

Sustainable Trade Index **2026**

China

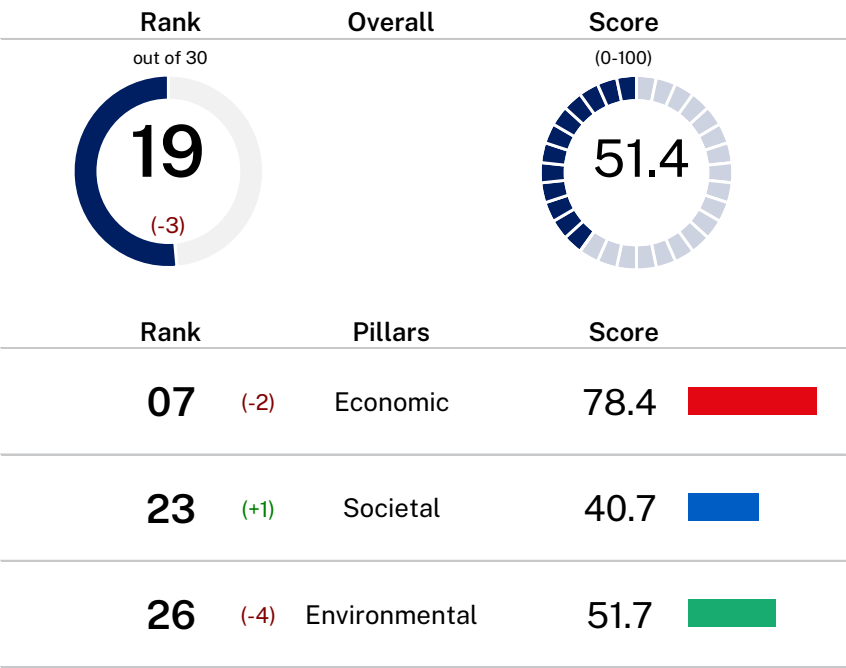


Sustainable Trade Index

The Hinrich-IMD Sustainable Trade Index measures 30 economies' readiness and capacity to participate in the global trading system in a manner that supports the long-term goals of economic growth, environmental protection, and societal development.

Overall and pillars

China



The values in (parentheses) indicate the one year ranking change

Background information

Population, millions (2025)	1,405.08	Large
Income level, GDP per Capita US\$ (2025)	13,968	Medium
Membership	APEC, RCEP, CPTPP (applicant)	

Economic pillar

The Economic pillar measures an economy's ability to ensure and promote economic growth through international trade. In this category, economies receive scores for indicators that demonstrate a link between the trading system and economic growth.

Some indicators capture the quality of trade infrastructure, while others measure the ease of conducting international trade. We measure export diversification by evaluating an economy's bilateral trade destinations and how heavily its exports are concentrated by sector. Furthermore, we consider the technological infrastructure and innovation capabilities of an economy by assessing its emphasis on research and development investments and digital technologies.

Indicators

1 Economic Pillar		Rank	Rank +/-	Value	Year	Score and 30 country average
1.01	Consumer price inflation	03	(-1)	0.00	2025	98.30
1.02	Real GDP Growth per capita, % GDP	05	(-2)	5.20	2025	66.35
1.03	Growth in labor force, %	26	(+1)	-0.07	2025	34.00
1.04	Foreign direct investment, net inflows, % GDP	28	(0)	0.41	2025	5.51
1.05	Gross fixed capital formation, % GDP	01	(0)	39.65	2024	100.00
1.06	Tariff & non-tariff barriers	29	(-1)	-	-	20.56
1.06.01	Tariff barriers	25	(-5)	-	-	70.21
1.06.01.a	Tariff barriers in force	24	(-1)	1,924	2025	71.17
1.06.01.b	New tariff barriers 2025	27	(-1)	168	2025	71.86
1.06.01.c	Net percentage of imports affected by new tariff barriers (2025)	27	(-25)	0.051	2025	65.12
1.06.02	Non-tariff barriers	30	(-1)	-	-	0.00
1.06.02.a	Non-tariff barriers in force	30	(0)	252,636	2025	0.00
1.06.02.b	New non-tariff barriers 2025	30	(-1)	8,202	2025	0.00
1.06.02.c	Net percentage of imports affected by new non-tariff barriers (2025)	26	(-20)	0.53	2025	14.83
1.07	Trade liberalization	24	(0)	-	-	20.10
1.07.01	Regional Trade Agreements, number in force	04	(+3)	23	2025	54.29
1.07.02	Capital account liberalization, Index	21	(0)	-1.25	2023	16.24
1.07.03	Investment Freedom, Index	29	(0)	20.00	2026	0.00
1.08	Exchange rate stability, parity change from national currency to SDR, 2025/2023	07	(+9)	0.03	2025	96.11
1.09	Domestic credit to private sector, % of GDP	03	(+1)	194.31	2024	86.63
1.10	Foreign trade and payments risk	18	(-4)	-	-	45.97
1.10.01	Country credit rating	11	(-1)	46.67	2025	76.61
1.10.02	Gross debt, % GDP	24	(-1)	99.20	2025	52.34
1.11	Trade costs	12	(+2)	-	-	71.21
1.11.01	Logistics performance indicators	08	(0)	-	-	84.62
1.11.01.a	Aviation import dwell time (days)	10	(NEW)	1.30	2024	95.01
1.11.01.b	Number of aviation partner economies	04	(NEW)	144.5	2024	88.61
1.11.01.c	Container import dwell time (days)	19	(NEW)	5.90	2024	60.37
1.11.01.d	Number of maritime partner economies	02	(NEW)	94.0	2024	99.24
1.11.01.e	Business-to-business postal delivery time (days)	21	(NEW)	7.00	2024	77.70
1.11.01.f	Number of business-to-business postal partner economies	04	(NEW)	145.0	2024	93.59
1.11.02	Corruption perceptions, index	14	(-1)	43	2025	39.71
1.11.03	Rule of law, index	22	(-6)	46.99	2024	35.42
1.12	Monetary policy intervention	20	(-5)	-	-	50.04
1.12.01	Current account balance, % GDP	20	(-1)	3.70	2025	64.93
1.12.02	Change (1-year) in total reserves (includes gold), % GDP	14	(-3)	0.001	2025	30.36
1.13	Export concentration	02	(0)	-	-	95.50
1.13.01	Export market concentration, Top 5 as % total	01	(0)	40.14	2025	100.00
1.13.02	Export product concentration, Top 5 as % total	06	(-2)	47.07	2025	84.58
1.14	Exports of goods and services	02	(0)	-	-	86.15
1.14.01	Merchandise exports, US\$ millions	01	(0)	3,771,842	2025	100.00
1.14.02	Commercial services exports, US\$ millions	03	(0)	506,230	2025	50.58
1.15	Technological innovation	11	(0)	-	-	40.51
1.15.01	R&D expenditure, % GDP	05	(+1)	2.69	2024	54.27
1.15.02	Researchers in R&D, per 1,000 inhabitants	10	(+1)	2.11	2023	22.02
1.15.03	Patent applications, per million inhabitants	06	(0)	1,274.58	2024	29.52
1.15.04	High-technology exports, % of manufactured exports	10	(0)	26.28	2024	33.84
1.15.05	Scientific articles, per million people	13	(0)	660.68	2023	21.02
1.16	Technological infrastructure	07	(+2)	-	-	78.21
1.16.01	Fixed internet speed, Mbps	13	(-2)	157.79	2025	46.75
1.16.02	Internet users, % population	13	(+6)	91.60	2025	91.89
1.16.03	Fixed broadband subscriptions (per 100 people)	02	(0)	47.19	2024	98.72
1.16.04	Mobile subscriptions (per 100 people)	10	(+1)	131.75	2024	40.73
1.17	Digital readiness (e-commerce legislations)	16	(NEW)	71.0	2025	58

Societal pillar

Social factors matter in an economy's capacity to trade internationally over the long term. Economies are measured on the environment that encourages and supports the development of human capital, such as the extent of education and labor standards.

This pillar also captures factors that influence public support for trade expansion. These include income inequality, political stability, goods produced by forced and child labor, and the government response to human trafficking.

Indicators

2 Societal Pillar		Rank	Rank +/-	Value	Year	Score and 30 country average
2.01	Inequality (Gini coefficient)	16	(-4)	36.00	2022	48.53 
2.02	Educational attainment	11	(+1)	-	-	56.46 
2.02.01	Mean years of schooling	23	(0)	8.04	2023	38.77 
2.02.02	University education Index	03	(0)	88.89	2026	53.53 
2.02.03	Tertiary enrollment	10	(+1)	76.88	2024	60.44 
2.03	Labor standards	23	(-1)	-	-	52.60 
2.03.01	Gender non-discrimination in hiring	01	(0)	100	2024	100.00 
2.03.02	Freedom of association and assembly	26	(0)	0.18	2025	5.20 
2.04	Political stability and absence of violence	17	(+5)	63.28	2024	58.31 
2.05	Goods produced by forced labor or child labor	22	(0)	-	-	54.22 
2.05.01	Goods produced by forced labor	27	(0)	-	-	31.53 
2.05.01.a	Goods produced by forced labor, number of goods categories	29	(0)	24	2024	0.00 
2.05.01.b	% population in forced labor	12	(0)	0.40	2023	75.82 
2.05.02	Goods produced by child labor, number of goods categories	19	(0)	6	2024	76.92 
2.06	Government response to human trafficking	25	(0)	-	-	30.38 
2.06.01	Government response to human trafficking, Criminalization	15	(0)	6	2025	60.00 
2.06.02	Government response to human trafficking, Strategy	24	(0)	39.74	2023	35.29 
2.06.03	Government response to human trafficking, Action	25	(0)	4	2025	0.00 
2.07	Trade in goods at risk of modern slavery	30	(0)	-	-	0.00 
2.07.01	Imports of goods at risk of modern slavery, US\$ millions	25	(-3)	15,064	2025	81.85 
2.07.02	Exports of goods at risk of modern slavery, US\$ millions	30	(-2)	358978.2	2025	0.00 
2.08	Legatum prosperity index	13	(NEW)	62.15	2023	50.23 
2.09	Life expectancy at birth	12	(-1)	77.95	2023	60.99 
2.10	Uneven economic development	24	(0)	6.20	2024	31.48 
2.11	Universal Health Coverage Index	09	(+2)	85	2023	88.33 
2.12	Equal distribution of resources index	22	(NEW)	0.30	2025	22.48 

Environmental pillar

The Environmental pillar measures the extent to which an economy's trade supports sustainable resources. The factors include measurements of non-renewable natural resources in trade and the management of externalities that arise from economic growth and participation in the global trading system.

While an economy's capacity to participate in the global trading system is dependent on economic development, achieving sustainable trade requires prudent stewardship of natural resources and limiting externalities in an economy's economic calculus to promote its overall environmental capital. The indicators chosen in this section measure an economy's environmental capital and include indicators for air and water pollution. In terms of future impact, we measure national environmental standards, carbon emissions, and share of natural resources in exports.

Indicators

3 Environmental Pillar		Rank	Rank +/-	Value	Year	Score and 30 country average
3.01	Air pollution, PM2.5 micrograms per cubic metre	25	(+2)	32.00	2025	59.31
3.02	Deforestation, Index	20	(+1)	0.0035	2024	18.10
3.03	% of wastewater treated	14	(0)	64.03	2024	61.20
3.04	Energy intensity (Energy use (kg of oil equivalent) per \$1,000 GDP)	26	(-6)	125.66	2023	8.80
3.05	Ecological footprint	15	(+1)	3.76	2025	52.06
3.06	Renewable energy, %	18	(+1)	15.20	2021	24.17
3.07	Environmental standards in trade, count	01	(+8)	-	-	100.00
3.07.01	Convention: Hazardous Wastes	01	(0)	2	2025	100.00
3.07.02	Convention: Prevention of Marine Pollution	01	(0)	2	2025	100.00
3.07.03	Convention: Protection of the Ozone Layer (Vienna)	01	(0)	2	2025	100.00
3.07.04	Convention on Climate Change (Kyoto)	01	(0)	2	2025	100.00
3.07.05	The International Timber Agreement	01	(0)	2	2025	100.00
3.07.06	Convention: International Trade in Endangered Species	01	(0)	2	2025	100.00
3.07.07	Convention: Prior Informed Consent - Hazardous Chemicals (Rotterdam)	01	(+24)	2	2025	100.00
3.08	Transfer emissions, million tonnes carbon	28	(0)	358.89	2023	0.00
3.09	Share of natural resources in trade, %	10	(-6)	12.62	2025	85.13
3.10	Carbon	09	(-2)	-	-	81.55
3.10.1	Carbon pricing	01	(0)	2	2025	100.00
3.10.2	CO2 emissions per capita	22	(0)	9.13	2024	56.30

About us

Global trade has helped lift hundreds of millions of people around the world out of poverty. It is a powerful driver of economic growth and job creation. Yet its benefits are not self-sustaining. Without responsible stewardship, trade can widen income inequalities, disrupt labor markets, and impose significant environmental costs. Sustainable trade means striking a durable balance by expanding the economic opportunities that open markets generate while ensuring those gains are broadly shared and maintained. This requires sound public policy, responsible business leadership, and evidence-based frameworks to guide decision-making.

The Hinrich Foundation and the IMD World Competitiveness Center have combined their expertise to build the Hinrich-IMD Sustainable Trade Index, a framework for policy makers, business executives, and civil society leaders to understand and advance sustainable global trade.

hinrich foundation
advancing sustainable global trade

The Hinrich Foundation is an independent Asia-based philanthropic organization dedicated to advancing mutually beneficial and sustainable global trade.

We believe that mutually beneficial and sustainable global trade is a powerful force for shared prosperity, technological progress, sustainability and peaceful international cooperation. Our work is grounded in rigorous fact-based research and the development of innovative trade education programs.

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IMD / World Competitiveness
Center

IMD is an independent academic institution with close ties to business and a strong focus on impact. Challenging what is and inspiring what could be, it develops leaders who transform organizations for a more prosperous, sustainable, and inclusive world. Through its Executive Education, MBA, Executive MBA, and advisory work IMD helps leaders and policymakers navigate complexity and change.

The IMD World Competitiveness Center is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge on world competitiveness and offers benchmarking services for countries and companies using the latest data. The Center has pioneered research on how nations and enterprises compete to lay the foundations for future prosperity.

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