



Country: Canada

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Information and communication technologies (ICT) have been at the heart of economic changes for more than a decade. ICT sector plays an important role, notably by contributing to rapid technological progress and productivity growth. Firms use ICTs to organise transnational networks in response to international competition and the increasing need for strategic interaction. As a result, multinational firms are a primary vehicle of the ever spreading process of globalisation. New technologies and their implementation in productive activities are changing the economic structure and contributing to productivity increases in OECD economies. Economic competitiveness depends on productivity level and in the knowledge economy, ICT sectors determine the productivity level. As a result, we can say that the power of economic competitiveness of a country depends on the productivity of its ICT sector.

There are over 43,200 companies in the Canadian Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) sector. The large majority fall within the software and computer services industries. The ICT sector makes a substantial contribution to Canada's GDP. In 2019, the sector's GDP was \$94.1 billion (in 2012 constant dollars), and accounted for 4.8% of national GDP. All ICT services sub-sectors experienced positive growth in 2019. Meanwhile, software and computer services expanded by 7.2% and the communications services sub-sector by 2.2%. Since 2013, the ICT sector has posted a stronger annual growth than the total economy. Revenues in the ICT sector reached an estimated \$210 billion in 2019. Almost all ICT sub-sectors posted positive growth in 2018, the software and computer services sub-sector led this growth with a jump in revenues of 11.1%. From 2013 to 2018, ICT sector revenues grew from \$158 billion to \$200 billion, a 26.9% increase. During this period, the ICT manufacturing industries declined by 2.8%. On the other hand, all of the services sub-sectors posted gains: the software and computer services, wholesaling, and the communications services sub-sectors increased by 47.4%, 26.5%, and 11.6% respectively. Over the same period, manufacturing

industries' revenue share dropped from 5.4% to 4.5% of total ICT sector revenues.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a wide range of global sustainable development targets for the environment, society and economy and they were launched by the United Nations in 2015. In launching the SDGs, the United Nations called on all member states to embrace what are an ambitious and demanding set of challenges but it also emphasised the vital role that businesses, would have to play if these challenges were to be met. The aim of this preliminary commentary paper is to review a number of the ways the Information Communication and Technology industry believes it can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. The paper outlines the characteristics of the concept of sustainable development and how ICT relates to sustainable development, reviews a number of the ways two leading ICT companies, namely Ericsson and Microsoft and two industry bodies, namely the GSMA which represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide, and the Global e-Sustainability Initiative, believe they can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. The paper also examines some of the challenges the industry may face in making such a contribution and offers some reflections on the role of ICT in promoting the transition to a more sustainable future for people and the planet.