



Sao Tome and Principe

This factsheet provides the latest statistics on trade and investment between the UK and Sao Tome and Principe.

Date of release: 7 April 2025; Date of next planned release: 2 May 2025

Total trade in goods and services (exports plus imports) between the UK and Sao Tome and Principe was **less than £1 million** in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024, a decrease of 100.0% or £2 million in current prices from the four quarters to the end of Q3 2023. Of this less than £1 million:

- Total UK **exports** to Sao Tome and Principe amounted to less than £1 million in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024 (a decrease of 100.0% or £2 million in current prices, compared to the four quarters to the end of Q3 2023);
- Total UK **imports** from Sao Tome and Principe amounted to less than £1 million in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024 (a change of less than £1 million in current prices, compared to the four quarters to the end of Q3 2023).

Sao Tome and Principe was the UK's joint 229th largest trading partner in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024 accounting for less than 0.1% of total UK trade.¹

In 2023, the **outward stock of foreign direct investment (FDI)** from the UK in Sao Tome and Principe are not available due to data disclosure.

In 2023, the **inward stock of foreign direct investment (FDI)** in the UK from Sao Tome and Principe was less than £500 thousand.²

¹Trade data sourced from the latest ONS publication of [UK total trade: all countries seasonally adjusted](#) data.

²Investment data sourced from the ONS [ad-hoc data release](#) if not provided in the latest ONS [main FDI release](#).

Contents

About these statistics	3
Summary trade and investment statistics for Sao Tome and Principe	4
Trade with Sao Tome and Principe, in current prices (ONS)	6
Trade in goods by commodity, in current prices (ONS)	8
Trade in services by service type, in current prices (ONS)	10
Trade in goods by UK countries and English regions, in current prices (HMRC)	11
Trade in services by mode of supply, in current prices (ONS)	12
UK Market Share (ONS and UNCTAD)	13
Number of VAT-registered businesses trading goods (HMRC)	14
Trade in Value Added (OECD)	15
Foreign Direct Investment with Sao Tome and Principe (ONS)	16
Economic statistics (as reported by Sao Tome and Principe)	17
Background Notes	21

About these statistics

This factsheet presents the latest statistics on trade and investment between the UK and Sao Tome and Principe. It summarises a wide range of publicly available data, from data providers such as the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), as well as international data providers.

This factsheet is part of a wider range produced by the Department for Business and Trade which draws together many data sources into one single compendium document for each individual trade and investment partner. The full set of factsheets for different individual partners can be found on the [Trade and Investment Factsheets website](#) on GOV.UK.

Where data are available, these factsheets contain metrics on:

- [Headline trade statistics between the UK and each trading partner for the latest four quarters.](#)
- [Trade statistics by commodity and service type.](#)
- [Trade between the UK and each trading partner, broken down by UK country and English region.](#)
- [Trade in services between the UK and each trading partner, broken down by mode of supply.](#)
- [UK's market share as a total of all imports for each trading partner.](#)
- [Number of VAT-registered businesses trading goods.](#)
- [UK's Foreign Direct Investment \(FDI\) with each investment partner.](#)
- [Summary trade and investment data as reported by each trade and investment partner, as well as economic data and projections.](#)

All statistics are correct at the time of publication, with upcoming release dates available on the [Government update schedule for Official Statistics](#). The Department for Business and Trade strongly recommends users download the latest factsheet to ensure the most up-to-date statistics are used. Please do not use previous factsheets to analyse earlier time periods than those shown in the most recent factsheets, as the data will have been revised and previous factsheets will no longer be correct. For analysis of earlier time periods, please use the published source data.

For the most up to date snapshot of the UK's trade and investment position with all partners, please see the [UK trade in numbers](#) publication or the [trade and investment core statistics book](#). These statistics are based on the same data sources as this factsheet and therefore are comparable. A list of all [Official Statistics](#) publications from the Department for Business and Trade can be found online.

Contact Details

Responsible statistician: Jo Payze

Authors: Oliver Cockram & Ishmael Mansaray

Media contact number: 020 7215 2000

Public contact e-mail address: statistics@businessandtrade.gov.uk

Summary trade and investment statistics for Sao Tome and Principe

UK trade with Sao Tome and Principe, in current prices (based on the latest four quarters)³

Trade	Value in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024	Change from the four quarters to the end of Q3 2023
Total trade	less than £1 million	a decrease of 100.0% or £2 million
Ranking out of all the UK's trading partners	Joint 229th	
Total UK exports	less than £1 million	a decrease of 100.0% or £2 million
Ranking out of all the UK's export partners	Joint 225th	
UK exports in goods (percentage of total UK exports that were goods)	less than £1 million	a change of less than £1 million
UK exports in services (percentage of total UK exports that were services)	less than £1 million	a decrease of 100.0% or £2 million
Total UK imports	less than £1 million	a change of less than £1 million
Ranking out of all the UK's import partners	Joint 224th	
UK imports in goods (percentage of total UK imports that were goods)	less than £1 million	a change of less than £1 million
UK imports in services (percentage of total UK imports that were services)	less than £1 million	a change of less than £1 million

UK trade with Sao Tome and Principe, in current prices (based on the latest calendar year)⁴

Trade	Value in 2023	Change from 2022
Total trade	less than £1 million	a decrease of 100.0% or £10 million
Ranking out of all the UK's trading partners	230th	
Total UK exports	less than £1 million	a decrease of 100.0% or £6 million
Ranking out of all the UK's export partners	Joint 226th	
UK exports in goods (percentage of total UK exports that were goods)	less than £1 million	a change of less than £1 million
UK exports in services (percentage of total UK exports that were services)	less than £1 million	a decrease of 100.0% or £6 million
Total UK imports	less than £1 million	a decrease of 100.0% or £4 million
Ranking out of all the UK's import partners	Joint 224th	
UK imports in goods (percentage of total UK imports that were goods)	less than £1 million	a decrease of 100.0% or £2 million
UK imports in services (percentage of total UK imports that were services)	less than £1 million	a decrease of 100.0% or £2 million

³Trade data sourced from Office for National Statistics data on [UK total trade \(seasonally adjusted data\)](#).

⁴Trade data sourced from Office for National Statistics data on [UK total trade \(seasonally adjusted data\)](#).

UK market share in Sao Tome and Principe⁵

UK market share for total trade	Value in 2023		Change from 2022
Total UK market share	0.0%	a decrease of 3.4 percentage points	
UK market share for goods only	0.0%	unchanged	
UK market share for services only	0.0%	a decrease of 13.5 percentage points	

UK Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) with Sao Tome and Principe⁶

UK FDI	Value in 2023		Change from 2022
Total UK outward FDI	Data not available due to data disclosure		Comparison not available
Total UK inward FDI	Less than £500 thousand	Not available due to low investment	

Economic statistics and projections using gross domestic product (GDP) for Sao Tome and Principe⁷

Economic statistics	2021	2022	2023	2024
Economic growth, using GDP in real terms, compared to the previous year	1.9%	0.2%	0.4%	<i>1.1%</i>
GDP per capita in \$USD (in thousands)	2.4	2.4	2.9	3.4

Sao Tome and Principe was the 185th largest economy in 2023, in terms of gross domestic product (GDP).

⁵UK market share data calculated using the methodology outlined in the [market share section](#) in the factsheet, based on data from the Office for National Statistics and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

⁶FDI data sourced from the Office for National Statistics [ad-hoc data release for FDI with all partners](#).

⁷Economic data sourced from the International Monetary Fund [World Economic Outlook](#) databases; Estimates and projections are given in italics; GDP rankings where provided are based on values in current prices (nominal terms) in \$USD, where some partner values are based on estimates which may influence the rankings when revised.

Trade with Sao Tome and Principe, in current prices (ONS)^{8 9 10}

Trade definitions

- **UK exports** - Goods and services that were produced or sourced in the UK, which were sold to Sao Tome and Principe.
- **UK imports** - Goods and services that were sold to the UK, which were produced or sourced by Sao Tome and Principe.
- **Total or 'bilateral' trade** - The value of total trade between the UK and Sao Tome and Principe (exports plus imports).
- **Trade balance** - The difference between exports and imports, calculated by UK exports minus UK imports.
- **Trade surplus** - This occurs when the value of UK exports to Sao Tome and Principe is greater than the value of UK imports from Sao Tome and Principe.
- **Trade deficit** - This occurs when the value of UK exports to Sao Tome and Principe is less than the value of UK imports from Sao Tome and Principe.

Headline trade statistics include trade in non-monetary gold (reported within the unspecified goods category), which can significantly affect trends for some partners. Please see the factsheet [quality and methodology report](#) for more information. These statistics are given on a balance of payments (change of ownership) basis.

Note: UK trade statistics experienced higher levels of volatility between 2019 and 2022, due to the pandemic, global recession, supply chain disruption, EU Exit, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, price inflation, conflict in the Middle East, and data collection changes. All figures are reported in current prices (not adjusted for inflation), unless otherwise stated. We recognise that some of the recent changes in UK trade values will be partly due to price changes.

Total trade in goods and services (exports plus imports) between the UK and Sao Tome and Principe was less than £1 million in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024, a decrease of 100.0% or £2 million in current prices from the four quarters to the end of Q3 2023.

In the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024, **total UK exports** to Sao Tome and Principe amounted to less than £1 million (a decrease of 100.0% or £2 million in current prices, compared to the four quarters to the end of Q3 2023).

Of all UK exports to Sao Tome and Principe in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024, less than £1 were **goods** and less than £1 were **services**. In the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024, UK **exports of goods** to Sao Tome and Principe changed by less than £1 million in current prices, compared to the four quarters to the end of Q3 2023 while UK **exports of services** to Sao Tome and Principe decreased by 100.0% or £2 million in current prices, compared to the four quarters to the end of Q3 2023.

In the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024, **total UK imports** from Sao Tome and Principe were less than £1 million (a change of less than £1 million in current prices, compared to the four quarters to the end of Q3 2023).

Of all UK imports from Sao Tome and Principe in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024, less than £1 were **goods** and less than £1 were **services**. In the same period, UK **imports of goods** from Sao Tome and Principe changed by less than £1 million in current prices, compared to the four quarters to the end of Q3 2023 while UK **imports of services** from Sao Tome and Principe changed by less than £1 million in current prices, compared to the four quarters to the end of Q3 2023.

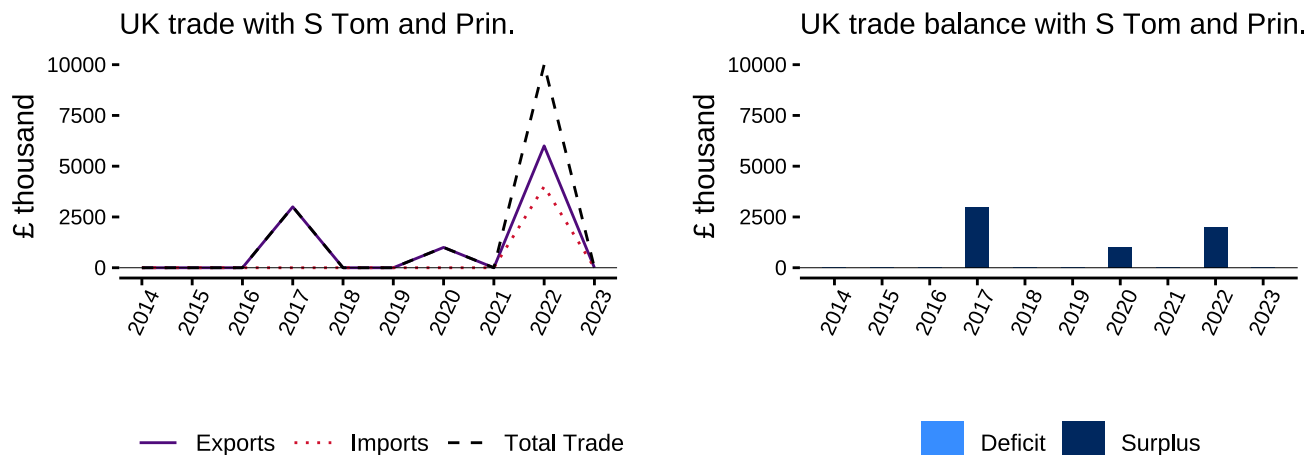
This means the UK reported a **total trade balance** of less than £1 million with Sao Tome and Principe, compared to a trade surplus of £2 million in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2023. In the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024, the UK had a **trade in goods balance** of less than £1 million with Sao Tome and Principe, compared to a trade in goods balance of less than £1 million in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2023. Meanwhile, in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024 the UK reported a **trade in services balance** of less than £1 million with Sao Tome and Principe, compared to a trade in services surplus of £2 million in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2023.

⁸Office of National Statistics (ONS) data source for total trade: [UK total trade data \(seasonally adjusted\)](#).

⁹This factsheet contains data as reported by the UK, users are advised to use UK-reported data where possible for consistency between partners. These data are subject to [asymmetries](#) e.g. the value of UK exports to Sao Tome and Principe (reported by the UK) may not match the value of Sao Tome and Principe imports from the UK (reported by Sao Tome and Principe).

¹⁰Data are in current prices, meaning no adjustment has been made to account for changes in inflation or exchange rate. The totals may not exactly match the sum of their parts due to rounding.'

The charts below present a time series for trade between the UK and Sao Tome and Principe for each year between 2014 and 2023:



Source: ONS, UK trade in goods and services, Q3 2024

The data that are presented in the charts above are given in the table below in £ thousand:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Value of total trade	0	0	0	3000	0	0	1000	0	10000	0
Value of exports	0	0	0	3000	0	0	1000	0	6000	0
Value of imports	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4000	0
Trade balance	0	0	0	+3000	0	0	+1000	0	+2000	0

In the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024, Sao Tome and Principe was the UK's:¹¹

- **Joint 229th largest trading partner** (accounting for less than 0.1% of total UK trade).
 - 219th largest **goods** trading partner (less than 0.1% of UK goods trade).
 - 227th largest **services** trading partner (less than 0.1% of UK services trade).
- **Joint 225th largest export market** (accounting for less than 0.1% of total UK exports).
 - 217th largest **goods** export market (less than 0.1% of UK goods exports).
 - Joint 220th largest **services** export market (less than 0.1% of UK services exports).
- **Joint 224th largest import market** (accounting for less than 0.1% of total UK imports).
 - Joint 198th largest **goods** import market (less than 0.1% of UK goods imports).
 - 223rd largest **services** import market (less than 0.1% of UK services imports).

More timely data, for trade in goods only¹², show that UK exports of goods to Sao Tome and Principe did not change the 12 months to January 2025 in current prices, compared to the same period the previous year. UK imports of goods from Sao Tome and Principe did not change, in current prices, over the same period.

¹¹Rankings are based on the ONS dataset which contains data for all individual partners: [UK total trade data \(seasonally adjusted\)](#).

¹²ONS data source for trade in the latest 12 months up to January 2025: [UK Trade data \(seasonally adjusted\)](#).

Trade in goods by commodity, in current prices (ONS)^{13 14}

Please note, these data are presented on a non-seasonally adjusted basis and are not directly comparable to seasonally adjusted data, including the headline trade statistics presented before.

The **top 5 goods exported from the UK to Sao Tome and Principe** in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024 were as follows:

Commodity	Exports in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024	Percentage of total goods exports	Change from the four quarters to the end of Q3 2023
01 - Meat & meat preparations	£660 thousand	-	a decrease of 8.3%
77K - Miscellaneous electrical goods (capital)	£60 thousand	-	Nil trade in previous period
76K - Telecoms & sound equipment (capital)	£40 thousand	-	a decrease of 33.3%
65 - Textile fabrics	£30 thousand	-	-
72I - Specialised machinery (intermediate)	£30 thousand	-	Nil trade in previous period

The **top good imported to the UK from Sao Tome and Principe** in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024 was as follows:

Commodity	Imports in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024	Percentage of total goods imports	Change from the four quarters to the end of Q3 2023
64 - Paper & paperboard	£20 thousand	-	an increase of 100.0%

Note: The percentage of the total UK imports and exports from Sao Tome and Principe accounted for by the above commodities are not provided here. This is due to the value of total UK imports and exports of goods being rounded to the nearest £million, with commodity trade values being given to a greater level of accuracy. In some cases, this means the percentages above might sum to more than 100%.

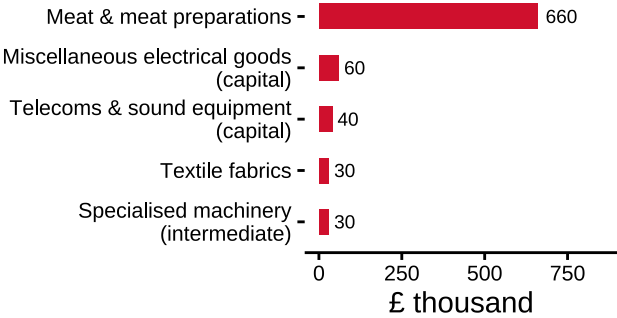
Note: Percentage changes between the current and previous period that exceed 100% have been omitted. This is to avoid presenting small value changes from a low base as fast growing.

¹³ Data on trade in goods by commodity are sourced from data by the ONS: [UK trade release \(non-seasonally adjusted\)](#). These statistics for [exports](#) and [imports](#) present the latest data from the January 2025 ONS publication which are given on a monthly basis.

¹⁴ The commodities are categorised based on [SITC](#) codes using a mixture of level 2 and level 3 codes.

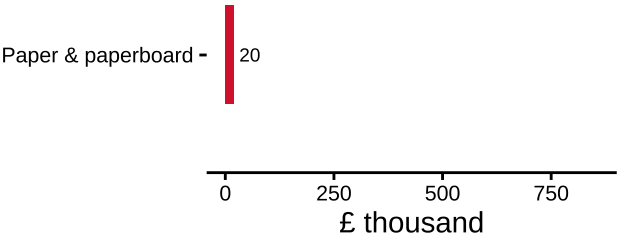
The chart below shows the top 5 products exported from the UK to Sao Tome and Principe and the top product imported to the UK from Sao Tome and Principe, by value, in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024. All data shown in the chart are provided in the text above.

The top 5 UK goods exports, in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024, to S Tom and Prin.



Source: ONS, January 2025

The top 1 UK goods imports, in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024, from S Tom and Prin.



Source: ONS, January 2025

Trade in services by service type, in current prices (ONS)¹⁵

Note: Service type data for the trade in services between the UK and Sao Tome and Principe in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2024 are not available from UK sources.

¹⁵Trade in services by service type is sourced from data by the ONS: [UK trade in services by partner country \(non-seasonally adjusted\)](#).

Trade in goods by UK countries and English regions, in current prices (HMRC)¹⁶

Regional trade definitions

- **UK regions** - The UK is categorised into 12 regions based on the International Territorial level 1 (ITL1). This level includes 9 regions in England, as well as Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- **Regional trade data** - The data are compiled by merging HM Revenues & Customs (HMRC) trade data with employment data from the Interdepartmental Business Register (IDBR) so a business' trade can be allocated to a UK region based on the proportion of its employees employed in that region. Where a trader is not matched with the IDBR, its trade is matched with ONS postcode data to obtain the UK region in which the Head Office of the VAT-registered business is based.

Note: Data for UK regions are not available from this source for Sao Tome and Principe in 2024.

¹⁶HMRC data source for regional UK trade data: [HMRC Regional Trade Statistics](#) (data extracted from the spreadsheet download using the HMRC interactive tables).

Trade in services by mode of supply, in current prices (ONS)^{17 18}

Trade in Services by Mode of Supply definitions

- **Modes of Supply** define the way services trade is conducted. The World Trade Organisation's [General Agreement on Services](#) categorises methods for trade in services into four different modes of supply, which depend upon on the territorial presence of the supplier and the consumer at the time of transaction.
- **Mode 1** - Remote trade (a supplier in one country sells a service to a customer in another, without the movement of people).
- **Mode 2** - Consumption abroad (the person receiving the service travels to the supplier's country).
- **Mode 3** - Commercial presence (e.g. a company subsidiary) - this mode is not counted as part of UK services trade on a balance of payments basis and is not reported in this release. This means that total figures are only the total of Modes 1, 2 and 4.
- **Mode 4** - Presence of natural persons (a supplier sends its personnel to the customer's country to provide service).

UK services exports to Sao Tome and Principe by mode of supply in 2022:

- Data on services exports to Sao Tome and Principe by mode of supply are not available from this source.

UK services imports from Sao Tome and Principe by mode of supply in 2022:

- Data on services imports from Sao Tome and Principe by mode of supply are not available from this source.

¹⁷ONS data source for UK Trade in Services by Mode of Supply: [ONS Imports and exports of services by country, by modes of supply, UK](#)

¹⁸Data included in this ONS release are experimental estimates.

UK Market Share (ONS and UNCTAD)^{19 20}

Market Share definitions

- **UK market share** – Imports from the UK as a percentage of all the goods and services imported by Sao Tome and Principe. Market share is provided for total imports from the UK, as well as for goods and services separately.
- **Market share methodology** – These UK market share statistics are derived by the Department for Business and Trade, using publicly available data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). These new statistics allows users to estimate the importance of UK trade on imports to each trading partner. Market share is calculated as the value of imports from the UK using data from [ONS](#), divided by the value of total imports using data from [UNCTAD](#). Data from UNCTAD are converted from US dollars into pounds sterling by using the annual average spot exchange rate ²¹.

The UK's market share for Sao Tome and Principe in 2023 was as follows:

- **The total UK market share in Sao Tome and Principe was 0.0% in 2023 for goods and services.** This is a decrease of 3.4 percentage points from 2022.
- The UK market share in Sao Tome and Principe was 0.0% in 2023 for **goods only**. This is unchanged from 2022.
- The UK market share in Sao Tome and Principe was 0.0% in 2023 for **services only**. This is a decrease of 13.5 percentage points from 2022.

The table below presents the UK's market share for Sao Tome and Principe between 2014 and 2023. Values presented in italics are based on UNCTAD estimates of imports.

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total goods and services	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	3.4%	<i>0.0%</i>
Goods only	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	<i>0.0%</i>
Services only	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	13.5%	<i>0.0%</i>

¹⁹ONS data source for market share: [UK total trade data \(seasonally adjusted\)](#).

²⁰UNCTAD data source for market share: [Goods and Services \(BPM6\): Exports and imports of goods and services, annual](#). Some UNCTAD data may be based on estimates.

²¹Annual average spot exchange rates for \$USD to £GBP are sourced from the [Bank of England](#)

Number of VAT-registered businesses trading goods (HMRC)^{22 23 24}

Business counts definition (Regional Trade in Goods Statistics)

- Business counts report UK VAT-registered business exporting and importing goods. Data is collected primarily from customs declarations (using the Intrastat survey and VAT returns for Northern Ireland businesses trading with the EU).
- Counts exclude businesses trading below the statistical value thresholds for customs declarations and exclude trade in non-monetary gold.

Businesses trading with Sao Tome and Principe in 2024:

- Data on the number of VAT-registered businesses exporting to Sao Tome and Principe are not available from this source.
- Data on the number of VAT-registered businesses importing from Sao Tome and Principe are not available from this source.

Businesses trading with the world in 2024:

- In 2024, around 122,000 UK VAT-registered businesses exported goods to the world.
- In 2024, around 256,400 UK VAT-registered businesses imported goods from the world.

²²HMRC data source for Regional Trade Statistics business counts data: [UK trade in goods statistics](#).

²³Data for UK businesses engaged in trade of services with Sao Tome and Principe are not available. A single business may trade with multiple trading partners abroad, so care should be taken when adding figures for multiple trading partners.

²⁴HMRC does not receive partner country information for customs declarations with commodity line values that fall under the statistical value threshold of £873 (in value) and 1,000kg (in net mass). Therefore, these counts of exporting/importing businesses only capture those businesses with exports/imports (respectively) above the statistical value threshold. The number of businesses has been rounded to the nearest 100.

Trade in Value Added (OECD)^{25 26}

Trade in Value Added definitions

- **Trade in Value Added (TiVA)** - TiVA is a statistical approach to examine supply chains, which is not possible with conventional ('gross') trade statistics. This is because TiVA treats international trade flows as flows of value added rather than gross flows of final goods and services.
- **Domestic and foreign value added** - In TiVA, gross exports are decomposed into domestic and foreign value added. Domestic value added measures the value added generated by the domestic economy in the production of its exports (e.g. the value added by UK car manufacturers and their UK supply chains in car exports). Foreign value added measures the value added contribution that foreign suppliers make to these exports (e.g. the import of foreign car parts).
- **TiVA statistics** - Although TiVA offers advantages over traditional ways of measuring trade, these statistics are not fully developed. These results are estimates which should be considered complementary to conventional trade statistics and not be over-interpreted. In addition, the geographical detail is limited for developing countries. More information on TiVA can be found in a recent [research report](#) by the Department for Business and Trade and Cambridge Econometrics.
- **UK forward linkages for exports** - Measures the reliance of foreign exporters on UK value added (inputs).
- **UK backward linkages for exports** - Measures the reliance of UK exporters on foreign value added (inputs).
- **Employment supported by exports** - This provides an estimate of the number of employees in exporting industries, and their domestic supply chains that are supported by exporting activity.

Note: Data for Sao Tome and Principe on forward and backward linkages for exports in 2020 are not available from this data source.

Employment supported by exports:²⁷

- Data for Sao Tome and Principe on employment supported by exports in 2020 are not available.
- Exporting activity in the UK supported 6.7 million persons in 2020 (20.6% of total UK employment). Data on the number of UK jobs supported by export activity to Sao Tome and Principe in 2020 are not available.

²⁵ The estimates in this factsheet are based on Trade in Value Added statistics published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD): a) [Trade in Value Added database \(origin of value added in gross exports\)](#), June 2024; and b) [Trade in employment \(TIM\) database](#), February 2024, indicators EXGR_DEM.

²⁶ The data shown in this factsheet is from 2020.

²⁷ These estimates measure employees directly and indirectly supported by exports i.e. workers employed in exporting businesses and in other domestic businesses supplying inputs to the exporting businesses. The estimates should be interpreted as employment *supported* by exports, rather than employment *created* by exports, as the jobs may have previously existed to serve the domestic market. Employees may also be supported by exports from a multiple number of trading partners. As with the core TiVA data, these estimates are based on a number of assumptions and modelling, so should be interpreted with caution.

Foreign Direct Investment with Sao Tome and Principe (ONS)^{28 29 30}

Foreign direct investment definitions

- **Foreign direct investment (FDI)** - Investment made by a firm or individual in one economy ('direct investor') to acquire a 'lasting interest' in an enterprise operating in another economy. The lasting interest is deemed to exist if the direct investor acquires at least 10% of equity, or equivalently 10% of the voting rights, of the company.
- **FDI stock** - The accumulated value of all previous investments at the end of a reference period. Figures are net, that is the value of investment minus disinvestment. **UK outward FDI stock** provides the total value of FDI by UK investors in economies abroad (investment of a UK parent company in Sao Tome and Principe), while **UK inward FDI stock** provides the total value of FDI by non-UK investors in the UK (investment of a Sao Tome and Principe parent company in the UK).
- **Data disclosure** - It can happen that FDI is coming from only a few investors. In that case, figures are suppressed by the ONS to avoid disclosure of information relating to individual enterprises.

***Note:** The FDI data for 2020 have been affected by changes in sampling methodology. Improvements have been made to the population which has been sampled and the way that businesses are sampled from the population, capturing a wider range of businesses. This means data from 2020 and onward are more representative of UK FDI with overseas partners and are comparable.*

More information about the methodology changes can be found on the [ONS website](#).

UK outward FDI stock:

- In 2023, the **stock of FDI from the UK in Sao Tome and Principe** are not available due to data disclosure.
- In 2023, the total UK FDI abroad was £1.9 trillion. In 2023, the **top destination for UK FDI** was United States, accounting for 26.7% of the total UK outward FDI stock, followed by Netherlands (14.8%) and Luxembourg (7.6%).

UK inward FDI stock:

- In 2023, the **stock of FDI from Sao Tome and Principe in the UK** was less than £500 thousand.
- In 2023, the total FDI in the UK in was £2.1 trillion. In 2023, the **top investor in the UK** was United States, accounting for 34.1% of the total UK inward FDI stock, followed by Luxembourg (9.1%) and Jersey (7.9%).

²⁸Data for both inward and outward FDI between the UK and Sao Tome and Principe are not available in the main ONS release ([Foreign Direct Investment involving UK companies](#)). Therefore, an [ONS FDI ad-hoc data release](#) is used to provide the latest FDI data for Sao Tome and Principe where it is unavailable in the main ONS release.

²⁹Data are presented on a directional basis which means they are not directly comparable to the asset/liability report prepared by ONS as part of the Balance of Payments statistical release. Figures are on net basis (investments minus disinvestments) and are given in nominal terms. Negative FDI values occur when disinvestments are greater than investments. Data are on an immediate destination/source basis and not an ultimate destination/source, which is likely to overstate financial centres such as the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

³⁰This factsheet contains data as reported by the UK and are subject to asymmetries e.g. UK outward FDI to Sao Tome and Principe (reported by the UK) may not match Sao Tome and Principe inward FDI from the UK (reported by Sao Tome and Principe). For consistency when comparing between partners, users are advised to use UK-reported data as far as possible.

Economic statistics (as reported by Sao Tome and Principe)

Trade and investment data for Sao Tome and Principe (UNCTAD)^{31 32 33}

The following data are reported by Sao Tome and Principe and are for reference only. Whenever possible use data from UK sources for trade and investment. All data below are presented in \$USD in billions.

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Nominal exports	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	<i>0.1</i>
Nominal imports	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	<i>0.2</i>
Nominal trade balance	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1	<i>-0.1</i>
Inward FDI stock	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5
Outward FDI stock	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

³¹United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) data sources for trade: [Goods and Services \(BPM6\): Exports and imports of goods and services, annual](#); and for investment: [Foreign direct investment: Inward and outward flows and stock, annual](#).

³²Estimates are given in italics. Historic data pre-2016 can be found on the [UNCTAD website](#).

³³All trade data are on a Balance of Payments basis. The FDI data are on a directional and net (investment minus disinvestment) basis. These figures are given in current prices and are rounded to the nearest \$0.1 billion, with missing data represented by dashes.

Economic data and projections for Sao Tome and Principe (IMF)^{34 35}

The following table presents economic statistics for Sao Tome and Principe. Projections include assumptions of the effects of COVID-19 and may be subject to change in the future. Estimated data, as well as projections up to 2029, are presented in italics and are subject to revision.

Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Change in exports (%)	35.0	-4.4	-2.0	<i>10.5</i>	<i>4.1</i>	<i>6.7</i>	<i>6.9</i>	<i>7.5</i>	<i>8.4</i>
Change in imports (%)	9.9	5.6	-0.4	<i>2.1</i>	<i>3.8</i>	<i>3.8</i>	<i>3.5</i>	<i>3.9</i>	<i>3.7</i>
Current account balance (% of GDP)	-13.1	-14.4	-12.3	-7.2	-5.7	-5.3	-5.3	-5.0	-4.9
Change in real GDP (%)	1.9	0.2	0.4	<i>1.1</i>	<i>3.3</i>	<i>4.7</i>	<i>4.1</i>	<i>3.5</i>	<i>3.5</i>
GDP per capita (1,000 \$USD)	2.4	2.4	2.9	<i>3.4</i>	<i>3.9</i>	<i>4.2</i>	<i>4.5</i>	<i>4.7</i>	<i>5.0</i>
GDP PPP (Int'l \$billion)	1.3	1.4	1.4	<i>1.5</i>	<i>1.5</i>	<i>1.7</i>	<i>1.7</i>	<i>1.8</i>	<i>1.9</i>
Inflation, year average (CPI %)	8.1	18.0	21.2	<i>17.1</i>	<i>10.8</i>	<i>5.1</i>	<i>5.0</i>	<i>5.0</i>	<i>5.0</i>
Unemployment rate (% of total labour force)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Population (million)	<i>0.2</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>0.3</i>
Total investment (% of GDP)	28.0	37.8	22.2	<i>23.3</i>	<i>20.6</i>	<i>19.3</i>	<i>19.3</i>	<i>19.4</i>	<i>19.3</i>
Gross national savings (% of GDP)	15.0	23.5	9.9	<i>16.1</i>	<i>14.9</i>	<i>14.0</i>	<i>14.0</i>	<i>14.4</i>	<i>14.3</i>
General government net lending/borrowing (% of GDP)	-1.5	-2.2	1.1	<i>4.0</i>	<i>4.2</i>	<i>1.6</i>	<i>1.5</i>	<i>1.4</i>	<i>1.2</i>
General government gross debt (% of GDP)	60.1	55.9	50.7	<i>40.6</i>	<i>31.8</i>	<i>29.0</i>	<i>27.3</i>	<i>25.2</i>	<i>24.2</i>

Sao Tome and Principe was the 185th largest economy in 2023, in terms of gross domestic product (GDP). The UK was the 6th largest economy in 2023.³⁶

³⁴International Monetary Fund (IMF) provide economic commentary in their [World Economic Outlook reports](#). The latest data presented here can be found in the [World Economic Database, October 2024](#).

³⁵Projections and estimates are given in italics. More information for each metric and each partner, as well as historic data pre-2021, can be found on the [IMF website](#).

³⁶GDP ranking based on values in current prices (nominal terms) in \$USD. Some GDP values for partners are based on estimates which may influence the rankings when revised.

Top goods traded with the world by Sao Tome and Principe, in current prices (UN Comtrade)^{37 38}

Data presented here show the top commodities traded with the world, not solely the UK, by Sao Tome and Principe. These data are based on a different commodity classification system to the ONS commodity data used earlier in this factsheet, and the two sections should therefore not be directly compared.

Top goods exported to the world by Sao Tome and Principe in 2023:

Rank	HS Commodity	\$USD million	% of total goods exported
1	18 - Cocoa and cocoa preparations	10	61.5%
2	15 - Animal or vegetable fats and oils	6	33.8%
3	09 - Coffee, tea and spices	0	2.0%
4	88 - Aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof	0	0.3%
5	84 - Machinery and mechanical appliances	0	0.3%
6	08 - Edible fruit and nuts	0	0.3%
7	04 - Dairy produce; birds' eggs	0	0.3%
8	87 - Vehicles other than railway or tramway stock	0	0.2%
9	38 - Miscellaneous chemical products	0	0.2%
10	12 - Oil seeds and oleaginous fruits	0	0.2%
	All goods exported	17	100.0%

Top goods imported from the world by Sao Tome and Principe in 2023:

Rank	HS Commodity	\$USD million	% of total goods imported
1	27 - Mineral fuels or oils, products of their distillation	54	29.3%
2	85 - Electrical machinery and equipment	16	8.5%
3	10 - Cereals	15	8.3%
4	22 - Beverages, spirits and vinegar	9	4.8%
5	84 - Machinery and mechanical appliances	9	4.8%
6	87 - Vehicles other than railway or tramway stock	9	4.6%
7	11 - Products of the milling industry	6	3.4%
8	15 - Animal or vegetable fats and oils	5	2.5%
9	25 - Salt; sulfur; earths and stone	4	2.4%
10	02 - Meat and edible meat	4	2.1%
	All goods imported	184	100.0%

³⁷ United Nations (UN) Comtrade data are sourced from the online [UN Comtrade Database](#). The data reported above are for 2023, but as the data upload to UN Comtrade is continuous, more timely data may be available from the source.

³⁸ Data are classified using the [Harmonized System](#) and are given on a physical movement basis, with UK data comparable to HMRC data sources rather than the headline trade figures presented here from ONS.

Top services traded with the world by Sao Tome and Principe, in current prices (ITC Trade Map)³⁹

40 41

Data presented here shows the top service types traded to the world, not solely the UK, by Sao Tome and Principe.

Top services exported to the world by Sao Tome and Principe in 2021:

Rank	EBOPS Service Type	\$USD million	% of total services exported
1	Travel	30	55.0%
2	Government goods and services n.i.e.	16	29.8%
3	Other business services	3	6.0%
4	Transport	3	5.4%
5	Telecommunications, computer, and information services	1	2.1%
	All services exported	54	100.0%

Top services imported from the world by Sao Tome and Principe in 2021:

Rank	EBOPS Service Type	\$USD million	% of total services imported
1	Transport	22	44.5%
2	Travel	14	27.6%
3	Other business services	7	14.5%
4	Telecommunications, computer, and information services	2	4.3%
5	Government goods and services n.i.e.	2	4.0%
	All services imported	49	100.0%

³⁹International Trade Centre (ITC) Trade Map data are sourced from the online [ITC Trade Map tool](#). The data above are for 2021, but as the data upload to ITC is continuous, more timely data may be available from the source.

⁴⁰Data are classified on the [EBOPS 2010](#) basis. 'Other business services' include: Research and development, professional and management consulting services, technical services and trade related services. A full description of all service types can be found on the [UN Statistics Division website](#).

⁴¹Estimates are shown in italics, where for some partners only estimates are available - These data have been included for information and should be treated with caution.

Background Notes

This document is one of a wider set of factsheets between the UK and its individual trade and investment partners which can be found on the [Trade and Investment Factsheets website](#). All of these factsheets are published as [Official Statistics](#) as defined by the [UK Statistics Authority](#).

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) that all producers of official statistics should adhere to. You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the OSR website.

The publication of these factsheets as Official Statistics was agreed by the Chief Statistician at the Department for Business and Trade, who monitors these factsheets to ensure they continue to adhere to the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). These factsheets have not been formally assessed by the [Office of Statistics Regulation](#) and are therefore not designated as [Accredited Official Statistics](#).

As a requisite of publishing as Official Statistics, a [quality and methodology report](#) has been produced which outlines the quality of these factsheets, as well as providing more information on the methodology of the data sources presented here. This report contains hyperlinks to information on the strengths and weaknesses for each data source. Statistics contained in the factsheets from UK data providers all come from Official Statistics publications, with some sources also being from National Statistics publications.

Future updates of these factsheets can be found on the [Government update schedule for Official Statistics](#). These scheduled updates are in line with significant updates from UK data providers when they release new data. Unscheduled releases of the factsheets may also be necessary to accommodate data updates where little or no advanced notice are given, such as in the case of international data updates. Please see the data update schedule and revisions policy in the [quality and methodology report](#) for more information. Please note that there may be occasions where more recent data than is provided here can be found directly from the data providers.

The Department for Business and Trade welcome any feedback or comments on these factsheets, please send these to statistics@businessandtrade.gov.uk.



© Crown copyright 2025

This publication is licensed under the terms of the except where otherwise stated.

Where the Department for Business and Trade have identified any third party copyright information, users will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available on the [GOV.UK website](#).

Any media enquiries regarding this publication should be directed to the Department for Business and Trade [website](#) or by phoning 0207 215 2000.