludes engineering projects (e.g., waterworks, sewers or culverts) and land.

For the purpose of the Building Permits release, the census metropolitan area of Ottawa-Gatineau is divided into two areas: Ottawa-Gatineau (Quebec part) and Ottawa-Gatineau (Ontario part).

units approved has been on a downward trend since the summer of 2007.

Both residential and non-residential permits decrease

\$ billions



Industrial and institutional permits pull down the non-residential sector

The value of non-residential permits fell 2.4% to \$2.0 billion, a level not seen since April 2007. Intentions peaked for this component in May and June last year.

On the industrial side, the value of permits plunged 21.9% to \$318 million, the third decline in four months and the lowest level since February 2007. This result was fuelled by declines in projects for utility buildings.

Following a 32.3% drop in February, the institutional component fell 4.7% to \$454 million, mainly as a result of a decline in projects for medical buildings.

In the commercial component, the value of permits increased 5.3% to \$1.2 billion, as a result of increases in various types of buildings such as warehouses, hotels, restaurants, recreation buildings and retail and wholesale stores.

Overall, the value of permits in each of the three non-residential components has been on a downward trend since the last part of 2007.

Four provinces post declines in their value of building permits

Alberta recorded the largest reduction in March (-32.9%) among the provinces. This decline had a significant impact on the overall results. Excluding Alberta, the value of building permits would have increased by 5.1% instead of declining 4.5% nationally. With marked retreats in both residential and non-residential sectors, the total value of construction intentions was below the \$1 billion mark for the first time in 13 months.

The cumulative value of permits for the January-to-March period in Alberta totalled \$3.7 billion, down 3.8% from the fourth quarter of 2007 and a third consecutive quarterly decline. This result was 19.2% lower than the peak recorded in the second quarter of 2007.

Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick and Manitoba also recorded reductions in March.

The most significant gain (in dollars) occurred in Ontario (+7.3% to \$2.1 billion), as a rise in construction intentions for multi-family dwellings more than offset a fifth decrease in six months in the non-residential sector.

Saskatchewan and Quebec also posted sizeable gains, thanks in large part to non-residential permits.

Furthermore, in Saskatchewan, the value of residential permits in March was just 1.1% below the record of \$96 million reached in December 2007. The robust demand for housing in Saskatchewan is

positively affected by a dynamic economy and strong interprovincial migration. In Quebec, the value of housing permits dropped to \$647 million, a 13 month low.

While the total value of permits increased in British Columbia and Nova Scotia, the level remained almost 10% below the average monthly level in 2007 for both provinces.

The demand for new dwellings falls in Calgary and Montréal

Overall, 11 out of the 34 census metropolitan areas showed a decline in March. The largest retreats (in dollars) were recorded in Calgary, Edmonton and Montréal.

In Calgary, the decline came in large part from the residential sector. The number of new units approved in March (692) was at its lowest level since July 2000.

In Montréal, the 1,536 new residential units approved represented the lowest number on record since December 2002.

In Edmonton, the decline came from a retreat in the non-residential sector after this component reached a near record level in February.

In contrast, the total value of permits in Kitchener reached a record high of \$144 million, thanks to strong results in both residential and non-residential components.

Available on CANSIM: tables 026-0001 to 026-0008 and 026-0010.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2802.

The March 2008 issue of *Building Permits* (64-001-XWE, free) will be available soon.

The April building permit estimate will be released on June 5.

To order data, contact Jasmine Gaudreault (613-951-6321; toll-free 1-800-579-8533; bdp_information@statcan.ca). For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Nicole Charron (613-951-0087), Investment and Capital Stock Division.

□

Value of building permits, by census metropolitan area¹

	February 2008 ^r	March 2008 ^p	February to March 2008	January to March 2007	January to March 2008	January–March 2007 to January–March 2008
Seasonally adjusted						
	\$ millions		% change	\$ millions		% change
St. John's	48.6	33.5	-31.2	75.4	107.3	42.3
Halifax	45.1	52.5	16.4	80.5	135.4	68.2
Moncton	8.1	16.3	101.7	39.1	46.6	19.1
Saint John	15.4	15.8	2.7	70.0	43.7	-37.6
Saguenay	8.4	22.2	165.4	22.0	35.4	60.9
Québec	140.2	157.5	12.3	343.6	376.9	9.7
Sherbrooke	27.6	52.2	88.7	63.8	103.5	62.2
Trois-Rivières	15.3	15.2	-0.4	53.8	54.3	1.0
Montréal	483.3	420.1	-13.1	1,491.7	1,419.6	-4.8
Ottawa–Gatineau, Ontario/Quebec	142.8	199.6	39.8	678.6	579.1	-14.7
Ottawa–Gatineau (Que. part)	25.9	48.4	87.0	135.5	105.8	-21.9
Ottawa–Gatineau (Ont. part)	116.9	151.1	29.3	543.1	473.2	-12.9
Kingston	8.1	18.7	129.5	52.9	32.9	-37.8
Peterborough	2.0	13.5	563.0	17.7	18.5	4.7
Oshawa	38.2	69.6	82.1	177.0	165.9	-6.3
Toronto	875.6	1,018.6	16.3	3,106.3	3,171.8	2.1
Hamilton	242.9	206.3	-15.1	294.3	545.5	85.3
St. Catharines–Niagara	22.9	33.8	47.3	94.7	99.5	5.1
Kitchener	42.6	144.0	237.9	181.3	247.2	36.3
Brantford	7.5	14.4	92.8	36.6	34.8	-4.8
Guelph	32.9	12.8	-61.1	67.5	70.9	5.0
London	100.4	40.9	-59.2	179.7	292.4	62.8
Windsor	9.6	12.2	27.2	64.2	36.6	-43.0
Barrie	63.2	21.9	-65.4	64.9	107.0	64.9
Greater Sudbury	11.8	13.0	10.4	131.9	51.2	-61.2
Thunder Bay	1.8	9.7	454.7	20.1	17.1	-14.7
Winnipeg	71.5	74.1	3.5	232.6	216.8	-6.8
Regina	29.9	51.3	71.5	66.9	102.3	52.9
Saskatoon	39.3	42.4	8.0	143.5	135.3	-5.7
Calgary	608.1	333.7	-45.1	1,339.7	1,361.2	1.6
Edmonton	312.9	246.8	-21.1	965.4	900.4	-6.7
Kelowna	83.7	63.4	-24.3	205.5	222.0	8.0
Abbotsford	22.3	43.8	96.2	89.4	111.2	24.5
Vancouver	443.6	471.0	6.2	1,618.7	1,339.8	-17.2
Victoria	74.2	72.5	-2.3	290.4	200.7	-30.9

^r revised

^p preliminary

1. Go online to view the census subdivisions that comprise the census metropolitan areas.

Note: Data may not add to totals as a result of rounding.

Value of building permits, by province and territory

	February 2008 ^r	March 2008 ^p	February to March 2008	January to March 2007	January to March 2008	January–March 2007 to January–March 2008
Seasonally adjusted						
	\$ millions		% change	\$ millions		% change
Canada	5,860.6	5,595.2	-4.5	16,943.5	17,271.0	1.9
Residential	3,794.1	3,577.7	-5.7	10,271.4	10,640.4	3.6
Non-residential	2,066.5	2,017.4	-2.4	6,672.1	6,630.6	-0.6
Newfoundland and Labrador	63.9	54.2	-15.2	121.9	162.6	33.3
Residential	58.3	45.8	-21.5	82.9	142.2	71.5
Non-residential	5.6	8.4	50.9	39.1	20.4	-47.8
Prince Edward Island	10.6	15.0	41.8	36.7	34.0	-7.4
Residential	7.3	7.8	7.3	29.5	20.0	-32.1
Non-residential	3.3	7.2	118.2	7.3	14.0	93.0
Nova Scotia	91.1	97.2	6.6	216.3	265.3	22.7
Residential	78.6	63.1	-19.7	152.6	208.5	36.6
Non-residential	12.5	34.1	171.8	63.7	56.9	-10.7
New Brunswick	58.4	58.3	-0.2	220.8	181.8	-17.7
Residential	40.4	32.5	-19.6	108.7	111.7	2.8
Non-residential	18.0	25.8	43.2	112.1	70.1	-37.5
Quebec	973.0	999.0	2.7	2,898.9	2,953.3	1.9
Residential	707.1	646.9	-8.5	1,902.3	2,031.0	6.8
Non-residential	266.0	352.1	32.4	996.6	922.3	-7.5
Ontario	1,998.8	2,144.4	7.3	6,315.2	6,565.1	4.0
Residential	1,247.0	1,406.8	12.8	3,467.7	3,709.7	7.0
Non-residential	751.8	737.5	-1.9	2,847.5	2,855.4	0.3
Manitoba	123.8	116.6	-5.8	366.1	351.9	-3.9
Residential	84.5	93.1	10.2	239.4	265.3	10.8
Non-residential	39.3	23.5	-40.2	126.7	86.7	-31.6
Saskatchewan	112.3	145.6	29.7	301.9	373.8	23.8
Residential	84.6	94.7	12.0	189.1	258.4	36.7
Non-residential	27.7	50.9	83.9	112.9	115.4	2.3
Alberta	1,485.3	996.8	-32.9	3,468.2	3,655.4	5.4
Residential	736.1	514.3	-30.1	2,115.7	1,817.0	-14.1
Non-residential	749.2	482.6	-35.6	1,352.5	1,838.4	35.9
British Columbia	939.1	946.9	0.8	2,930.3	2,700.1	-7.9
Residential	746.3	670.9	-10.1	1,938.5	2,069.3	6.7
Non-residential	192.7	276.0	43.2	991.8	630.8	-36.4
Yukon	3.5	2.7	-22.6	23.5	8.1	-65.5
Residential	3.2	1.8	-43.0	8.3	6.4	-22.8
Non-residential	0.3	0.9	182.5	15.3	1.7	-88.6
Northwest Territories	0.9	18.2	1,995.4	6.8	19.3	182.7
Residential	0.8	0.1	-85.8	1.2	1.0	-18.8
Non-residential	0.1	18.1	16,640.7	5.6	18.3	224.9
Nunavut	0.0	0.3	8,400.0	36.8	0.4	-99.0
Residential	0.0	0.0	-100.0	35.5	0.0	-99.9
Non-residential	0.0	0.3	...	1.3	0.3	-73.9

^r revised

^p preliminary

... not applicable

Note: Data may not add to totals as a result of rounding.

Foreign direct investment

2007

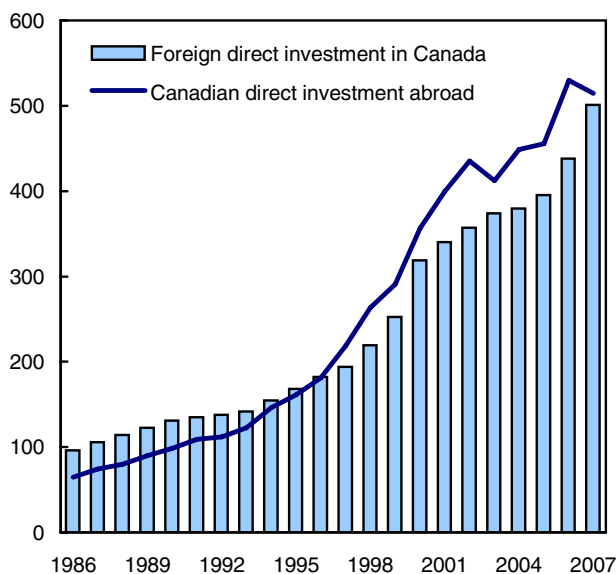
The stock of foreign direct investment in Canada recorded the largest gain in eight years, led by a continued wave of acquisitions by foreign investors, particularly in resource-based industries. At the same time, Canadian direct investment assets declined despite strong Canadian corporate investment flows in 2007, while the rise in the Canadian dollar against major foreign currencies resulted in a decrease in Canadian dollar direct investment holdings by year-end.

Foreign holdings of Canadian firms grew strongly in 2007

Foreign corporate investment inflows to Canada were booming in 2007. As a result, foreign direct investment holdings in Canada hit the half a trillion dollar mark at the end of 2007, a marked increase of 14.4% over 2006. This increase was led by a continued wave of takeovers of Canadian firms by foreign investors. Foreign direct investment acquisitions activity surpassed that realized during the high-tech bubble of 2000.

Foreign direct investment position

\$ billions



On the other side of the ledger, Canadian direct investors' holdings amounted to \$514.5 billion, a decrease of \$15.4 billion compared with 2006. This was

Note to readers

Direct investment is a component of the international investment position that refers to investment of a resident entity in one country obtaining a lasting interest in an enterprise resident in another country. The lasting interest implies the existence of a long-term relationship between the direct investor and the enterprise, as well as a significant degree of influence by the investor on the management of the enterprise.

In practice, direct investment is deemed to occur when a company owns at least 10% of the voting equity in a foreign enterprise. This report presents the cumulative year-end positions for direct investment.

In the Canadian statistics, direct investment is measured as the total value of equity, net long-term claims and net short-term claims held by the enterprise across the border.

Direct investment is often channelled through intermediate holding companies or other legal entities before reaching its ultimate destination. Since these entities are generally in the financial sector, this sector accounts for a larger share on an immediate investor basis than if the ultimate destination were known. This is especially the case for Canadian direct investment abroad.

only the second annual decline in this series, with the previous one occurring in 2003. On both occasions, the appreciation of the Canadian dollar played a significant role.

The change in Canadian direct investment holdings for 2007 can be broken down into substantial investment flows amounting to just over \$53.0 billion, which were more than offset by a downward revaluation of foreign currency denominated assets of just over \$67.0 billion. The Canadian dollar reached parity with the US currency by the end of 2007. It gained strongly against the US dollar (+18%), the British pound (+16%) and, to a lesser extent, against the Euro (+6%).

Net direct investment position narrows substantially

Canada's net direct investment position, the difference between Canadian direct investment abroad and foreign direct investment in Canada, narrowed to \$13.7 billion at the end of 2007, down from \$92.2 billion a year earlier. This was the smallest surplus since this account moved out of deficit in 1997.

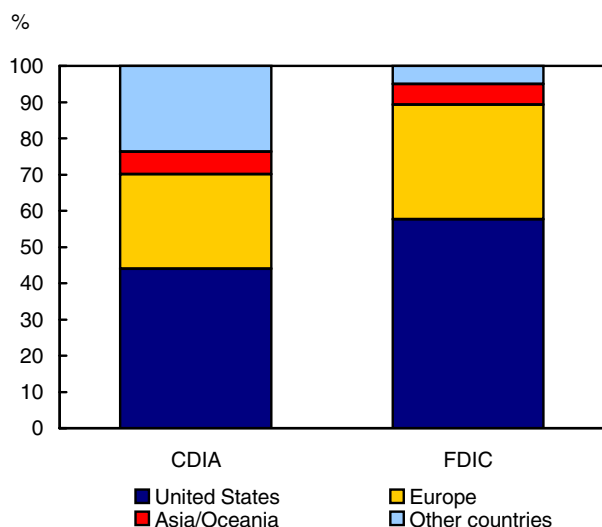
Acquisitions drove foreign direct investment in Canada, especially from non-US countries

For the second consecutive year, the increase of foreign corporate investment in Canada was led by major acquisitions originating mainly from non-US countries. The United Kingdom and other European countries accounted for a large portion of this activity.

The total foreign direct investment position in Canada was still dominated by holdings of American

investors at the end of 2007. American corporations accounted for 58% of the total, down from 61% in 2006. Nevertheless, their direct investment holdings stood at \$288.6 billion, up \$21.4 billion from 2006.

Canadian direct investment abroad (CDIA) and Foreign direct investment in Canada (FDIC) Geographical distribution, 2007



Direct investors from the United Kingdom rose significantly for the second consecutive year (+37.5%) to \$54.7 billion, the gain principally arising from acquisitions. The Netherlands, France, Switzerland, Germany and Sweden comprise the other European countries among the top 10 nations with foreign direct investment in Canada.

Foreign direct investment positions in Canada arising from Asia/Oceania increased steadily in the past five years, still mainly driven by corporate investors from Japan.

Holdings of Canadian direct investors abroad declined in most countries

Holdings of Canadian direct investors abroad were down in all major geographical areas, mainly a reflection of the appreciating Canadian dollar. The direct

investment position with the United States decreased to \$226.1 billion, accounting for approximately 30% (\$4.3 billion) of the overall decline.

Although the share of Canadian direct investment abroad in the United States (44%) remained little changed from a year earlier, it was down from 10 years ago (51%), as this form of investment has become more diversified across countries.

Canadian direct investment in European countries decreased \$5.4 billion to \$134.6 billion in 2007. The United Kingdom continued to represent the second most popular venue for Canadian direct investment abroad with the investment position at \$54.6 billion. Ireland (\$19.3 billion) and France (\$14.6 billion) were also in the top 10 European countries for Canadian direct investors.

The proportion of Canadian inter-company investment in some Caribbean countries remained high at the end of 2007. Investment in Barbados, Bahamas, Bermuda and the Cayman islands stood at 16.5% of the total Canadian direct investment abroad, up sharply from 5.4% in 1997.

Australia and Brazil, among the top 10 destinations for Canadian corporate investment in 2007, were the only countries which recorded an increase in the value of the Canadian direct investment abroad position.

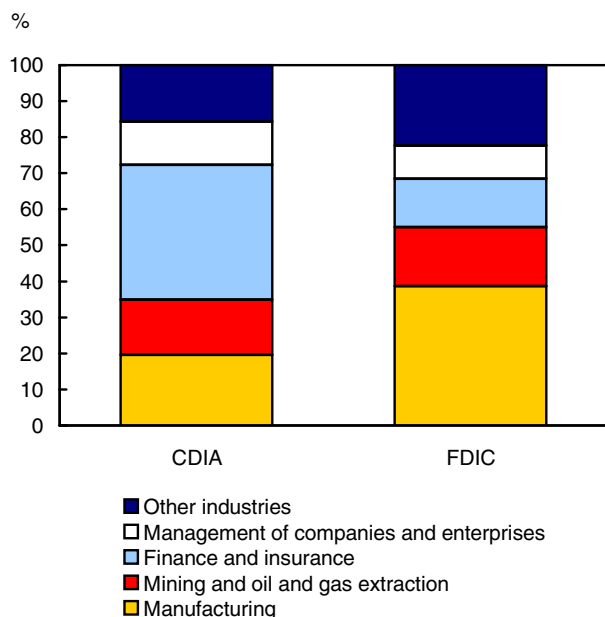
Foreign holdings of direct investment in Canada concentrated in manufacturing and oil and gas industries

Foreign corporations directed the majority of their investment in Canada into the manufacturing and oil and gas industries, which accounted for more than half (55.0%) of the total foreign direct investment positions in Canada at the end of 2007. Financial, insurance and management industries combined amounted to 22.7%.

Canadian direct investment abroad focused in financial, insurance and management industries

On the other hand, Canadian direct investors placed almost half of their portfolio of investment abroad (49.4%) into financial, insurance and management industries. Investment in the manufacturing and mining and oil and gas industries sector abroad accounted for 34.9% of the total outward investment.

**Canadian direct investment abroad (CDIA) and Foreign direct investment in Canada (FDIC)
Industry distribution, 2007**

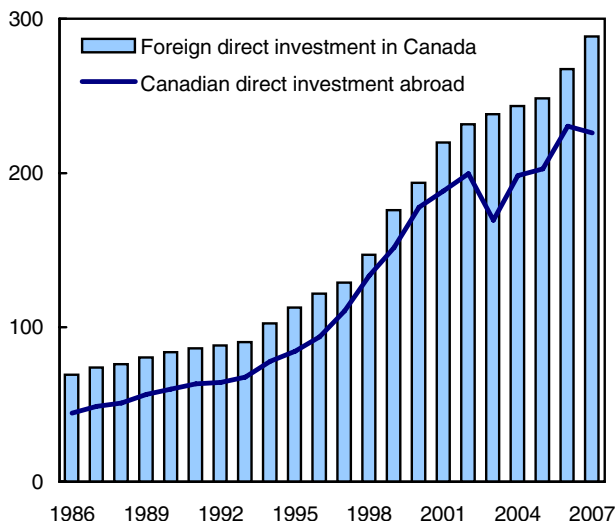


At the end of 2007, Canada had a negative net direct investment position with key partners such as the United States, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Japan. Canada had a positive net direct investment position with most of its other partners.

The net direct investment position of Canada with the United States was negative \$62.5 billion, a deficit position which expanded by \$25.5 billion in the year. This largely reflected the impact on Canadian direct investment positions of an appreciating Canadian currency vis-à-vis the US greenback.

Foreign direct investment position with the United States

\$ billions



Available on CANSIM: tables 376-0038 and 376-0051 to 376-0054.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 1537.

For general information or to order data, contact Client Services (613-951-1855; infobalance@statcan.ca). To enquire about the methods, concepts or data quality of this release, contact Christian Lajule (613-951-2062; christian.lajule@statcan.ca), or Komal Bobal (613-951-6645; komal.bobal@statcan.ca), Balance of Payments Division.

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Foreign direct investment positions at year-end

	2004	2005	2006	2007
	\$ billions			
Canadian direct investment abroad				
United States	198.5	202.7	230.4	226.1
United Kingdom	44.4	47.7	58.0	54.6
Barbados	27.1	33.6	38.6	36.2
Ireland	19.9	20.0	19.6	19.3
Cayman Islands	9.7	9.3	18.5	17.5
Bermuda	12.4	12.9	22.6	17.4
France	14.3	14.6	15.4	14.6
Bahamas	7.5	9.7	14.5	13.7
Australia	8.2	8.0	6.9	8.9
Brazil	7.3	6.8	8.4	8.8
All other countries	99.5	90.0	97.2	97.2
Total	448.5	455.2	530.0	514.5
Foreign direct investment in Canada				
United States	243.3	248.5	267.2	288.6
United Kingdom	25.3	29.5	39.8	54.7
Netherlands	20.0	21.2	24.7	31.5
France	33.4	28.3	16.9	17.4
Switzerland	7.8	12.2	13.9	13.8
Japan	9.9	10.5	12.9	13.4
Brazil	1.9	3.1	11.9	12.8
Germany	7.6	9.6	10.3	10.5
Sweden	2.1	2.2	2.3	8.5
All other countries	22.8	24.0	30.2	41.0
Total	379.4	395.2	437.8	500.9

■

Real estate agents, brokers, appraisers and other related activities industries

2006

Real estate agents, brokers, appraisers and other real estate industries reported total operating revenues of \$10.6 billion in 2006, an 8.1% increase from the previous year.

Canada's real estate industry has benefited from sustained high demand for real estate that resulted in increased sales and higher real estate prices.

With steady economic growth, real estate prices and unit sales continued to rise despite a slight increase in mortgage rates. Statistics Canada's national New Housing Price Index grew by 9.7% in 2006, close to five times the rate of inflation.

The real estate market in Alberta continued to flourish in 2006. For the second straight year, the province led national growth with a 37% increase in operating revenues.

Manitoba also recorded double-digit annual growth (+19%) in 2006. However, in Central Canada, growth rates were much more modest.

Real estate sales in Ontario account for about half of operating revenues earned by the real estate agents, brokers, appraisers and other real estate industries. Those in British Columbia accounted for a distant 19%, and those in Alberta, 13%.

These industries are dominated by the offices of real estate agents and brokers, which generate 87% of the total revenue.

Available on CANSIM: table 352-0005.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 4706.

Data on the real estate agents, brokers, appraisers and other real estate activities industries are now available for 2006. These data provide information on revenue and expenses at the provincial and territorial level.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Janine Stafford (613-951-3288; janine.stafford@statcan.ca), Service Industries Division. ■

Specialized design services

2006

Specialized design service firms generated \$2.5 billion in operating revenues in 2006, up 9% from the previous year.

Nearly two-thirds of the operating revenue growth came from businesses classified to the interior design services industry, which is closely associated with building construction and renovation activity. It posted a 19% revenue growth rate. Graphic design, industrial design, and other design service industries recorded single-digit revenue growth rates.

Graphic design services, the largest of the specialized design industries, recorded the lowest rate of growth (+4%). Even though graphic design businesses represent half of operating revenues earned by the specialized design group, they accounted for only about a quarter of the group's revenue growth.

In Ontario, total operating revenues were flat compared with the previous year as a moderate revenue increase in interior design was offset by declines in the other industries. Businesses in Ontario still made up half of total national operating revenues.

National revenue growth was attributable mostly to gains posted by interior design firms located in Alberta, British Columbia and Quebec.

Operating expenses grew at a slower pace than operating revenues, resulting in a slight increase in operating profit. The operating profit margin reached 12%, up from 11% the previous year. Salaries, wages and benefits continued to account for nearly one-third of total operating expenses.

Note: The Annual Survey of Specialized Design Services comprises four North American Industry Classification System industries; interior design (54141), industrial design (54142), graphic design (54143), and other specialized design (54149). Prior to 2006, it also included landscape architectural services (541320), which is now included with the annual survey of architectural services.

Available on CANSIM: table 360-0002.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 4719.

Results from the 2006 Annual Survey of Specialized Design Services are now available.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Saad Gouled (613-951-6701; fax: 613-951-6696; saad.gouled@statcan.ca) or Kyoomars

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Research and development personnel

1996 to 2005

The growth in the number of people engaged in research and development (R&D) in Canada, such as researchers, technicians and supporting staff, slowed down considerably in 2005.

In 2005, 213,930 full-time equivalent researchers, technicians, and other support personnel were engaged in R&D activities, up 3.8% from the previous year. This was well below the increase of 6.7% in 2003.

The number of these individuals increased by 48.4% between 1996 and 2005, largely the result of increased employment of researchers in the business enterprise sector.

Together, the business enterprise and higher education sectors employed over 8 of every 10 new researchers in 2005.

Researchers accounted for 63% of all the personnel engaged in R&D in Canada in 2005. However, only

three provinces had higher proportions than the national average: British Columbia, where researchers accounted for 70%, Alberta (66%) and Ontario (65%).

The proportion of personnel engaged in R&D in the business enterprise sector increased from 55% in 1996 to 64% in 2005.

On the other hand, during the same period, the share in the higher education sector declined from 32% in 1996 to 27% in 2005. This was a reflection of the more robust increase in the number of R&D personnel in the business enterprise sector.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 4201, 4204, 4208, 4209, 4210, 4212 and 5109.

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