

# What is an ISIC Code?

The International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) is the international reference classification of productive activities.

## The purpose of the classification

Its main purpose is to provide a set of activity categories that can be utilized for the collection and reporting of statistics according to such activities. It provides a comprehensive framework within which economic data can be collected and reported in a format that is designed for purposes of economic analysis, decision-taking and policy-making.

## The classification structure

The classification structure represents a standard format to organize detailed information about the state of an economy according to economic principles and perceptions.

These economic activities are subdivided in a hierarchical, four-level structure of mutually exclusive categories, facilitating data collection, presentation and analysis at detailed levels of the economy in an internationally comparable, standardized way.

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## How to Read an ISIC Code

The ISIC is subdivided in a hierarchical, four-level structure. The categories at the highest level are called sections. The two-digit of the code identify the division, the third digit identifies the group and the fourth digit identifies the class.

### Example

|                 |             |                                                                           |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Section</b>  | <b>K</b>    | <b>Financial and insurance activities</b>                                 |
| <b>Division</b> | <b>64</b>   | <b>Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding</b> |
| <b>Group</b>    | <b>641</b>  | <b>Monetary intermediation</b>                                            |
| <b>Class</b>    | <b>6411</b> | <b>Central banking</b>                                                    |

## Historical Background:

Since the adoption of the original version of ISIC in 1948, the majority of countries around the world have used ISIC as their national activity classification or have developed national classifications derived from ISIC. ISIC has therefore provided guidance to countries in developing national activity classifications and has become an important tool for comparing statistical data on economic activities at the international level. The fourth version of the classification was adopted in 2008.

## ISIC Broad Structure

| Section | Divisions | Description                                                                                                                 |
|---------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A       | 0100–0300 | Agriculture, forestry and fishing                                                                                           |
| B       | 0500–0900 | Mining and quarrying                                                                                                        |
| C       | 1000–3300 | Manufacturing                                                                                                               |
| D       | 3500      | Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply                                                                         |
| E       | 3600–3900 | Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation                                                                    |
| F       | 4100–4300 | Construction                                                                                                                |
| G       | 4500–4700 | Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles                                                        |
| H       | 4900–5300 | Transportation and storage                                                                                                  |
| I       | 5500–5600 | Accommodation and food service activities                                                                                   |
| J       | 5800–6300 | Information and communication                                                                                               |
| K       | 6400–6600 | Financial and insurance activities                                                                                          |
| L       | 6800      | Real estate activities                                                                                                      |
| M       | 6900–7500 | Professional, scientific and technical activities                                                                           |
| N       | 7700–8200 | Administrative and support service activities                                                                               |
| O       | 8400      | Public administration and defence; compulsory social security                                                               |
| P       | 8500      | Education                                                                                                                   |
| Q       | 8600–8800 | Human health and social work activities                                                                                     |
| R       | 9000–9300 | Arts, entertainment and recreation                                                                                          |
| S       | 9400–9600 | Other service activities                                                                                                    |
| T       | 9700–9800 | Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services- producing activities of households for own use |
| U       | 9900      | Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies                                                                     |
|         | 9999      | There is no ISIC or no Data                                                                                                 |

## What are ISIC Codes used for?

Wide use has been made of ISIC, both nationally and internationally, in classifying data according to kind of economic activity in the fields of economic and social statistics, such as for statistics on national accounts, demography of enterprises, employment and others. In addition, ISIC is increasingly used for non-statistical purposes.

- Used for providing a continuing flow of information that is indispensable for the monitoring, analysis and evaluation of the performance of an economy over time
- Used to classify statistical units, such as establishments or enterprises, according to the economic activity in which they mainly engage
- At each level of ISIC, each statistical unit is assigned to one and only one ISIC code
- ISIC provides the internationally accepted standard for categorizing producing units within an economy, which allows for data comparison at the national and international levels

## Why are ISIC Codes important?

- Important tool for socio-economic statistics that need to be arranged in accordance with the productive system of the economy.
- ISIC allows the gathering and analysis of data quickly and efficiently.
- ISIC has been recommended to countries as an international standard and model in the development and/or adaptation of their national activity classifications.
- ISIC has a central position among existing classifications of economic activities, as well as other economic classifications, such as those for products. See: [Nomenclature of Economic Activities \(NACE\)](#)