

NI Detergents trade information

Size of UK market (*Defra input*)

The UK Cleaning Products Industry Association (UKCPI) estimates that the UK cleaning and hygiene product manufacturing sector generates over £4.5 billion in sales annually and directly employs over 10,000 people – many in SMEs¹.

Table 1: The UK market:

Retail Sector	Retail sales (%)
Fabric Washing	45
Dish Cleaning	15
Hard Surface Cleaners	16
Maintenance Products	15
Bleaches	3
Toilet Soaps (liquid & solid)	6

Indicative size of NI market (*Defra input*)

The size of the NI market is not currently known. However, NI's population is around 2.7% of the UK's, with a Gross Disposable Household Income that is 2.3% of the UK's, demonstrating the comparative size of the NI market.

Detergents trade between NI and GB (*Defra input*)

No statistics are available for flow of trade between NI and GB, as this is not currently recorded in a disclosable format. It is anticipated that forthcoming Defra engagement with local stakeholders will help to strengthen the evidence base.

Available data for EU and non-EU detergents/surfactants trade for NI and GB (*Defra input*)

The statistics available for detergents and surfactants indicate that NI's recorded international trade flows are very small relative to those of GB. For the period 2022–2025 (shown in Table 2), NI accounted for less than 1% of UK detergent trade with both EU and non EU markets. This reflects only international trade recorded at ports and airports and does not capture NI's significant land border movements with Ireland, as HMRC provides only port level data for trade and does not break down goods that move directly across the border to ROI. This therefore does not indicate the overall size of the NI detergents and surfactants sector but remains consistent with our

¹ <https://www.ukcpi.org/about-us-documents/>

understanding that only a limited number of NI based producers trade these goods.

Table 2: Average trade 2022-2025, £m

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Detergents, Surfactants and related cleaning agents	GB	NI Ports/Airports	NI Ports/Airport trade as a % of UK
EU imports	752.4	0.0	0.003%
EU Exports	1344.3	0.0	0.000%
Non EU imports	341.5	0.4	0.104%
Non EU Exports	115.3	0.6	0.512%

NI imports and exports of soap / Organic surface-active agents for Ireland, EU & world (GB only data not available) (DAERA input)

DAERA requested Northern Ireland's trade in goods statistics relating to detergents from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). Under the Windsor Framework, the UK is required to collect and submit trade data on goods moving in and out of Northern Ireland to the Statistical Office of the European Commission (Eurostat).

The table below shows Northern Ireland's imports and exports for the two key identified categories related to detergents. All figures are reported in Euros, sourced by NISRA from Eurostat, which publishes HMRC's data. The data in Table 4 indicates that Northern Ireland's primary trade market is with Ireland, followed by the EU, and then a relatively small rest of world market.

Table 3: NI imports and exports of soap / Organic surface-active agents for Ireland, EU & world (GB only data not available)

Product label	Partner	Flow	2021	2022	2023	2024
Soap (SIC code 3401)	Ireland	Import	311,818	892,693	887,160	860,639
		Export	10,127,425	4,878,647	4,856,622	5,029,170
	European Union (including Ireland)	Import	1,656,969	2,752,733	2,568,504	2,398,546
		Export	10,360,935	4,916,153	5,061,926	5,309,712
	World	Import	1,933,011	2,981,828	2,789,623	2,566,792
		Export	10,575,710	4,976,705	5,095,058	5,333,295
Organic surface-active agents (excl. soap) (SIC code 3402)	Ireland	Import	2,470,845	7,758,172	12,026,866	11,940,260
		Export	13,657,184	17,073,587	17,068,510	15,830,400
	European Union (including Ireland)	Import	6,082,599	13,550,809	16,520,978	16,832,435
		Export	13,706,185	18,042,906	17,795,257	18,441,634
	World	Import	6,557,797	14,079,987	16,950,973	17,271,187
		Export	13,907,240	18,362,483	18,457,087	18,771,734