



Unified Enterprise Survey-Annual

2001 Survey of Service Industries: Accounting and Bookkeeping Services

Information Booklet

*(Includes a reporting guide to
the questionnaire and other information
about this survey and Statistics Canada)*

**This guide is designed to provide additional information
as you work through your questionnaire.
If further assistance is required, please call us.
A Statistics Canada agent will be happy to assist you.**

Help Line: 1 888 881-3666



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Did you know?

The accounting, tax preparation, bookkeeping and payroll services sector is a dynamic industry, with total revenue of about \$7.5 billion dollars a year. There are over 25,000 businesses listed in the Statistics Canada's Business Register as belonging to this industry.

Self-employed individuals make up 49% of the businesses listed, while the other 51% are businesses that have 1 or more employees. Small businesses are the most numerous; there are 9,691 of them that have 1-4 employees; 144 mid-size businesses with employee count of 50-99, and 13 large businesses that employ 500 or more people.

Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long-standing co-operation involving Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued co-operation and goodwill.



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The Statistics Act

The *Statistics Act* requires businesses and individuals to provide information needed to produce official statistics. Mandatory response is required for this business survey because the results are used directly or indirectly for programs that are legally mandated by Parliament. You can consult a copy of the *Statistics Act* on the Statistics Canada Web site (go to www.statcan.ca, and follow the links "About Statistics Canada", then "Protecting confidentiality and privacy").

Name and address

Please make sure the information pre-printed on the front page of the questionnaire is correct. If incorrect, please make the necessary changes in the corresponding boxes.

Section A: General information

Survey purpose

Statistics Canada requires information on this industry in order to measure its trends in areas such as employment, revenue and income as well as its contribution to the Canadian economy. In completing this questionnaire, you are helping to measure the country's economic production—the gross domestic product or GDP. Businesses and governments depend on such information to make vital economic decisions. For example, the Bank of Canada uses the GDP to make decisions that influence interest and exchange rates, which in turn affect the cost of doing business.

This survey is part of the Unified Enterprise Survey (UES) program that incorporates several annual business surveys into a single framework using questionnaires with a consistent look, structure and content. Through the unified approach, firms operating in different industries provide similar information for each branch operation.

Benefits of Data to the Accounting and Bookkeeping Industry

Survey results will provide a clearer picture of the size and structure of the industry. For example: the share of industry revenue and profits of small firms compared to large firms, the average revenue per firm and per partner, the average number of professional and non-professional employees by size of firm. The survey will measure the shift in revenue sources from traditional accounting services to consulting services and other specialization.

This survey will shed light on the provincial distribution of accounting and bookkeeping services, and, for the first time, provide specific information on bookkeeping and taxation firms, as well as accounting firms.



Accounting and bookkeeping firms will be able to use the data as a benchmark, to compare profit margins and expenses with averages for similar firms. Accounting firms that are earning increasing consulting revenue can assess this shift in light of industry trends. The data can be used to assess client base and market share.

Associations of accountants can use the data to promote the accounting services industry and get a more accurate picture of its growth and trends.

Business and government analysts will use these data to better understand the accounting and bookkeeping industry and its interdependence with other sectors of the economy.

Investors will be able to consult key data on the industry's performance, which could result in better access to investment capital, particularly for smaller firms.

Governments need accurate data on all industries to produce national production statistics (GDP), broken down by province and industry. These statistics are used to monitor business cycles and promote an efficient, competitive economic climate. The results from this survey will generate more accurate data on inter-provincial trade, which will improve the quality of provincial economic statistics. These provincial economic statistics are the basis for calculating each province's fair share of federal-provincial transfer payments for health, education and social programs.

Data-sharing agreements

To avoid duplicating surveys and to ensure more uniform statistics, Statistics Canada has entered into data-sharing agreements with provincial and territorial statistical agencies and with several government departments and agencies that also require your data. The objective is to share data from some surveys for those business establishments operating within their respective jurisdictions.

These agreements require that the shared data be used for statistical purposes and be kept confidential. Survey participants are always informed at the time of collection if a sharing agreement applies to a particular survey.

There are two types of data-sharing agreements that exist under the *Statistics Act*:

Agreements under Section 11 of the *Statistics Act* allow to share information from the Unified Enterprise Survey program with the statistical agencies of *Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta* and *British Columbia*. These statistical agencies have been established under provincial legislation authorizing them to collect this information on their own or jointly with Statistics Canada. Their legislation also provides the same confidentiality protection and outlines similar penalties for disclosure of confidential information as the federal *Statistics Act*.

Agreements under Section 12 of the *Statistics Act* allow to share information from the Unified Enterprise Survey program with the statistical agencies of *Prince Edward Island, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories* and *Nunavut*. All these Section 12 agreements require that the information be kept strictly confidential.



Under Section 12, you may refuse to share your information with any of these agencies by writing a letter of objection to the Chief Statistician of Canada and returning it with your completed questionnaire. Please specify those agencies from which data shall be withheld.

Note regarding Section 12 agreements:

For business units in the manufacturing and forestry industries, Section 12 agreements also exist to share information with the following government departments and agencies:

Natural Resources Canada for all business units in the manufacturing industries.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Natural Resources, the New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources and Energy, the Quebec Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ontario Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, the Manitoba Department of Energy and Mines and the British Columbia Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources for business units in Non-Ferrous Metal (except Aluminum), Smelting and Refining, Clay Building Material and addition to allowing the use of the information for statistical purposes, the agreements with these agencies also allow them to use the information in accordance with the provisions of their governing legislation.

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources for business units in Logging, Sawmills (except Shingle and Shake Mills), Hardwood Veneer and Plywood Mills, Softwood Veneer and Plywood Mills, Wood Preservation, Particle Board and Fibreboard Mills, Waferboard Mills, Mechanical Pulp Mills, Chemical Pulp Mills, Paper (except Newsprint) Mills, Newsprint Mills and Paperboard Mills.

In cases where the information is reported on an amalgamated basis and relates to operations in more than one province or territory, Statistics Canada may allocate a portion of the reported information to those other operations. The allocated information will be shared in accordance with the Section 11 or 12 agreements of the *Statistics Act*, as described above.

In cases where there is a separate head office, Statistics Canada may adjust the reported revenues of that head office so that those revenues more fully reflect the value of the services the head office provides. In such cases, there will be a corresponding adjustment to the reported expenses of the units served. The adjusted information will be shared in accordance with the Section 11 or 12 agreements of the *Statistics Act*, as described above.

Please note that Statistics Canada does not share any individual survey information with Canada Customs and Revenue Agency.

For more information about these data-sharing agreements, please contact Statistics Canada at our toll-free number **1 888 881-3666**.

Confidentiality

Your answers are confidential. The *Statistics Act* ensures the confidentiality of information collected by Statistics Canada. All Statistics Canada employees take an oath of secrecy and face penalties for any breach of confidentiality. Information cannot be disclosed under the Access to Information Act or any other Act.



Statistics Canada only publishes data as statistical summaries, tables and graphs so no released information can identify any individual business.

Reporting instructions

Note: Please provide information for **only** the business unit(s)¹ shown on the front page of the questionnaire. Some businesses may have divisions or units which operate in industries not covered by the survey (e.g. in construction, retail, manufacturing, etc.). If you cannot provide separate information for the specified business unit(s), please explain this in the comments section at the end of the questionnaire.

Section B: Main business activity

To ensure that you have received the appropriate questionnaire, you are asked to provide a brief description of the nature of your business activity for the reporting period you have indicated under **Reporting Period Information**. The description should briefly state the main activities of your business unit. (A "Business unit" is defined as the level of the firm for which there is a common set of activities and separate records are kept for such details as revenues, expenses and employment.)

A detailed description of the accounting and bookkeeping industry is given below. This industry has three major types of business activities; namely, offices of accountants, tax preparation services and bookkeeping, payroll and related services. For your business unit, you are asked to indicate the **main** activity that most accurately describes the principal source of operating revenue. If the **main** activity is **none of the above**, please describe the nature of your business in the space provided.

Description of the Accounting and Bookkeeping Industry Based on the North American Industry Classification (NAICS)

The categories to select from on the questionnaire use a coding system called the **North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)**. The NAICS system was developed by the statistical agencies of Canada, Mexico and the United States against the background of the North American Free Trade Agreement. It is designed to provide common definitions of the industrial structure of the three countries and a common statistical framework to facilitate the analysis of the three economies.

Under the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), the accounting and bookkeeping industry includes three types of business services. These services are defined as follows:

¹ A business unit is sometimes referred to as a location or operation.



- **Offices of Accountants**

This Canadian industry comprises establishments primarily engaged in providing a range of accounting services, such as the preparation of financial statements, the preparation of management accounting reports, the review and auditing of accounting records, the development of budgets, the design of accounting systems, and the provision of advice on matters related to accounting. These establishments may also provide related services, such as bookkeeping services, tax return preparation services, payroll services, management consulting services and insolvency services.

Inclusions: Accountant, professional
Accounting services, professional
Auditing accountants, offices of
Chartered accountant, offices of
Professional accounting firm
Public accountants, offices of

Exclusions: Establishments primarily engaged in:

- providing tax return preparation services, without also providing accounting or auditing services (classified under Tax Preparation Services)
- providing bookkeeping, billing and payroll processing services, without also providing accounting or auditing services (classified under Bookkeeping, Payroll and Related Services).

- **Tax Preparation Services**

This Canadian industry comprises establishments primarily engaged in providing only tax return preparation services. These establishments do not provide accounting, bookkeeping, billing or payroll processing services.

Inclusions:

- Income tax return preparation services (without accounting, auditing, or bookkeeping services)
- Tax return preparation services (without accounting, auditing, or bookkeeping services)

Exclusion:

- Establishments primarily engaged in providing a range of accounting services (classified under Offices of Accountants).

- **Bookkeeping, Payroll and Related Services**

This Canadian industry comprises establishments primarily engaged in providing bookkeeping, billing or payroll processing services. These establishments do not provide accounting services, such as the preparation of financial statements, the preparation of management accounting reports, and the review and auditing of accounting records.

Inclusions:
Billing and bookkeeping services
Payroll processing services



Exclusions:

Establishments primarily engaged in

- providing a range of accounting services (classified under Offices of Accountants); and
- providing tax return preparation services, without also providing accounting or auditing services (classified under Tax Preparation Services).

Section C: Reporting period information

The reporting period for this survey is the business unit's **most recent 12-month fiscal year** that ended between April 1, 2001 and March 31, 2002.

If this business did not operate for the full reporting period indicated at question 1, please indicate the reason by checking the appropriate circle at question 2.

If the organization of this business has changed during the reporting period, please check the appropriate circle at question 3.

Section D: Business unit organization

Please indicate the type of your business unit by checking the appropriate circle. Check only one circle. Definitions of these organizations are given below:

Unincorporated sole proprietorship: Ownership of an unincorporated business by an individual.

Unincorporated partnership: Ownership of an unincorporated business by two or more individuals who combine resources and activities in a joint undertaking.

Incorporated company: A legal entity (corporation) operating under a grant of authority from the provincial or federal government. Basic attributes of a corporation are:

- it holds an exclusive name under which it can hold property, contract services, and sue or be sued and
- it has limited liability, and is not liable for its debts and obligations beyond the amount of its capital assets

Co-operative: A corporation incorporated under a federal or provincial law providing for the establishment of such a corporation. The main purpose of a cooperative corporation must be:

- Marketing (including processing) of natural products belonging to its members or customers or acquired from them.



- The purchasing of supplies, equipment or household necessities for its members or customers
- The performance of services for its members or customers.

Joint venture: A joint venture is a business undertaking entered into by two or more parties, which terminate upon completion of the project.

Government business entity: Entities that are regulated by government departments

Government: Division of government of Canada or of the government of a province or territory or municipality.

Non-profit organization: Organization usually formed for social, philanthropic or similar purpose in which there is normally no transferable ownership interest and that does not carry on business with a view to distribution or use of any profits or the pecuniary gains of the members.

Section E: Revenue

Revenue data are used to calculate economic statistics that provide an indication of the industry's contribution to the overall Canadian economy.

Please complete this section for each province and territory in which this business unit has operations.

For questions 1 to 17, please report or estimate revenue for each of these services. Data relating to these questions are used to determine the extent of revenue generated from services often provided by businesses in the accounting and bookkeeping industry. Descriptions of these services are listed below.

1. Auditing engagements

A financial statement audit engagement is carried out in order to express an opinion on whether financial statements present fairly, in every important respect, the financial position of an entity, the results of its operations and changes in its financial position in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. In some cases, an audit engagement may include tax return preparation.

2. Review engagements

A review engagement consists primarily of inquiry, analytical procedures and discussion related to financial information provided by the client. It has the limited objective of assessing whether the information reported on is plausible within the framework of the appropriate criteria. The accountant may compile financial statements and may prepare tax returns.

3. Compilation engagements

A compilation engagement involves preparing financial statements based on information provided by a client. No opinion is rendered on the reliability of the clients' financial statements.



4. Other assurance services

Engagements that culminate in the delivery of a report expressing a conclusion as to the reliability of information for which another party is responsible. In an assurance engagement, the accounting professional explicitly states the level of assurance that the professional has been able to obtain from his/her work. Such engagements include attest engagements and direct reporting engagements. Other assurance services offer a high or moderate level of assurance. Other assurance and related services pertain to subject matter other than financial statements or financial information.

5. Bookkeeping services

Bookkeeping services include the classification and entry of commercial transactions in financial records (in either paper or electronic format).

6. Corporate tax planning

Tax planning for corporate clients.

7. Corporate tax preparation

Preparation of income and other tax returns for corporate clients
Review of returns prepared by corporate clients
Filing of returns
Preparation of supplementary documents associated with returns
Compilation of financial statements when they are packaged with tax preparation

8. Individual and non-corporate tax services

Tax preparation services for individuals and non-corporate businesses are the same as those listed for corporate clients above.

9. Commodity and other tax services

This class of services includes one or more of the following:
Assembly of interim financial reports
Preparation of commodity tax forms
Review of returns prepared by others
Filing of returns
Review of commodity tax strategies

10. Insolvency and receivership services

In the role of bankruptcy trustees:
Safeguard the assets of a business
Reorganize business finances
Liquidate inventories
Manage day-to-day business operations
Dissolve other assets
Distribution of dissolution proceeds to creditors and
Filing of required documentation

11. Strategic management consulting services

Strategic management and planning, organizational structure and review – Include advice and operational assistance services concerning business policy and strategy and the overall planning, structuring and control of an organization.



12. Financial management consulting

Financial management consulting services – Include advice and operational assistance services concerning matters related to financial planning and control.

13. Human resource and executive search services

Human resource management consulting services – Include human resource consultants providing actuarial, benefit and compensation consulting services; employee assessment consulting services; organization development consulting services and personnel management consulting services.

14. Marketing services

Marketing management consulting services – Include analysis and formulation of marketing strategies, formulation of customer service and pricing policies, organization of the distribution process.

15. Operations management consulting services

Operations management consulting services – Include advice concerning effective utilization of materials in the production process, inventory management and control, quality control standards.

16. Other management consulting

Other advisory services such as computerized accounting systems services.

17. Other sales and services produced

This class of services encompasses all other services not elsewhere specified and may include:

- Payroll services
- Business incorporation services
- Personal financial planning services
- Legal services
- Education and training services
- Business process outsourcing

Please indicate the major items associated with the revenue reported for this category on the line provided. Sales from these goods and services are not generally part of your principal sources of revenue. However, they complete the financial picture of the activities of your business unit.

18. Total operating revenue is the summation of all the detailed information that relates to the total operating revenue of this business unit.

19. For 'Investment and other income', please report revenue not directly related to the operation of this business unit. This includes interest income, dividends and gains on sales of assets (capital gains).

20. Total revenue is the summation of the total operating revenue and revenue from investment and other income received by this business unit.



Distribution of Operating Revenue by Client Location

If the coverage of this report relates to operations belonging to only one province or territory, please follow these instructions. Otherwise, follow the instructions given under 'Sales to Clients Outside the Province'.

This section is designed to measure the value of services sold to clients located inside and outside the province of location of your business. Please provide a percentage estimate of your total operating revenue (section E, question 18) by the location of client and/or customer to whom your services were delivered. Please ensure that the percentages reported for questions 21 to 43 add to 100%.

Example: If your Alberta office provided services to clients residing in Saskatchewan, generating fees representing 2% of the total revenues earned by the Alberta office, please report 2% on the Saskatchewan line.

Data on your revenue by client location will be used to improve information on the movement of goods and services between provinces and to other countries. We recognize that this may be a difficult question to answer and welcome your suggestions on how to improve it in the **Comments** section at the end of the questionnaire.

Sales to Clients Outside the Province

(For long form questionnaires: 5-3300-207.1)

This schedule is designed to measure the value of services sold to clients located outside the province. After completing the provincial summary of total revenue, please provide an estimate of each province's total operating revenue (section E, question 18) from services provided, sold or delivered to out-of-province clients.

Example: If your Alberta office provided services to clients residing in Saskatchewan, generating fees representing 2% of the total revenues earned by the Alberta office, please report 2% on line 21 (the Saskatchewan line) under the province of Alberta operations.

This schedule will be challenging to complete, but we assure you that this information is crucial to Statistics Canada's ability to measure the flow of goods and services between provinces and those sold to non-residents.

Section F: Expenses

1. Wages and Salaries

Please report wages and salaries of your employees on the appropriate lines.

Include amounts deposited to foreign accounts, vacation pay, directors' fees, bonuses (including profit sharing), commissions, taxable allowances and retroactive wage payments.

Exclude all payments and expenses associated with outside contract workers and payments to casual labour without a **T4 – Statement of Remuneration Paid** form.



2. Employer portion of employee benefits

Please report the employer portion of employee benefits.

Include contributions to health plans, insurance plans, employment insurance, pension plans, workers' compensation, retiring allowances or lump sum payments to employees upon termination or retirement as well as contributions to any other employee benefits such as child care and supplementary unemployment benefit (SUB) plans.

Exclude contributions to provincial health and education payroll taxes. Please report these payments in section F, question 22, "All other expenses".

3. Total labour remuneration

Total labour remuneration is the sum of salaries, wages and employer contributions to employee benefits.

5. Telephone and other telecommunications expenses

Include charges for telephone, fax, cellular phone or pager services for transmission of voice, data or image, internet access charges and expenses for cable and satellite transmission of television, radio and music programs.

6a. Rental and leasing of offices and warehousing

Include energy costs covered in your rental and leasing expenses.

6b. Rental and leasing of equipment and vehicles

Include motor vehicles (*without driver*), computers and peripherals and other machinery and equipment (*without driver*) and fuel and other energy costs covered in your rental and leasing expenses (if applicable).

7. Maintenance and repair services purchased

Include expenses for the maintenance and repair of buildings and structures (including janitorial and cleaning services), machinery and equipment and other goods. Include expenses relating to materials, parts and labour.

8. Accounting work subcontracted to others

Include payments made to other firms

9. Legal, audit and other professional fees

Include legal fees, accounting and auditing fees, consulting fees, education and training fees, data processing fees, payroll preparation fees, research and development expenses and all other professional and business service fees.

10. Interest expenses

Include interest on short term and long term debt, interest payments on capital leases, interest on bonds and debentures and interest on mortgages.

11. Financial service fees and other banking charges

Include explicit service charges for financial services, credit and debit card commissions and charges and other financial service fees.

Exclude interest expenses.



12. Insurance premiums

Include insurance expenses such as liability insurance, bonding, business interruption insurance, fire insurance, motor vehicle insurance, property insurance, etc.

Exclude premiums paid directly to your head office (if applicable).

13. Advertising

Include advertising and promotional expenses such as newspaper advertising, media expenses, catalogues, business promotion, presentations, displays, etc.

14. Travel, conferences, meals and entertainment

Include passenger transportation, accommodation, meals while travelling, other travel allowances as well as meal, entertainment and hospitality purchases for clients.

15. Office supplies

Include paper; photocopier, printer and fax machine supplies; diskettes; writing utensils and other office supplies

Exclude postage and courier expenses and telephone and other telecommunications expenses

16. Energy costs

Exclude energy expenses covered in your rental and leasing expenses. Such expenses should be included in the rental and leasing expenses (section F, questions 6(a) and 6(b))

17. Property and business taxes, licenses and permits

Include property taxes except those that are covered in your rental and leasing expenses, property transfer taxes and vehicle license fees.

19. Depreciation and amortization

Depreciation is the accounting process whereby the cost of capital assets is systematically allocated to current operations over the term of its useful life. This process recognizes the gradual exhaustion of the service capacity of the capital assets.

Amortization is the gradual writing off of capitalized costs.

Include the depreciation and amortization expenses on this business unit's assets including capital lease obligations. Note: Please only report the amount of expenses you capitalized during the reporting period.

20. Write-offs, valuation adjustments, capital losses

Losses from the disposal of capital assets and investments, writedowns of asset values to net realizable values because of permanent decline in values, losses because of changing rates of currency, and other such extraordinary losses which result from transactions or events that have all of the following characteristics:

- a) they are not expected to occur frequently over several years;
- b) they do not typify the normal business activities of the entity; and
- c) they do not depend primarily on decisions or determinations by management or owners.



22. All other expenses

Please specify the major items associated with the expenses reported for this question.

Include royalties and franchise fees, contributions to provincial health and education payroll taxes, allowances for bad debts and donations.

23. Total expenses

This total is the summation of all the detailed expense items given in Section F, questions 3 to 22.

Section G: Personnel characteristics

To fully measure the intellectual contribution of all human capital in this industry, we are asking for the statistics on the number of owners, partners and proprietors as well as the number and classification of employees.

1. Number of partners and working proprietors (non-salaried)

For unincorporated businesses, on line 1, please report the number of partners and owners whose earning will be the net income of the partnership or proprietorship.

Number of employees by type of work performed

2a. Professionals

Employees whose duties would normally require at least an undergraduate university degree or the equivalent. Professionals should include accounting students articling with the organization. Include marketing and market research professionals and include computing professionals whose duties would normally require a minimum of an undergraduate degree in computer science. Do not include non-salaried partners and proprietors reported above.

2b. Technical and trades

Technical: employees whose duties would normally require a community college certificate/diploma or the equivalent and who are not primarily involved in marketing/sales of a product or service. Examples: technology trainers and computer programmers and operators whose duties would normally require a community college certificate or diploma.

Trades: employees in positions requiring vocational/trades accreditation or the equivalent that do not normally require a post-secondary certificate or diploma.

2c. Administrative, support staff and other workers with no trade certification

Staff providing clerical/administrative services and staff in production and maintenance positions. Generally, training for these positions is on-the-job or requiring vocational training of less than one month. Examples: account clerks, receptionists, desk clerks, mail and distribution clerks, filing clerks, warehousing and cleaning staff.



Total number of paid employees

This total is the summation of the number of paid employees reported for professionals, technical and trades and administrative, support staff and other.

3. Percentage of paid employees that worked full time

Please specify the percentage of paid employees who have been working full-time. Round the percentage to the nearest whole number. A full-time paid employee is defined as a paid employee who has worked the standard work week as observed by the business.

5. Number of contract workers

Contract workers are not employees, but workers contracted to perform a specific task or project in your organization for a specific duration. Please report the number of contract workers employed by your organization during the fiscal year.

Section H: Distribution of operating revenue by type of client

This section is designed to measure which sector of the Canadian economy purchases your services.

Clients in Canada:

Individuals and households

Persons that purchase your services that do not represent the business or government sector.

Businesses

Percentage of total operating revenue sold to the business sector. Sales of government and institutional clients should be reported below.

Public Institutions

Please report the share of total operating revenue from sales to hospitals, schools and universities and utilities.

Governments

The share of revenues to clients classified as federal, provincial and municipal government administration organizations should be reported here.

Clients Outside Canada

Please report the share of total operating revenue that represents sales to customers or clients located outside Canada. Such clients can include foreign businesses, foreign individuals, foreign institutions and/or governments. Please ensure that the percentage reported for clients outside of Canada is equal to the sum of the percentages reported for questions 34 to 43 in Section E – Revenue.

Please ensure that the percentages reported in this section add to 100%.



Section I: Certification

Please certify that the information contained on the questionnaire is complete and correct to the best of your knowledge. In addition, please provide the requested contact information that will allow Statistics Canada to contact you on any matters relating to this survey.

Please indicate the approximate time (in hours and minutes) to assemble the information and complete this questionnaire. If you had any major difficulties in completing this question, please describe the nature of these difficulties in the **Comments** section. This information will be very useful to assess response burden and to improve the questionnaire.

Section J: Comments

Your comments on our business survey program are most welcomed. If necessary, please attach a separate page. Please be assured that all comments are reviewed with the intent of improving the survey. Some of the topics to consider are listed below:

- events that may have caused significant changes in your reported values from the previous year
- questionnaire content
- new questions of interest to your industry
- questionnaire language
- use of business terminology
- clarity of questions (eg., definitions, examples of inclusions and exclusions, code sheets, instruction sheets, reporting guides)
- order and flow of questions
- timing of receipt of questionnaire and the period given for response
- other sources of data to further reduce response burden
- potential for electronic data reporting
- general (non-proprietary) business software packages in use



Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please retain a copy for your records.

Should there be any questions about the information provided, a representative from Statistics Canada may call you. Retaining a copy of this completed questionnaire for your records allows you to spend less time on the phone.

Thank you

We hope this booklet was helpful to you in completing the survey as well as providing some information about Statistics Canada. If you have suggestions on ways to improve this booklet, please write your ideas in the comment section of the questionnaire.

A few frequently asked questions

How did this firm get selected?

Most firms are selected as part of a random sample to represent other accounting and bookkeeping firms with similar characteristics, such as size, employment, or revenue. Some are **selected because they dominate the accounting and bookkeeping** industry in Canada, or in a particular province or territory. Your answers are important to ensure the survey results provide an accurate and complete picture of your industry.

How are businesses selected for a survey?

The majority of Statistics Canada business surveys are sample surveys. This means that only certain businesses in a particular industry, within each province and territory, are selected to receive the survey questionnaire. Together, the sampled businesses represent the entire industry being studied. Most businesses in the sample are randomly selected to represent other businesses with similar characteristics, such as revenue or number of employees. Some businesses **must** be included in the sample because they contribute substantially to their particular industry or region.

A small number of our business surveys are census surveys, which include **all** the businesses of significant size in a particular industry. A census is used when the industry being surveyed includes only a small number of firms, or firms that are very unlike one another. In such cases, a sample would not accurately reflect the entire industry being studied.

Why are businesses required by law to respond?

Canadians need accurate and reliable information as the cornerstone of democratic decision-making. Through the Statistics Act, Parliament has mandated Statistics Canada, as the national statistical agency, to produce such information. Business surveys provide important economic information. It is used by businesses, unions, non-profit organizations and all levels of government to make informed decisions in many areas. Because most business surveys feed directly or indirectly into legally mandated programs, mandatory response is required to ensure an adequate response rate and, therefore, reliable results.



How does Statistics Canada know to survey my firm?

The Business Register is Statistics Canada's list of all businesses in Canada, classified into specific industrial sectors. This list is the source of the firms to be included in the survey sample. The main source of this list is the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency which provides details of businesses that have a business number (BN). Once a month, Statistics Canada receives the current version of the Business Number file and processes it to update the Business Register. This monthly processing identifies businesses that are new or no longer active, and any changes to the name, address or size of small businesses.

Information collected from survey questionnaires is also used to update the Business Register. For example, a business may report that it has changed its main business activity and its industrial code will be updated.

Large enterprises are contacted by Statistics Canada and inquiries are made about their legal and organizational structure, business activity and survey contacts. These inquiries are designed to keep the Business Register up-to-date. They are also referred to as "profiling".

How is a business classified to an industry?

Statistics Canada assigns a classification code to your business based on the description you provided when you registered with Revenue Canada. We update the code when you provide us with new information in a survey.

The coding system Statistics Canada uses is called the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). NAICS was developed by the statistical agencies of Canada, Mexico and the United States. Created against the background of the North American Free Trade Agreement, it provides common definitions of the industrial structure of the three countries, so that economic data are comparable between them. It replaces the old system, called the "1980 Standard Industrial Classification" (SIC 80).

At the highest level, NAICS divides the economy into 20 classifications or sectors. These sectors comprise hundreds of types of industries. To produce uniform statistics, most businesses are assigned only one code. However, if a business is involved in multiple activities, such as manufacturing and wholesale trade, Statistics Canada classifies the business' different units to the different industrial activities.

Your business may contribute to several aspects of the economy

You may receive several Statistics Canada questionnaires if your firm operates in different provinces and/or types of industries. For example, a firm could receive separate food services questionnaires covering its restaurant operations in each province, as well as a retail questionnaire covering its grocery stores. Whether our surveys ask for information about financial statements, capital expenditures or innovations like electronic commerce, your responses are significant for understanding the complexity of the economy.



How to obtain Statistics Canada information

National inquiry service

- Telephone: 1 800 263-1136
- Telecommunications device for the hearing impaired: 1 800 363-7629
- Fax: 1 877 287-4369
- E-mail: infostats@statcan.ca

Statistics Canada Reference Centres across Canada

Halifax	(902) 426-5331
Montreal	(514) 283-5725
Ottawa	(613) 951-8116
Toronto	(416) 973-6586
Winnipeg	(204) 983-4020
Regina	(306) 780-5405
Edmonton	(780) 495-3027
Vancouver	(604) 666-3691

Visit the Statistics Canada's Web site at www.statcan.ca

Check out some of the most informative pages:

- **The Daily** (The latest Statistics Canada information available every day)
- **Canadian Statistics** (Over 350 statistical tables on a wide array of economic and social topics)
- **Information for survey participants** (Information on household and business surveys conducted by Statistics Canada)
- **Community Profiles** (Access 1996 Census results and other information for any city, town or village in Canada)
- **Census** (Results from the 1996 Census. Results from the 2001 Census will be available beginning in spring 2002)

Visit your public library

Over 700 public libraries across Canada carry Statistics Canada publications.