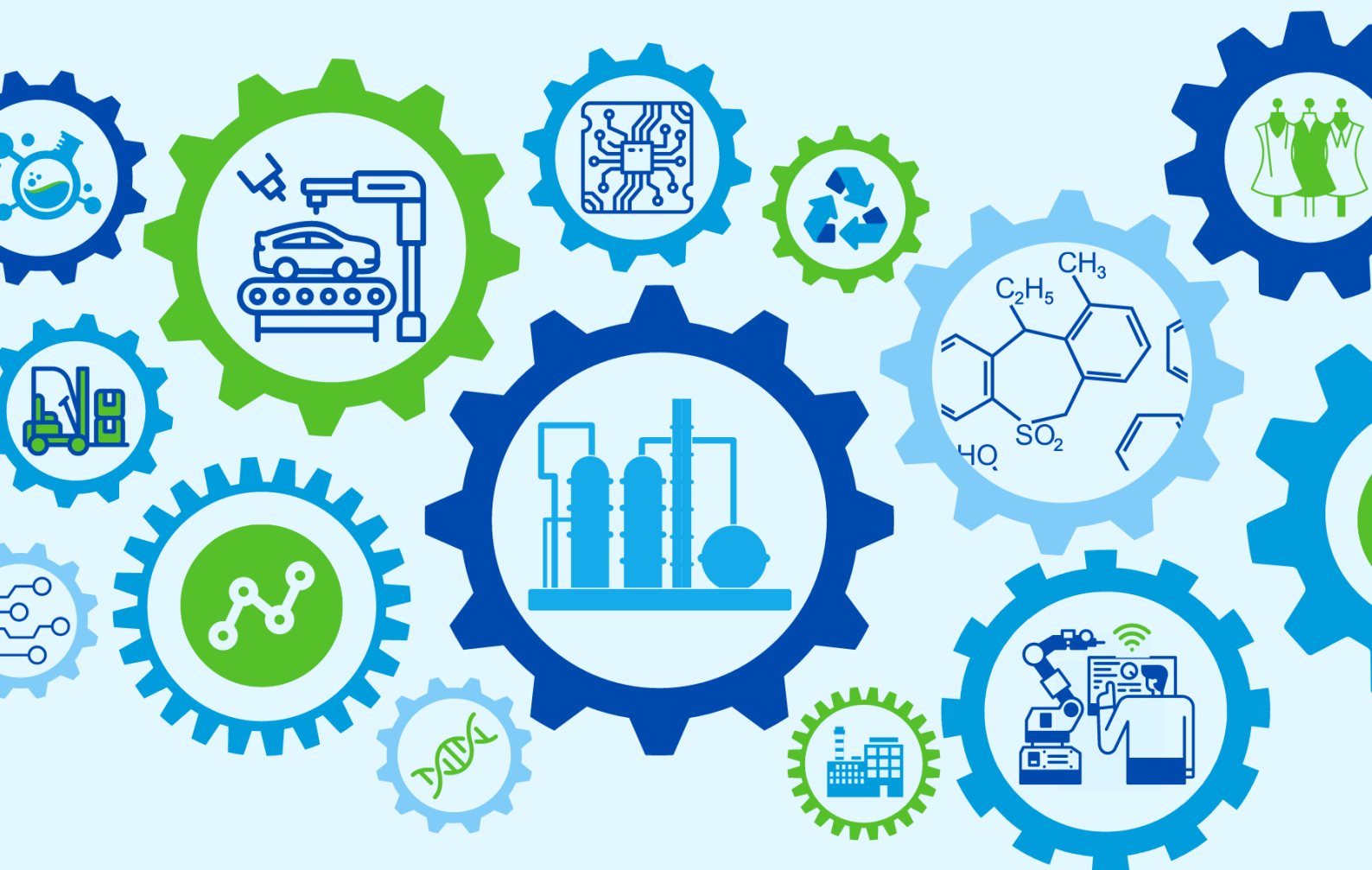




UNITED NATIONS
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION



Quarterly Report, Q1 2026

Manufacturing Production and Trade

Global manufacturing remained robust amid external headwinds

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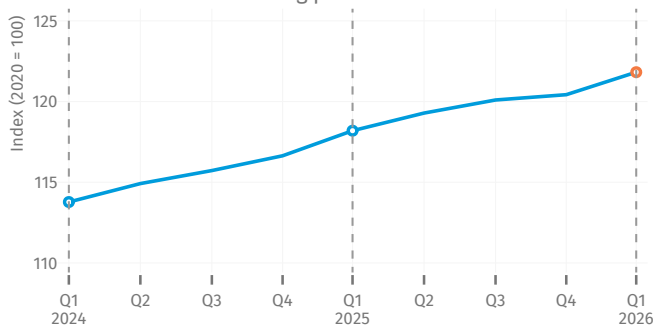
World Manufacturing

Highlights Q1 2026

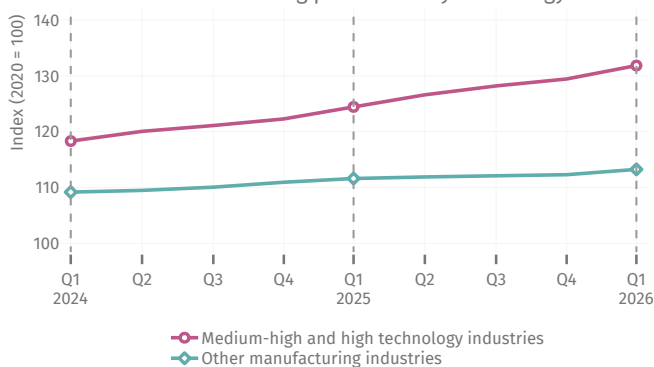


Manufacturing Production

Global index of manufacturing production



Global index of manufacturing production by technology level

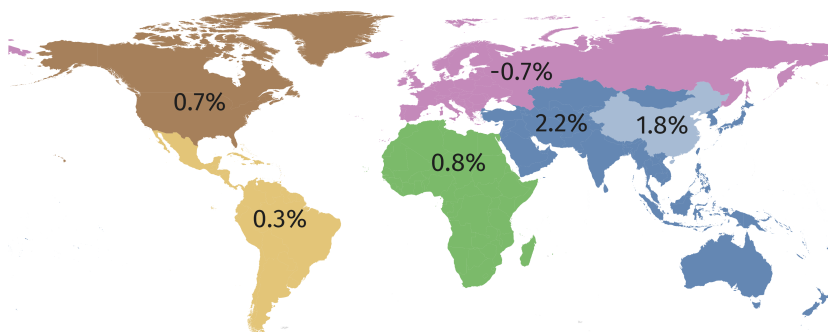


1.2%

quarterly growth of global manufacturing **production**, highlighting its resilience in the face of economic strain.

Medium-high and high technology industries maintained their lead over lower-tech sectors in Q1 2026, although the latter accelerated slightly compared with previous quarters.

Quarter-over-quarter growth rate of manufacturing production by region

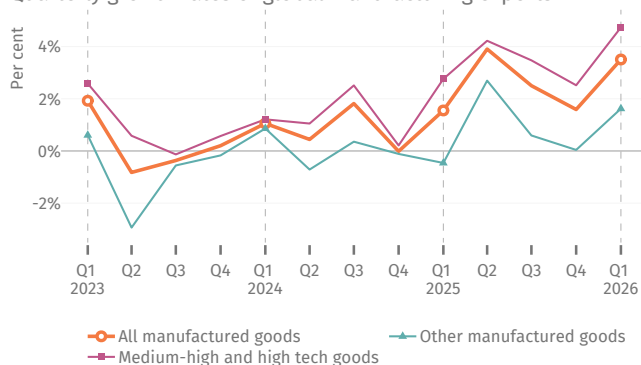


Asia and the Pacific recorded the strongest growth in manufacturing production, well ahead of **Africa** and **Northern America**, while **Europe** was the only region to experience a decline.



Manufacturing Trade

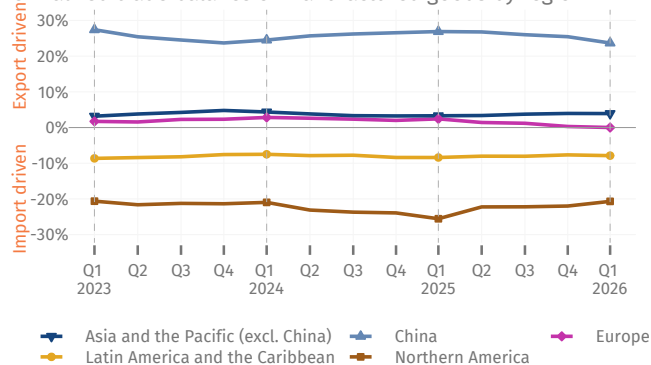
Quarterly growth rates of global manufacturing exports



3.5%

quarter-on-quarter growth rate in manufacturing **exports**, showing strong momentum despite geopolitical tensions.

Normalized trade balance of manufactured goods by region



In Q1 2026, **Europe's** manufacturing trade position returned to balance, while **China** and **Northern America** moderately narrowed their respective trade surplus and deficit.

World Manufacturing Production

1

1.1 Global and regional manufacturing trends

In the first quarter of 2026, global manufacturing output grew by 1.2 per cent compared with the previous quarter, following a modest increase of 0.27 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2025. This signals a pickup in manufacturing activity after a rather subdued growth throughout 2025 (Figure 1.1). On a year-over-year basis, global manufacturing expanded considerably by 3.1 per cent.

The factors that shaped 2025 persisted into early 2026, with heightened geopolitical tensions, particularly in the Middle East, adding to global uncertainty and supply chain disruptions. Tariff escalations and inflationary pressures also continued to weigh on economic activity. Despite these headwinds, global manufacturing activity remained resilient, sustaining positive quarterly growth since early 2023.

Over the longer term, labour shortages, climate-related disruptions, and uncertainty surrounding artificial intelligence and other technological developments, continue to pose challenges across industries. Addressing these interconnected issues will require coordinated international action.

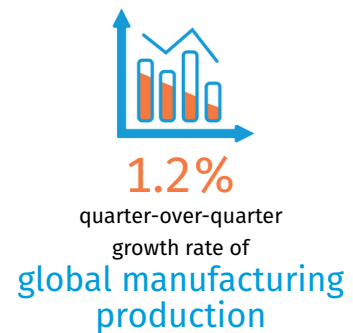


Figure 1.1 | Index of global manufacturing production

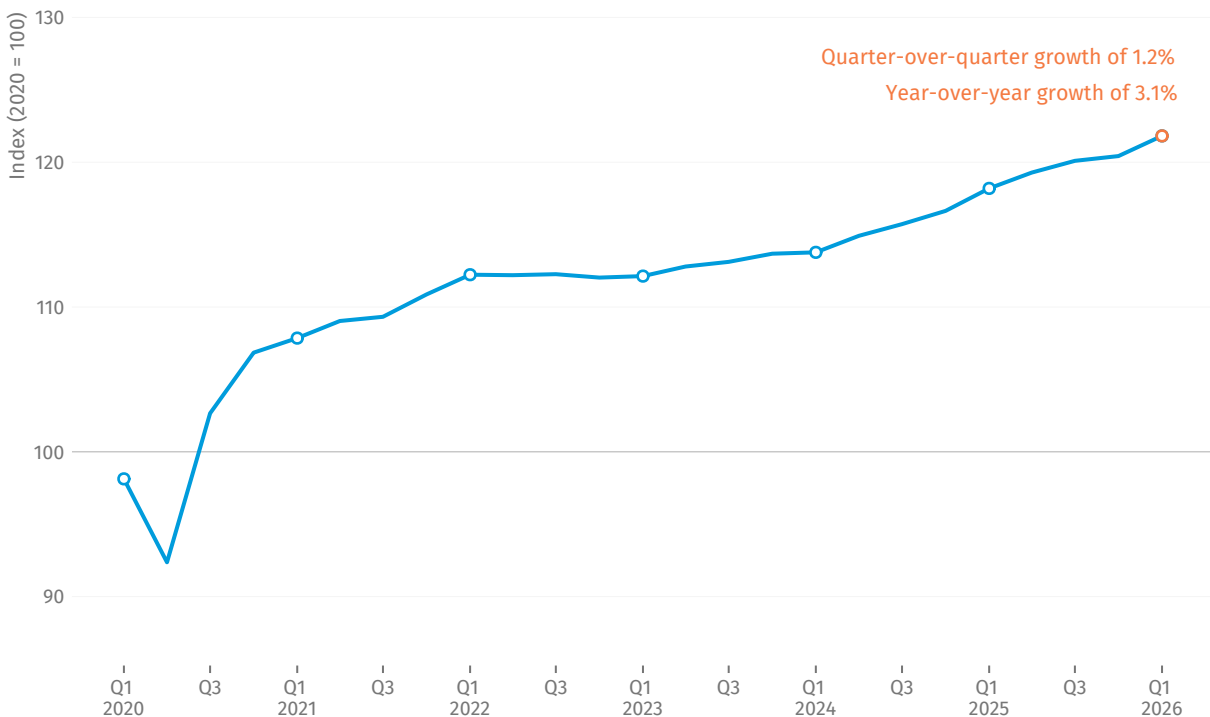
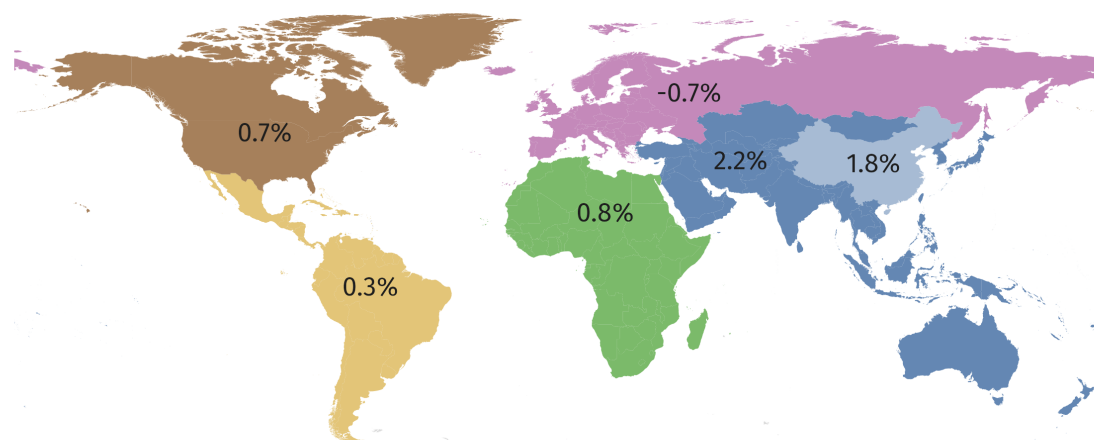


Figure 1.2 | Quarter-over-quarter growth rate of manufacturing output by region, Q1 2026

Global manufacturing activity showed mixed regional performance in the first quarter of 2026 (Figure 1.2). Asia and the Pacific recorded the strongest growth, with manufacturing output increasing by 1.8 per cent in China and by 2.2 per cent in the rest of the region. Limited data indicate that Africa's output expanded by 0.81 per cent, extending a steady expansion trend that began in early 2024. Northern America grew by 0.74 per cent in quarterly comparison, recovering from a weak manufacturing performance in the fourth quarter of 2025. Latin America and the Caribbean posted more modest growth of 0.25 per cent, while Europe was the only region to record a decline, with output falling by 0.72 per cent. On a year-over-year basis, Africa and Asia and the Pacific also reported the strongest cumulative growth over the previous four quarters (see Annex Table A.1).

Figure 1.3 provides an overview of recent manufacturing trends across major regions. Asia and the Pacific continued its predominantly positive, though volatile, trajectory, supported by strong performance among key producers. Manufacturing output extended quarterly by 2.5 per cent in India, 1.2 per cent in Indonesia, 2.5 per cent in Japan, 3.0 per cent in the Republic of Korea, and 6.5 per cent in Taiwan Province of China. Singapore and Qatar were among few economies from this region that recorded declines. China's manufacturing sector expanded by 1.8 per cent quarter-on-quarter and 5.6 per cent year-on-year.

Limited data from Africa indicate stable manufacturing growth in the first quarter of 2026, although country-level performance varied considerably. Manufacturing activity increased markedly in Angola, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, and the United Republic of Tanzania, while it declined in Egypt, Morocco, and South Africa.



Asia and the Pacific
maintained strong manufacturing
dynamism
in Q1 2026

Top 10 manufacturers and their quarter-over-quarter growth rate in Q1 2026

1. China (1.8%)
2. United States (0.8%)
3. Japan (2.5%)
4. Germany (-1.0%)
5. Republic of Korea (3.0%)
6. India (2.5%)
7. China, Taiwan Province (6.5%)
8. Italy (0.0%)
9. France (0.1%)
10. Mexico (-0.7%)

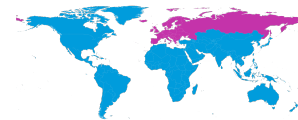
Northern America's manufacturing output gained moderately in the first quarter of 2026, following a decline of 1.0 per cent in the previous quarter. The regional result was largely driven by the United States of America, where output increased by 0.80 per cent, while Canada reported a slight contraction of 0.27 per cent.

Manufacturing output in Latin America and the Caribbean grew by 0.25 per cent in the first quarter of 2026, continuing the region's subdued growth trend since late 2023. However, output remained 0.41 per cent below its level of a year earlier. Performance among the region's two largest manufacturers diverged: Mexico recorded a decline of 0.70 per cent, while Brazil expanded by 1.5 per cent compared with the previous quarter, reversing the pattern observed in the fourth quarter of 2025. Elsewhere in the region, manufacturing output stagnated in Argentina, increased in Colombia and Peru, and declined significantly in Chile and Costa Rica.

Europe's manufacturing sector has exhibited considerable volatility in recent quarters. Following a surge in early 2025, production largely stagnated, resulting in a significant quarter-on-quarter decline of 0.72 per cent in the first quarter of 2026. Compared with a year earlier, manufacturing output was 1.2 per cent lower. The quarterly outcome varied across the region. Germany (-0.97 per cent), Ireland (-6.9 per cent), and the Russian Federation (-0.37 per cent) experienced declines, while France (0.10 per cent), Poland (0.88 per cent) and the United Kingdom (0.74 per cent) registered modest to solid growth.

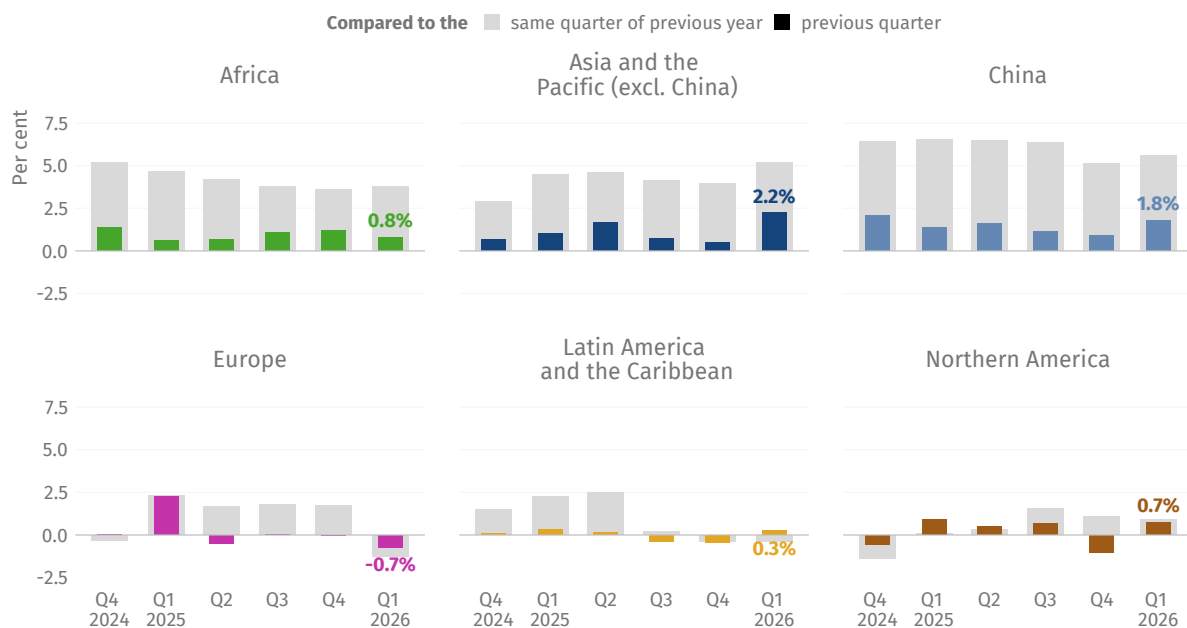


In Q1 2026,
Africa's
manufacturing production
maintained
positive momentum



Europe
posted
negative growth
in Q1 2026, following
a period of stagnation

Figure 1.3 | Growth rates of manufacturing output by region



1.2 Highlights by country groups

1.2.1 Industrial economies

In the first quarter of 2026, manufacturing activity in industrial economies regained momentum following a gradual slowdown throughout 2025, recording quarterly growth of 1.1 per cent. On an annual basis, output growth remained just below 3 per cent.

A closer examination reveals divergent performance across individual economies. Denmark, Taiwan Province of China, and Viet Nam posted quarterly increases of more than 3 per cent compared with the fourth quarter of 2025, while Belarus, Singapore, South Africa, and Sweden experienced significant declines in manufacturing output.

Disaggregated data also highlight the volatility of manufacturing performance among high-income industrial economies in recent quarters, resulting in an expansion by 0.64 per cent in the first quarter of 2026 (Figure 1.4). Within the group, output in Japan, New Zealand, and Uruguay grew strongly, whereas Chile, Costa Rica, and Switzerland recorded marked contractions in manufacturing output.



In 2025,
industrial economies
accounted for
87.7% of global
manufacturing value added

Figure 1.4 | Growth rates of manufacturing production of industrial economies

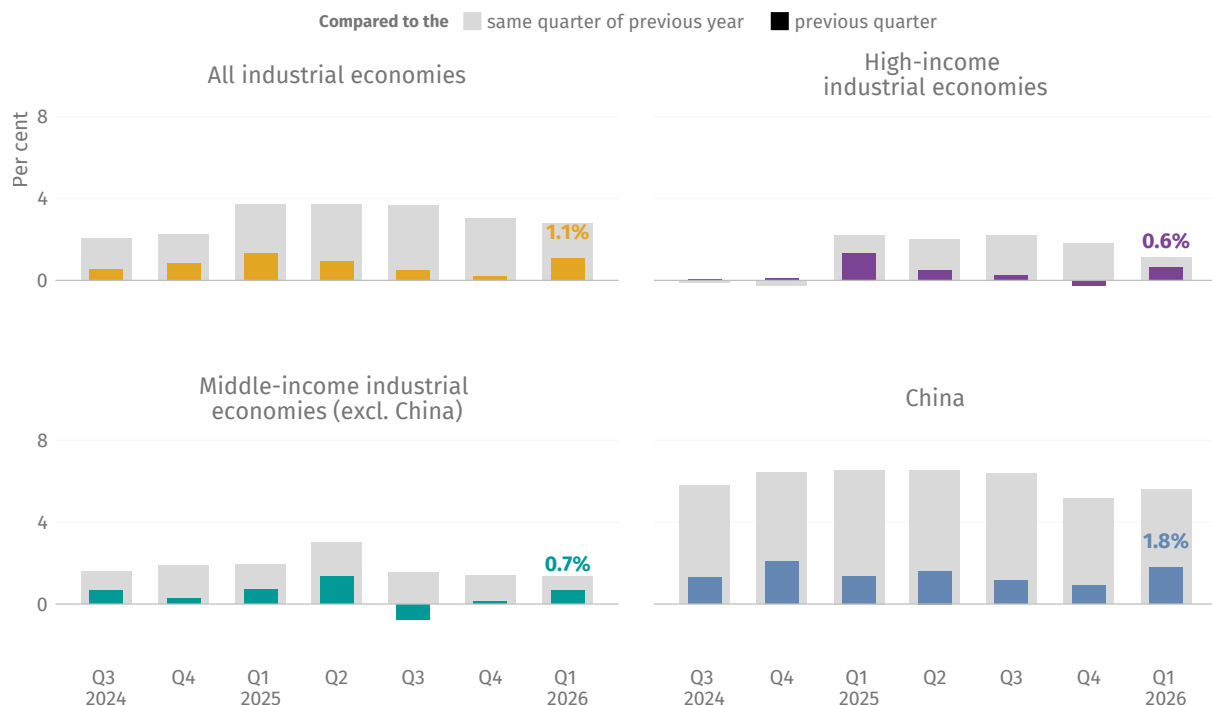
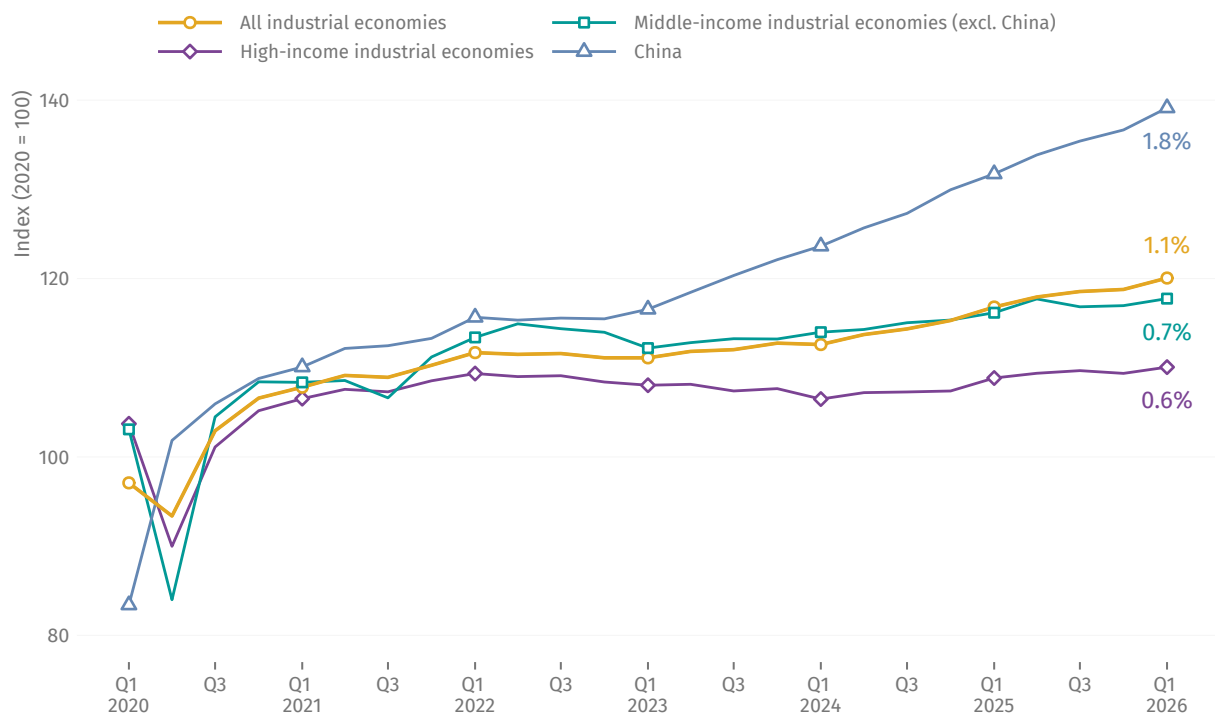


Figure 1.5 | Index of manufacturing production of industrial economies

Note: The labels indicate the most recent quarter-on-quarter growth rate of Q1 2026.

China, classified as a middle-income industrial economy, continued to record strong growth in the first quarter of 2026, with manufacturing output increasing by 1.8 per cent. Given China's substantial share of total output within this group, it is presented separately for analytical clarity. Excluding China, manufacturing output in middle-income industrial economies expanded by 0.67 per cent, following a period of uneven growth. Performance across this group remained mixed. Brazil, Serbia, and Thailand posted solid gains, while Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mexico, and Türkiye recorded stagnant to declining manufacturing output.

Figure 1.5 illustrates the manufacturing trajectories of different groups of industrial economies over time. Following the pandemic-related disruptions of 2020, all groups experienced a period of recovery and sustained growth. Since early 2023, China has regained momentum and further strengthened its lead over other groups. In contrast, high-income industrial economies have achieved only modest growth after recovering from the pandemic-induced downturn.



In Q1 2026, **China's** manufacturing sector expanded by **1.8%** compared to Q4 2025

1.2.2 Industrializing economies

Although this group comprises nearly 70 per cent of all economies, it accounts for a relatively modest share of global manufacturing value added, contributing only 12.3 per cent in 2025. Despite their diversity, economies across all income levels within this group could benefit substantially from strengthening their manufacturing sectors and transitioning toward more productive, manufacturing-driven economic structures. In recent years, the group's manufacturing performance has steadily improved. In the first quarter of 2026, manufacturing output increased by 1.7 per cent quarter-on-quarter and 5.2 per cent year-on-year, outperforming industrial economies on both measures.

A closer analysis by subgroups is shown in Figure 1.6. In the first quarter of 2026, high-income industrializing economies registered another quarterly decline in output, contracting by 0.22 per cent, although they maintained solid year-on-year growth of 3.3 per cent. At the same time, manufacturing output in middle-income industrializing economies, the largest UNIDO subgroup by number of countries, expanded by 2.0 per cent in the first quarter of 2026, continuing a pattern of strong, albeit volatile, growth observed in recent quarters. Within this group, Angola, India, Pakistan, and the Philippines recorded quarterly increases exceeding 2 per cent. In contrast, Armenia, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, and the Maldives experienced significant declines in manufacturing output.

Low-income economies are increasingly constrained by limited manufacturing data availability and are therefore excluded from this analysis.

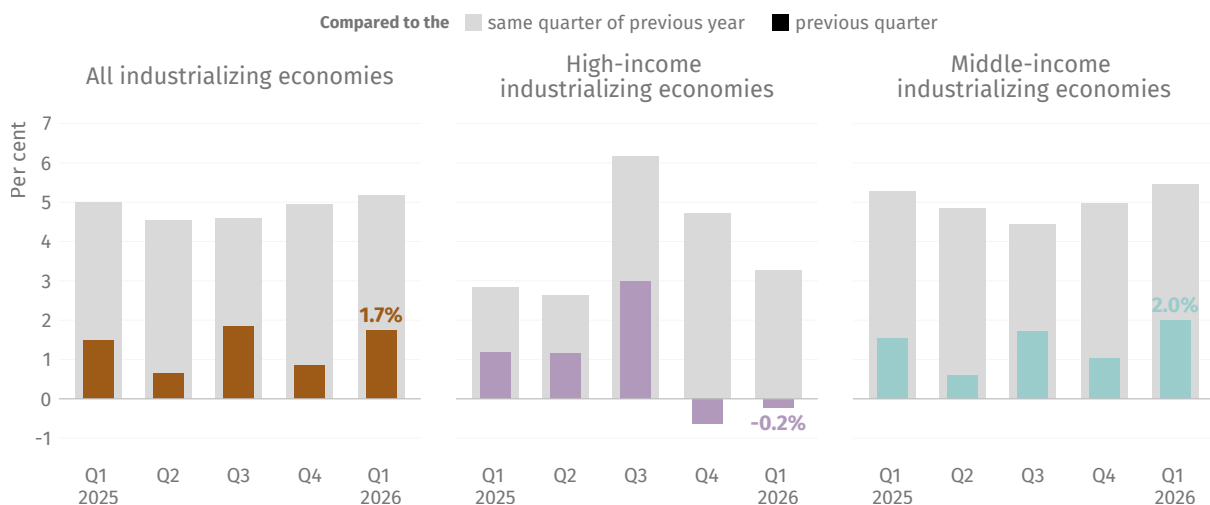


In Q1 2026,
industrializing
economies recorded
robust growth
of **1.7%**

Quarter-over-quarter output growth rates of selected middle-income industrializing economies in Q1 2026

- India (2.5%)
- Philippines (2.4%)
- Indonesia (1.2%)
- Bangladesh (1.2%)
- Argentina (0.0%)
- Egypt (-0.7%)

Figure 1.6 | Growth rates of manufacturing production of industrializing economies



1.2.3 Emerging industrial economies

Emerging industrial economies constitute a distinct group of 10 low- and middle-income countries whose manufacturing sectors have demonstrated remarkable dynamism in recent years. The group includes both established industrial and industrializing economies that, despite being at earlier stages of industrial development, have achieved strong and resilient manufacturing growth in recent years.

Manufacturing output in this group has consistently outperformed global manufacturing, as well as that of industrial and industrializing economies, and has maintained robust quarter-over-quarter growth since mid-2023. In the first quarter of 2026, output expanded by 1.9 per cent compared with the previous quarter, surpassing the global growth rate of 1.2 per cent and the rates recorded by industrial economies (1.1 per cent) and industrializing economies (1.7 per cent) (Figure 1.7). On an annual basis, manufacturing output increased by 5.6 per cent compared with the first quarter of 2025, again markedly outperforming both industrial and industrializing economies.

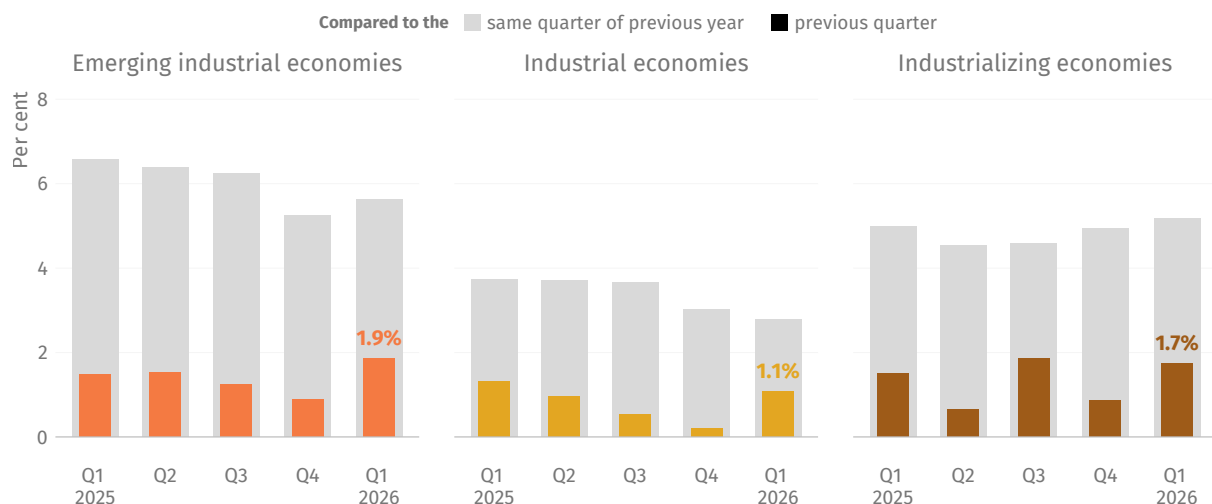
At the country level, most economies with available data reported moderate to strong manufacturing growth in the first quarter of 2026. Viet Nam led the group with quarter-on-quarter growth of 3.4 per cent, followed by India (2.5 per cent) and China (1.8 per cent). Other economies, including Bangladesh, Indonesia, and the United Republic of Tanzania, also recorded solid growth of at least 0.8 per cent.

Emerging industrial economies are characterized by **sustained** spells of substantial manufacturing growth

Quarter-over-quarter output growth rates of selected emerging industrial economies in Q1 2026

- Viet Nam (3.4%)
- India (2.5%)
- China (1.8%)
- Indonesia (1.2%)
- Bangladesh (1.2%)

Figure 1.7 | Growth rates of manufacturing output in emerging industrial economies and other selected country groups



1.3 Findings by industry group

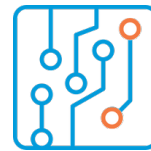
Global manufacturing sectors continue to exhibit diverging trends by technological intensity, with medium-high- and high-technology (MHT) industries maintaining strong growth. Since mid-2024, they have consistently recorded solid quarterly growth, culminating in a robust increase of 1.9 per cent in the first quarter of 2026 (Figure 1.8). By contrast, lower-technology sectors still lagged behind, despite recording output growth of 0.85 per cent quarter-on-quarter and 1.5 per cent year-on-year in the current quarter. Meanwhile, MHT industries further strengthened, posting year-on-year growth rates of more than 5 per cent in each of the past five quarters.

Figure 1.9 shows the latest manufacturing performance across industries. Most higher-technology sectors recorded quarterly output growth of at least 1 per cent. The main exceptions were pharmaceuticals, where output remained broadly unchanged, and machinery, which grew by only 0.48 per cent. Computers and electronics delivered the strongest performance, with output rising quarterly by 4.1 per cent and annually by more than 13 per cent. The surge may reflect increased AI-related investment, continued technological upgrading and inventory accumulation. Other transport equipment, including the manufacturing of ships, aircraft, and military vehicles, followed with annual growth of 8.6 per cent.



Higher-technology

industries continued to **drive** manufacturing growth



Output of **computers and electronics** surged by **4.1%** in Q1 2026

Figure 1.8 | Global index of manufacturing production, industries by technology level

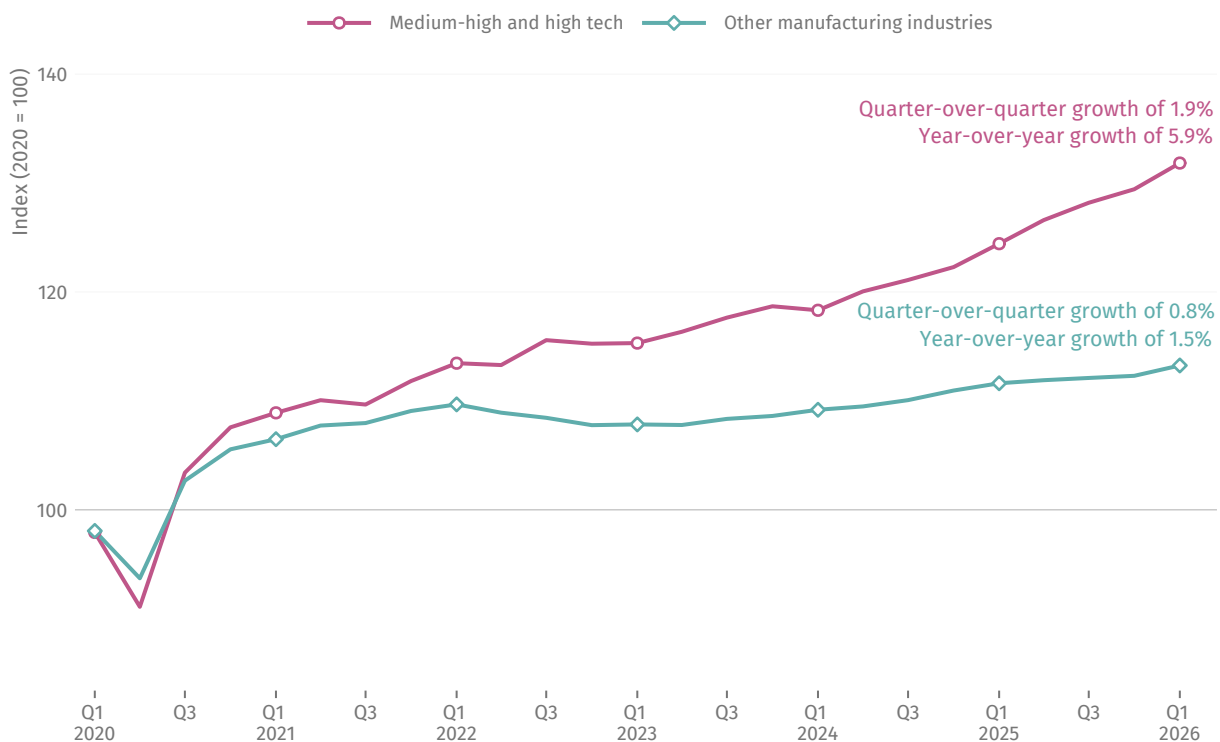
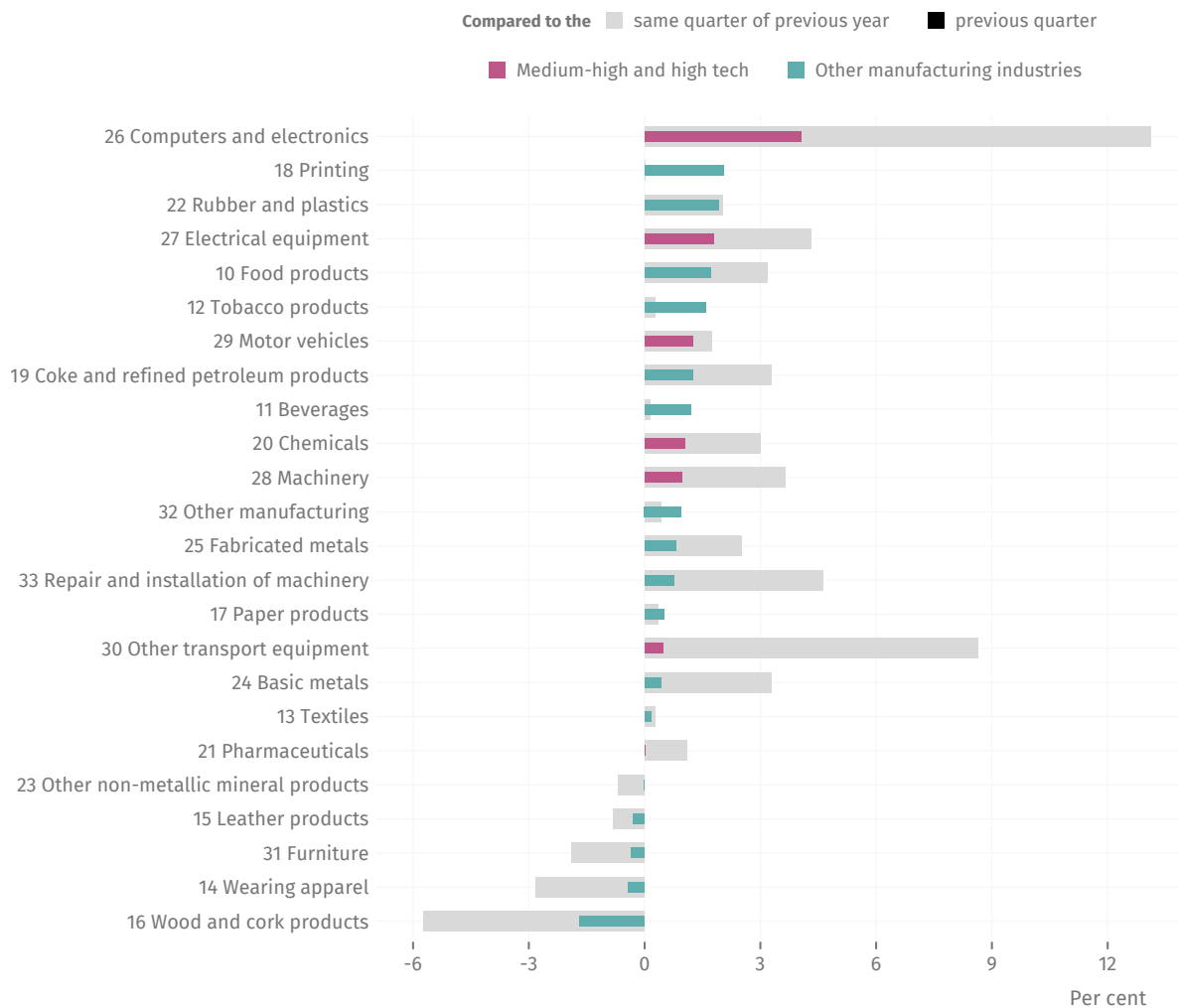


Figure 1.9 | Performance of manufacturing industries by technological intensity, Q1 2026 growth rates

In contrast, lower-technology industries showed rather mixed quarterly outcomes, with five industries recording declining output. Nevertheless, several sectors posted strong quarter-on-quarter and year-on-year growth. In particular, food, rubber and plastics, coke and refined petroleum products, and basic metals registered solid gains compared with both the fourth quarter of 2025 and the same quarter of the previous year.

Figure 1.10 presents manufacturing performance by industry across country groups. Both industrial and industrializing economies exhibited varying results, although most higher-technology industries achieved solid growth. Industrializing economies particularly excelled in pharmaceuticals, whereas industrial economies experienced a decline in output. Despite strong contractions in certain lower-technology industries, industrializing economies outperformed industrial economies with stronger growth across many sectors, especially in higher-technology industries.

Top 5 producers of computers and electronics and their quarter-over-quarter growth in Q1 2026

1. China (3.3%)
2. United States (2.1%)
3. China, Taiwan Province (12.5%)
4. Republic of Korea (10.3%)
5. Japan (2.0%)

Figure 1.10 | Performance of manufacturing industries by technological intensity and country groups, quarter-over-quarter growth rates, Q1 2026



Note: Industries are ordered according to world growth rate (see Figure 1.9)

World Mining and Utilities Production

2

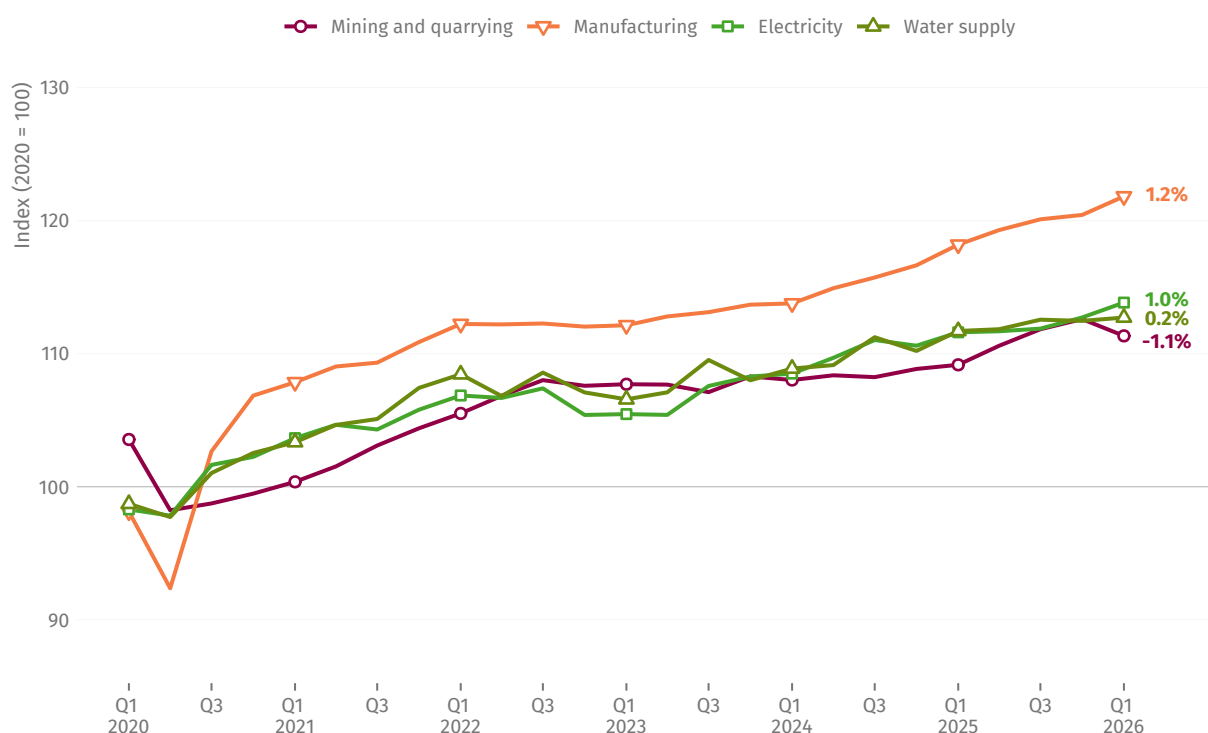
2.1 Global results

This report also examines global production trends in mining and utilities, based on industrial production indices for mining and quarrying (ISIC Rev. 4 section B), electricity and other utilities (ISIC section D), and water supply and related activities (ISIC section E). For simplicity, the terms mining, electricity, and water supply are used throughout this chapter to refer to these sectors.

Since 2020, mining and utilities sectors have followed broadly similar growth trajectories, while manufacturing has surged after experiencing a sharper pandemic-related downturn. In the first quarter of 2026, global mining production declined by 1.1 per cent, following a period of subdued growth since 2020 (see Figure 2.1). Global efforts to reduce the environmental impact of mining may contribute to greater uncertainty in the sector's outlook, while technological advances in energy, batteries, and related could boost demand for minerals and metals, potentially sustaining growth in mining production.



Figure 2.1 | Global indices of industrial production



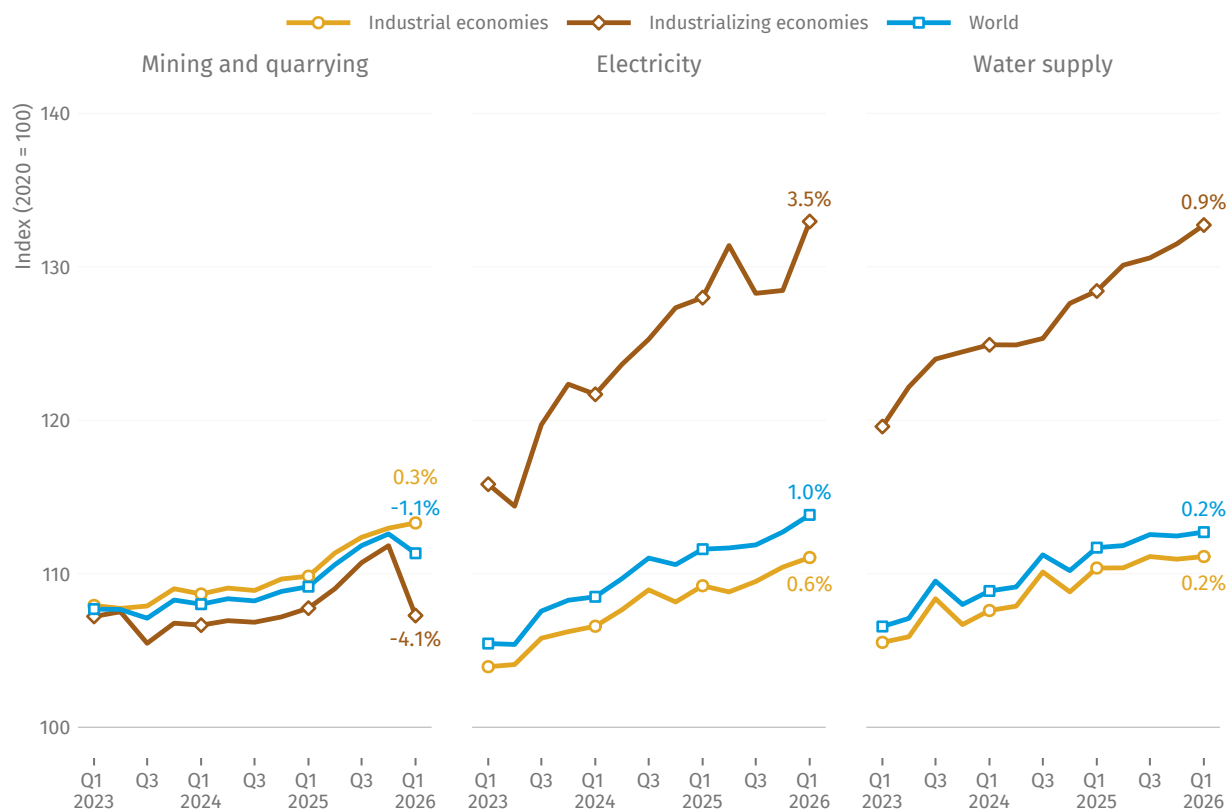
Production of electricity, on the other hand, recorded a strong growth of 1.0 per cent in the current quarter, and has also shown a notable improvement of 2.0 per cent over the past four quarters. Meanwhile, limited data on water supply and related activities indicate a lower quarter-over-quarter growth of only 0.22 per cent.

Figure 2.2 shows that industrializing economies continued to outperform industrial economies in both utilities sectors, reflecting rising demand, improving living standards, and a lower initial production base. Electricity production in industrializing economies increased by 3.5 per cent in the first quarter of 2026, rebounding from subdued growth in the preceding two quarters. By contrast, mining activity remained weak across both country groups. In particular, industrializing economies recorded a sharp quarterly contraction of 4.1 per cent in the first quarter of 2026, partly reflecting heightened geopolitical tensions in the Middle East at the end of February that affected mining production. Significant declines in mining output were indeed reported in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

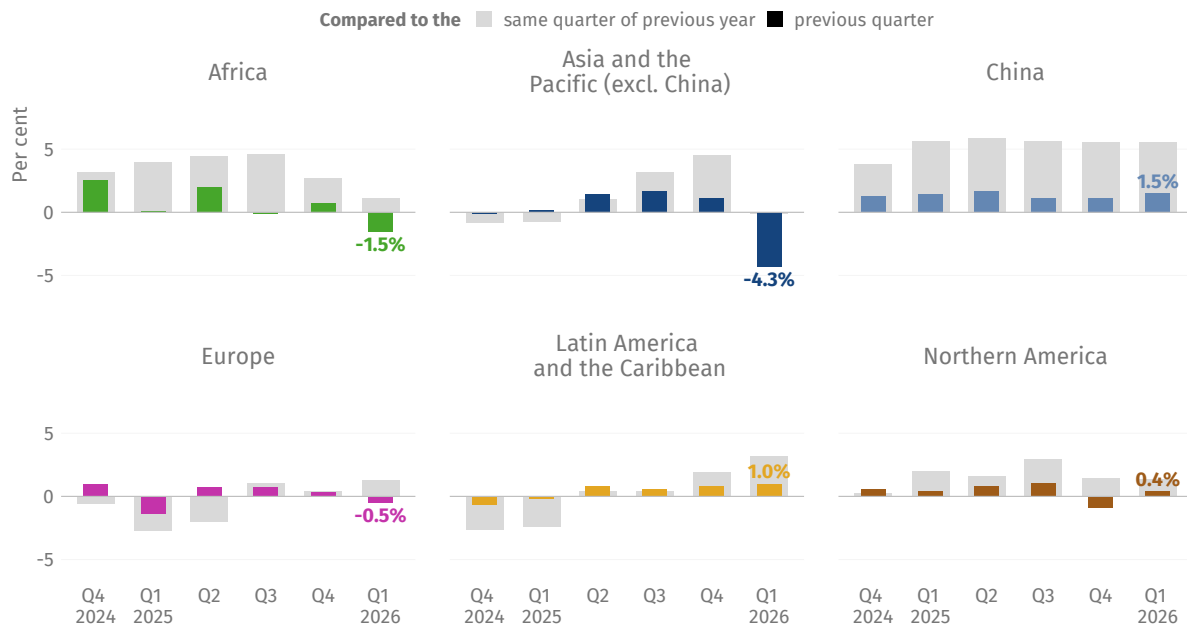


In Q1 2026,
industrializing
economies
continue to
drive growth in
the utilities sectors

Figure 2.2 | Indices of industrial production, by country group



Note: The labels indicate the most recent quarter-on-quarter growth rate of Q1 2026.

Figure 2.3 | Growth rates of mining and quarrying by region

2.2 Regional highlights in mining and utilities

At the regional level, Asia and the Pacific (excl. China) recorded the steepest quarterly decline in mining production, contracting by 4.3 per cent in the first quarter of 2026 (see Figure 2.3). Most economies in the region reported lower output, particularly Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, while Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Kyrgyzstan were among the few that registered growth. China maintained positive momentum, with mining production increasing by 1.5 per cent. Limited data for Africa indicate a 1.5 per cent output decline in mining and quarrying, with contractions in Angola, Nigeria, and the United Republic of Tanzania, while output increased in Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, and South Africa.

In Europe, mining production declined by 0.50 per cent in the first quarter of 2026 after several quarters of modest growth. Output fell in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom, but increased in Czechia, Norway, and Poland. Northern America recorded a modest increase of 0.39 per cent, with Canada and the United States of America posting similar growth rates. The strongest regional performance was observed in Latin America and the Caribbean, where mining production expanded by 1.0 per cent. Brazil and Mexico increased their outputs in quarterly comparison, while Chile and Honduras were among the few economies to register declines.

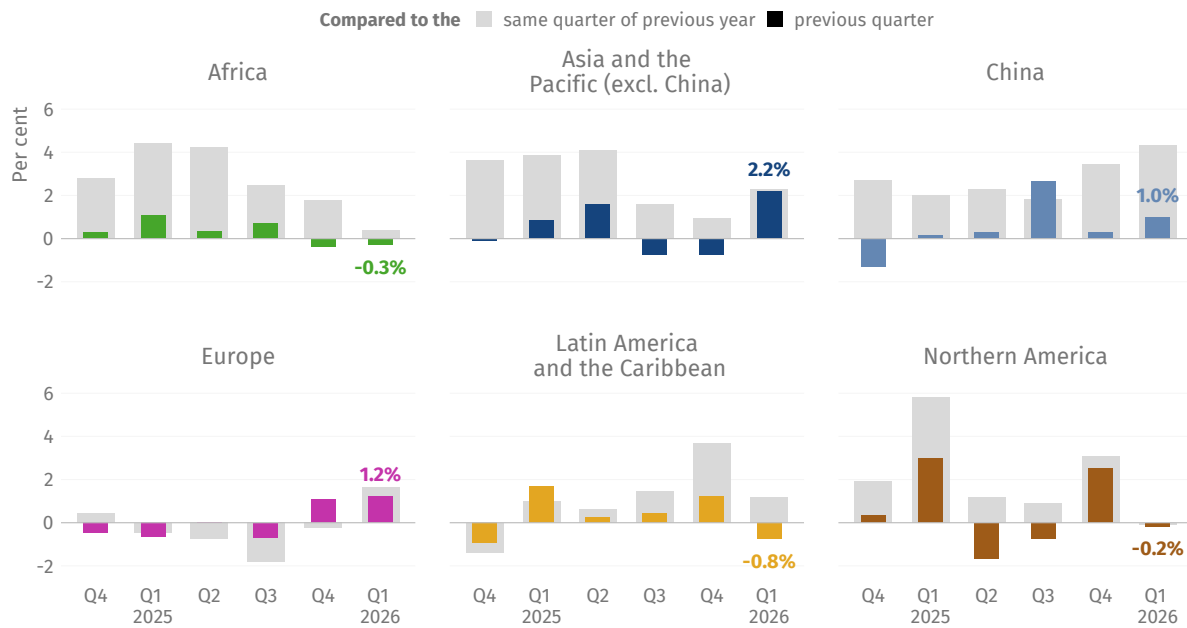
Figure 2.4 presents the disparate regional trends of electricity production. In the first quarter of 2026, Asia and the Pacific (excl. China) achieved a strong recovery, with output increasing by 2.2 per cent

Key contributors to the mining sector and their quarter-over-quarter growth rate in Q1 2026

1. China (1.5%)
2. United States (0.4%)
3. Australia (-1.4%)
4. Saudi Arabia (-7.3%)
5. Russian Federation (0.0%)

Key electricity producers and their quarter-over-quarter growth rate in Q1 2026

1. United States (-0.4%)
2. China (1.0%)
3. Japan (0.2%)
4. India (9.9%)
5. Germany (3.7%)

Figure 2.4 | Growth rates of electricity production by region

following two consecutive quarters of decline. Within this group, India reported a particularly strong increase of nearly 10 per cent, while Japan, Malaysia, and Türkiye also posted solid gains. In contrast, Australia, the Republic of Korea, and Saudi Arabia experienced declines in electricity production. China recorded comparatively moderate growth of 1.0 per cent.

Europe also recorded growth in electricity production of more than 1 per cent in the first quarter of 2026, although results varied across countries. Output in Germany, Italy, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom increased significantly, whereas it declined with varying magnitude in Belgium, France, and Spain. Northern America followed a volatile trajectory over recent quarters, with a modest decline of 0.17 per cent in the latest quarter. Limited data for Africa indicate a quarterly decrease of 0.30 per cent, driven by contractions in Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, and the United Republic of Tanzania, while Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal recorded rises. Latin America and the Caribbean registered the weakest regional performance, with electricity production declining by 0.76 per cent. Reduced output was recorded in Chile and Mexico, while Costa Rica and Peru reported increases.

Data availability for water supply and related activities remains limited and regional disaggregation cannot be supported.

Key water suppliers and their quarter-over-quarter growth rate in Q1 2026

1. Japan (0.2%)
2. China (1.0%)
3. United Kingdom (-0.5%)
4. Australia (-0.9%)
5. Canada (0.2%)

3.1 Global and regional manufacturing exports

In the first quarter of 2026, world manufacturing exports expanded strongly by 3.5 per cent compared to the previous quarter, while it increased by 12.0 per cent in annual comparison (Figure 3.1).

Despite heightened geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, which escalated at the end of February and led to the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz and attacks on key oil-refining and gas infrastructure in the region, the impact on global manufacturing trade in the first quarter of 2026 appears to have been limited. More recent data may reveal a more pronounced impact, which will be covered in future UNIDO reports.

In addition, global manufacturing trade continues to face multiple challenges, including persistent protectionist measures in major economies, which contribute to undermining stability and predictability. Together, these factors increased uncertainty surrounding the outlook for international trade. In addition, the depreciation of the United States dollar against the currencies of several major exporting economies since early 2025 has further influenced global trade dynamics in 2026.



Figure 3.1 | Growth rates of global manufacturing exports

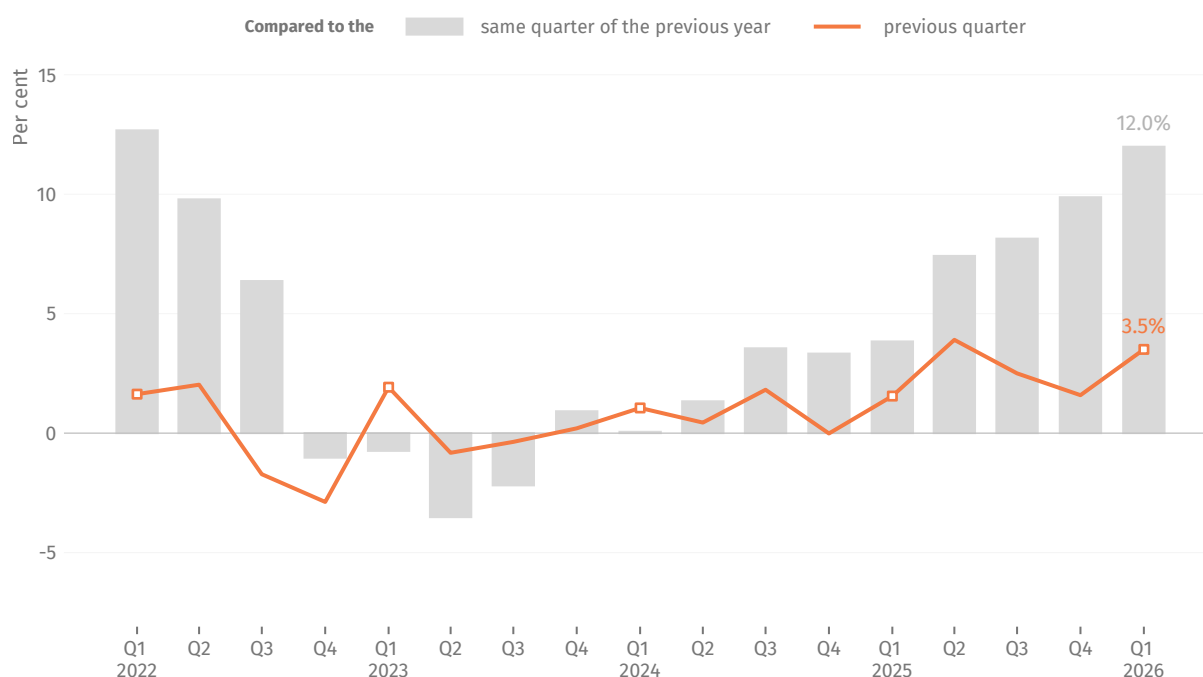
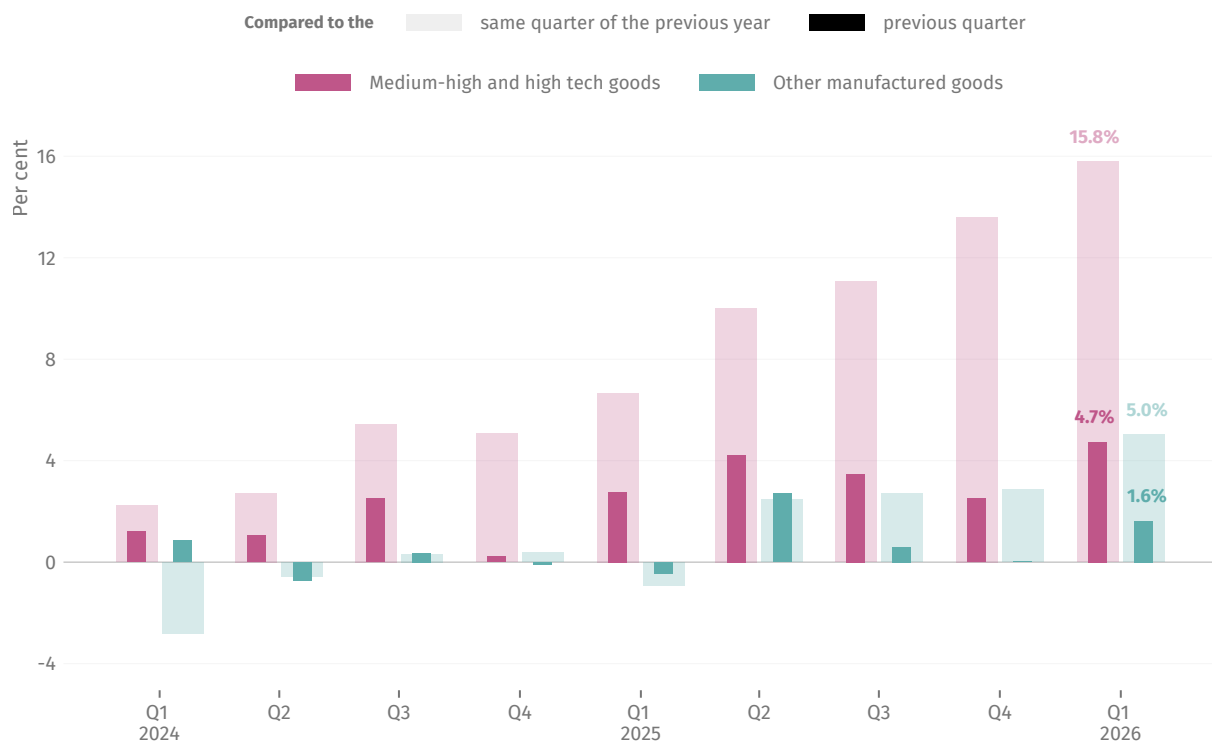


Figure 3.2 | Growth rates of global manufacturing exports by technological intensity

Higher-technology exports achieved a strong 4.7 per cent quarter-over-quarter expansion in the first quarter of 2026 (see Figure 3.2). Over the past two years, they have consistently outpaced other manufactured exports (1.6 per cent). On an annual basis, higher-tech exports grew by almost 16 per cent, while other manufacturing goods increased by 5.0 per cent.

Figure 3.3 presents the most recent quarterly manufacturing export performance by region. In the first quarter of 2026, Asia and the Pacific led export growth, with China's manufacturing exports rising by 4.5 per cent. The rest of the region grew by exceptional 7.1 per cent, driven mainly by Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Thailand. In contrast, Australia, Cambodia, and India recorded declines.

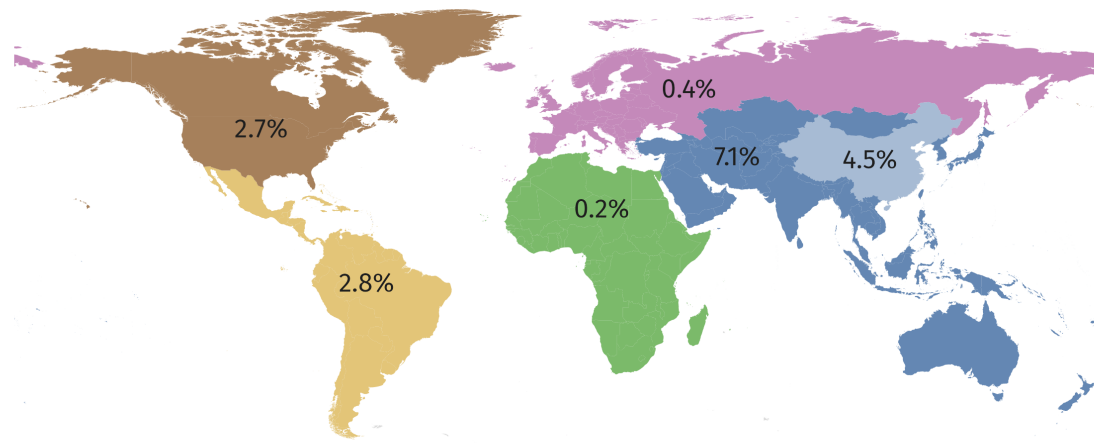
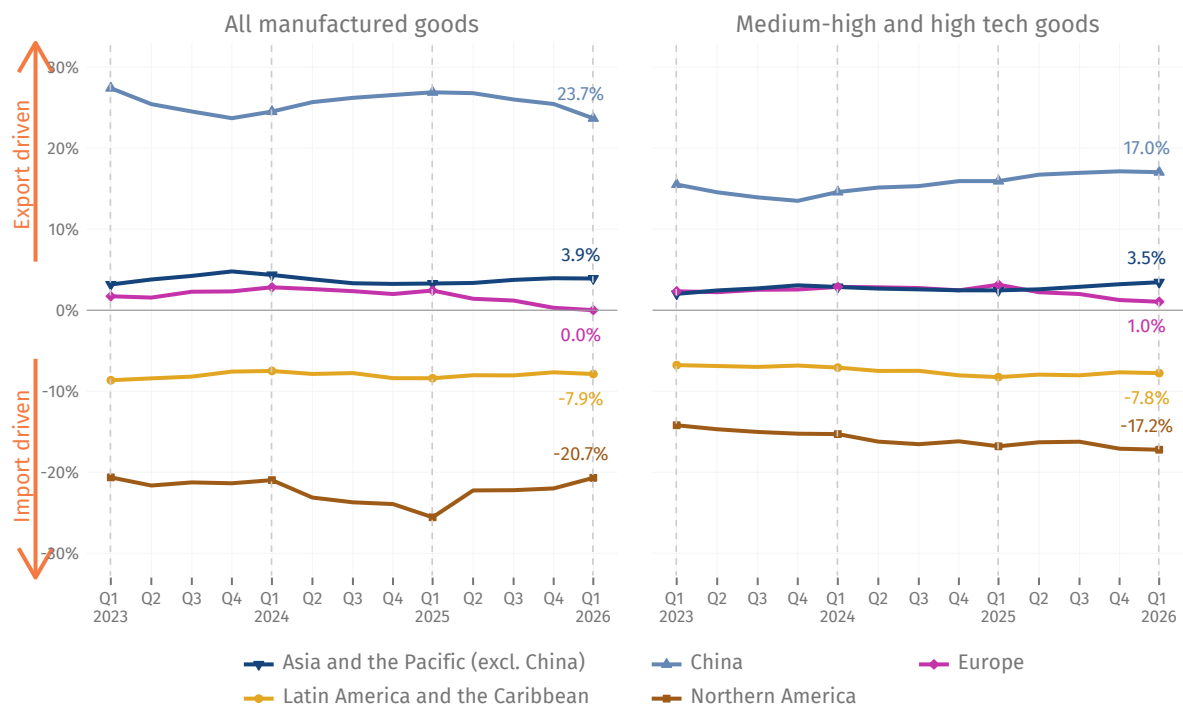
Latin America and the Caribbean expanded its manufacturing exports by 2.8 per cent in the current quarter, driven largely by robust increases in Argentina, Chile, and Mexico. Northern America posted a comparable growth rate of 2.7 per cent, supported primarily by the United States of America, where exports grew by 3.1 per cent, while Canada registered an increase of 0.90 per cent. By contrast, manufacturing exports in Europe increased only marginally, rising by 0.44 per cent. Although France, Italy, Sweden, and the United Kingdom reported gains, these were partly offset by declines in Germany, Ireland, and Switzerland. Limited data for Africa suggest modest quarterly growth of 0.18 per cent.

Manufacturing trade

includes trade in all commodities **except** primary agricultural, mineral, or energy commodities, non-monetary gold, electric current, and unallocated commodities



Manufacturing exports from
Asia and the Pacific
once again outpaced
all other regions
in Q1 2026

Figure 3.3 | Quarter-over-quarter growth rate of manufacturing exports by region, Q1 2026**Figure 3.4** | Normalized trade balance of manufactured goods

Note: The normalized trade balance of manufactured goods shows the manufacturing trade surplus or deficit as a proportion of total trade (the sum of exports and imports) to facilitate cross-regional comparisons.

The normalized manufacturing trade balance measures a region's surplus or deficit in manufactured goods as a share of total trade (exports plus imports), enabling comparison of regional trade performance. The left panel of Figure 3.4 shows marked regional disparities. China reduced its manufacturing trade surplus, even though manufacturing exports still exceeded imports by almost one quarter of total trade. Northern America's trade balance returned to the result of 2023, with a lower deficit position after a period with higher volatility over the past two years but is still reflecting strong import orientation. Meanwhile, Europe's trade surplus further narrowed, halting in the first quarter of 2026 at a balanced position, while other regions maintained relatively stable results.



In Q1 2026,
China and
Northern America
narrowed each of
their trade
balance positions

3.2 Results by technology groups

As already shown in Figure 3.2, medium and high technology exports have consistently outperformed other manufactured goods in recent periods. In Asia and the Pacific (excl. China), higher-technology exports surged by 9.2 per cent, driven primarily by Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, and Singapore (Figure 3.5). China also expanded strongly by 6.1 per cent. Latin America and the Caribbean continued to build on recent positive momentum, recording growth of 4.4 per cent in the first quarter of 2026, while Northern America and Europe posted more moderate quarterly increases of 1.3 per cent and 0.56 per cent, respectively, both remaining on a volatile trajectory with mixed performance among its exporters.

The right-hand panel of Figure 3.4, focusing specifically on medium and high technology goods, reveals a more balanced distribution of net trade positions. China and Northern America continued to display pronounced surplus and deficit positions, respectively, with Northern America's higher-tech trade deficit slightly widening. Notably, Europe's trade balance for higher-technology goods exceeded its overall manufacturing balance, offsetting a small deficit in lower-technology goods, even though it's still narrowing towards a balanced position.

Finally, Figure 3.6 compares the growth rates of global manufacturing production and exports. Exports generally exhibit greater volatility than production and tend to follow production trends with a lag. In recent quarters, however, production and export growth have moved in broadly similar directions, albeit with differing magnitudes. In quarterly comparison, manufacturing production rose by 1.2 per cent, while exports increased by 3.5 per cent. Growth was even stronger for higher-technology goods, with production rising by 1.9 per cent and exports by 4.7 per cent.

Top 5 higher-tech exporters and their quarter-on-quarter growth in Q1 2026

1. China (6.1%)
2. Germany (-0.8%)
3. United States (1.9%)
4. China, Hong Kong SAR (18.5%)
5. China, Taiwan Province (5.1%)



Manufacturing
exports and
production
continue to maintain
momentum
despite ongoing global
turbulence

Figure 3.5 | Growth rates of medium-high and high technology manufacturing exports, by region

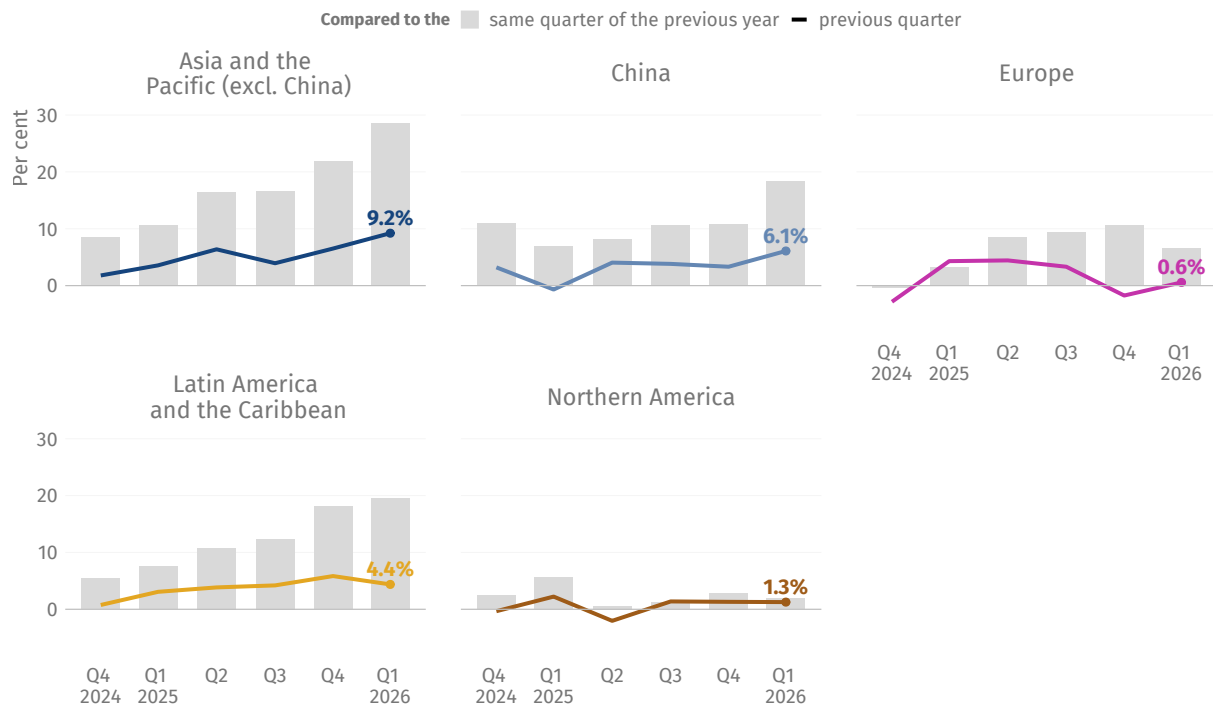
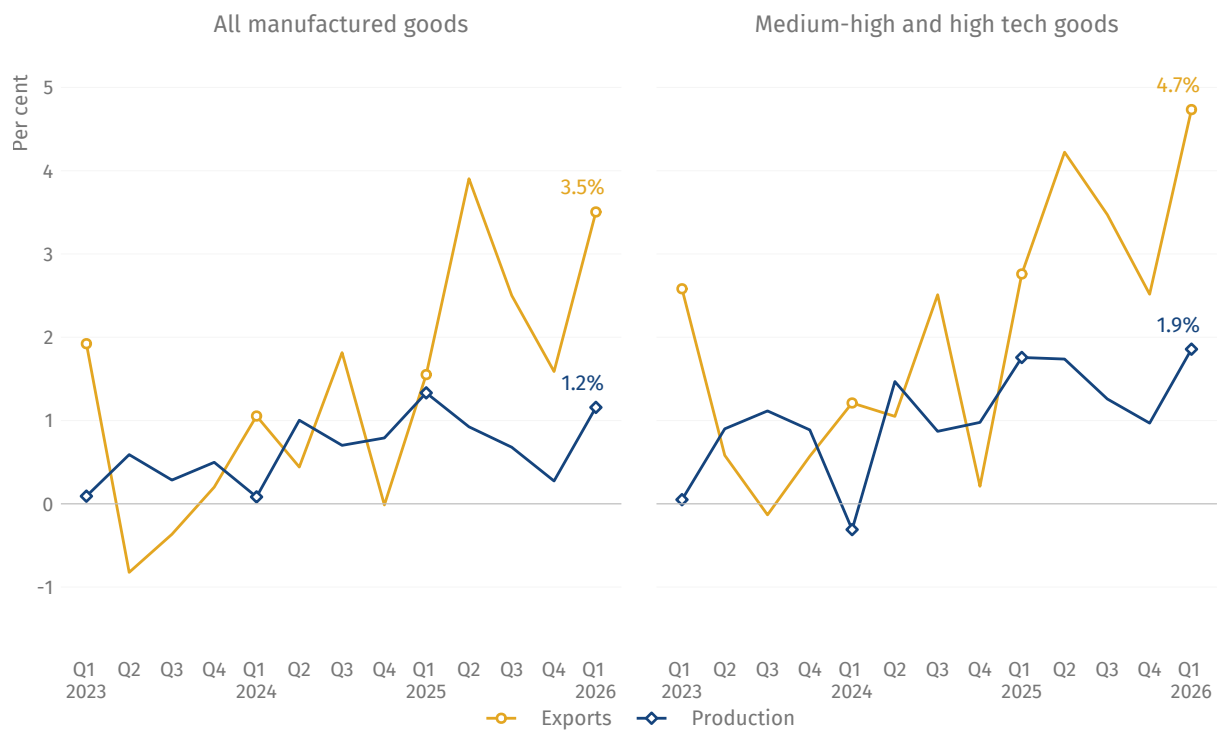


Figure 3.6 | Quarter-over-quarter growth rates of global manufacturing exports and production





A Main indicators

Table A.1 presents a summary of the main indicators of manufacturing production for the first quarter of 2026. Similarly, the latest manufacturing trade figures can be found in Table A.2 and Table A.3. Data tables with expanded details on recent production and trade trends, broken down by region, country group, and industrial sector, and including revised figures for prior quarters, are available [here](#). The full dataset of quarterly indices of industrial production can be accessed in UNIDO's [IIP database](#), while comprehensive trade data are available from UNIDO's [Monthly Manufacturing Trade database](#).

Table A.1 | Main indicators of manufacturing output by region and industrial group, Q1 2026

	Share in world MVA (2020, in %)	Index (2020=100)	Growth compared to previous quarter (%)	Growth compared to same period of previous year (%)
Development groups				
World	100.0	121.8	1.2	3.1
Industrial economies	87.7	120.1	1.1	2.8
Industrializing economies	12.3	136.3	1.7	5.2
Regions				
Africa	2.2	117.6	0.8	3.8
Asia and the Pacific	49.6	132.1	2.0	5.4
Asia and the Pacific (excl. China)	25.3	124.1	2.2	5.2
Europe	22.7	111.5	-0.7	-1.2
Latin America and the Caribbean	6.7	114.1	0.3	-0.4
Northern America	18.7	105.0	0.7	0.9
Industrial economies				
High-income industrial economies	56.5	110.1	0.6	1.1
Middle-income industrial economies (excl. China)	6.8	117.8	0.7	1.4
China	24.3	139.1	1.8	5.6
Industrializing economies				
High-income industrializing economies	1.4	137.8	-0.2	3.3
Middle-income industrializing economies	10.7	136.1	2.0	5.4

Note: Low-income economies are excluded due to insufficient data coverage.

Table A.2 | Growth rates of manufacturing exports by region and selected country groups, Q1 2026 (per cent)

	Growth of manufactur- ing exports compared to the previous quarter	Growth of manufactur- ing exports compared to the same quarter of the previous year	Growth of higher-tech exports compared to the same quarter of the previous quarter	Growth of higher-tech exports compared to the same quarter of the previous year
Development groups				
World	3.5	12.0	4.7	15.8
Industrial economies	3.3	11.9	4.2	15.3
Emerging industrial economies	3.6	11.5	5.4	18.4
BRICS	3.3	9.9	5.1	16.3
Regions				
Africa	0.2	8.2		
Asia and the Pacific	6.1	17.7	8.1	24.7
Asia and the Pacific (excl. China)	7.1	21.4	9.2	28.6
Europe	0.4	7.5	0.6	6.6
Latin America and the Caribbean	2.8	12.1	4.4	19.6
Northern America	2.7	2.1	1.3	1.9
Industrial economies				
High-income industrial economies	2.6	10.8	3.3	12.6
Middle-income industrial economies (excl. China)	4.7	17.5	5.7	24.0
China	4.5	12.1	6.1	18.4

Note: Only groups with sufficient data coverage are displayed.

Table A.3 | Normalized trade balance of manufacturing products by region and selected country groups, Q1 2026 (per cent)

	Normalized trade balance of manufactured goods	Normalized trade balance of higher-tech goods
Development groups		
Industrial economies	2.0	1.7
Emerging industrial economies	15.5	10.0
BRICS	14.9	9.2
Regions		
Asia and the Pacific	11.2	8.5
Asia and the Pacific (excl. China)	3.9	3.5
Europe	0.0	1.0
Latin America and the Caribbean	-7.9	-7.8
Northern America	-20.7	-17.2
Industrial economies		
High-income industrial economies	-2.9	-1.3
Middle-income industrial economies (excl. China)	-0.7	-2.1
China	23.7	17.0

Note: The normalized trade balance of manufactured goods shows the manufacturing trade surplus or deficit as a proportion of total trade (the sum of exports and imports) to facilitate cross-regional comparisons.



B Data sources and methodological notes

This report presents observed growth rates and estimates of world manufacturing production and trade for the first quarter of 2026, as well as revised estimates for previous periods. Since the first quarter of 2025, this report covers not only manufacturing production, but also manufacturing trade. The production figures are based on indices of industrial production (IIP), while the trade data refers to export and import data in current US dollars. Both datasets are collected by UNIDO Statistics from national data sources. Currently, quarterly IIPs are available for 135 countries, corresponding to 98.6 per cent of global manufacturing value added (MVA), while quarterly manufacturing trade include around 80 countries, representing a share of almost 90 per cent of global manufacturing trade. As shown in Figure B.1 and Figure B.2, major data gaps remain, mostly in Africa and some subregions of Asia and the Pacific.

IIP measures the growth of the volume of industrial production in real terms, independently from price fluctuations. Users should take note that while annual industrial growth rates from national accounts generally refer to changes in MVA, i.e. output net of intermediate consumption, IIPs reflect the growth of gross output. Given the temporal nature of estimates, output growth provides the best approximation of value added growth, assuming that the input-output relationship remains stable during the observation period.

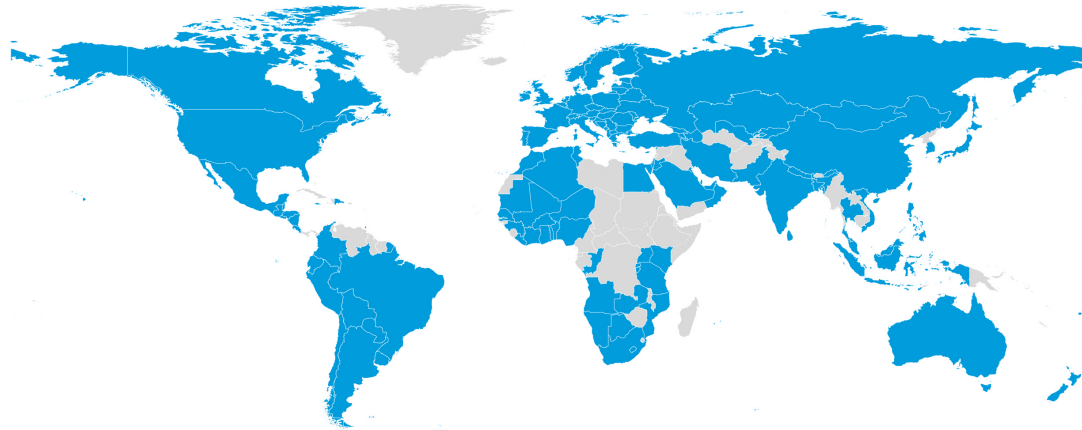
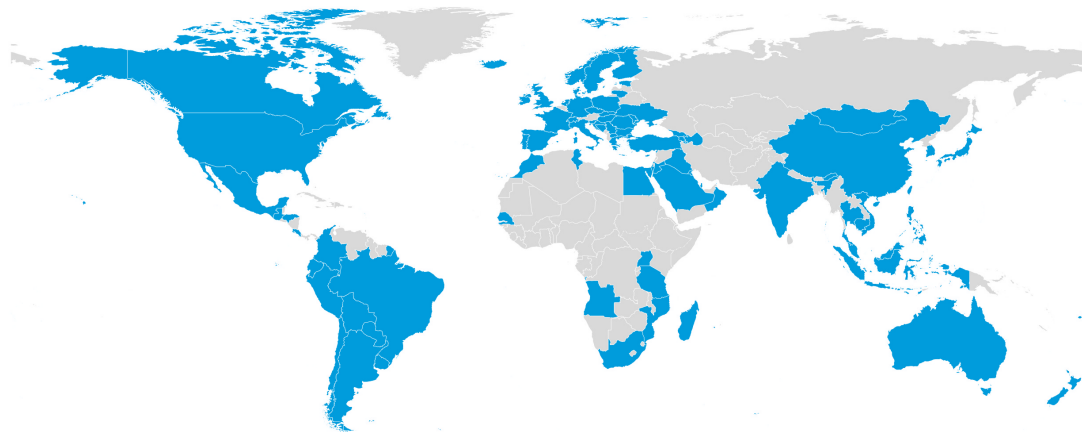
Manufacturing trade, on the other hand, refers to manufactured goods produced in an economy and sold to buyers in another economy. It involves the physical movement of manufactured products across international borders and represents a key component of global trade. Data are reported in current US dollars; when only local currency data are available, exchange rates published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are used for conversion. UNIDO Statistics adopts the [Lall classification](#), which defines manufacturing trade as including all commodities except primary agricultural, mineral or energy commodities, non-monetary gold, electric current, and unallocated commodities. The list of traded commodities classified as medium and high technology commodities, based on SITC Revision 3, is provided in Annex A.1 of the latest [methodological document](#).



The current **report**
covers world manufacturing
production
and **trade**

IIP measures
the growth of the
industrial production
in volume terms, free
from price fluctuations

Manufacturing trade
(in current US dollars)
refers to
goods sold or bought across
international borders

Figure B.1 | Data availability of quarterly IIP indices, Q1 2026**Figure B.2** | Data availability of manufacturing trade data, Q1 2026

UNIDO has published quarterly reports on world manufacturing production since 2011. The data compilation and presentation methods are regularly updated. Since 2013, growth figures of production have been published based on [seasonally adjusted index numbers](#). Since 2017, seasonal adjustments for production data have been made using the TRAMO/SEATS ⁱ method in the JDemetra+ software. A similar approach is used for sub-annual trade data since 2025. The purpose of seasonal adjustment is to filter out periodic fluctuations or calendar effects within time series. The individual parameters of the seasonal adjustment procedure for each time series are subject to regular revisions, normally at the beginning of each new reference year. Major economic uncertainties or other unusual events, such as the global pandemic of 2020, require frequent reviews of the underlying models based on the most recent available information.

UNIDO's sub-annual time series are **seasonally adjusted** for seasonal- and calendar-related effects

ⁱ TRAMO stands for Time series Regression with ARIMA noise, Missing values and Outliers, and SEATS for Signal Extraction in ARIMA Time Series. ARIMA is the abbreviation of Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average, a widely applied statistical method for time series analysis.

The first section of this report applies revision 4 of the International Standard for Industrial Classification of All Economic Activitiesⁱ (ISIC Rev. 4). For countries that publish monthly or quarterly indices based on ISIC Rev. 4, national data are used in their original form. In cases where index numbers are still based on ISIC Rev. 3, growth figures are estimated at the two-digit level of Rev. 4 using standardized correspondence tables. The trade data, however, references revision 3 of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC Rev. 3) consistent with the use of the [Lall classification](#). All data are sourced from national statistical offices and are further adjusted when necessary. Where data are missing, UNIDO performs imputations, which are subsequently replaced once official figures become available in national statistical publications.

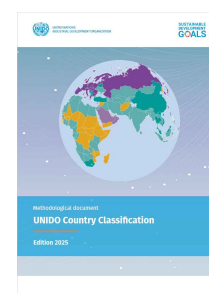
This report refers to country groups in terms of economic territories rather than political boundaries. Economies are classified according to a combination of their stage of industrialization (industrial or industrializing) and income level (high income, middle income, and low income). This classification is particularly useful for presenting growth estimates by country aggregates at different levels of structural transformation. In addition, the report includes information on the group of emerging industrial economies, which includes the most dynamic low- and middle-income economies within both industrial and industrializing economies. Finally, regional groups based on the M49 classification are also presented. A comparative picture of growth trends in different parts of the world is provided based on these country groups. The methodology and full list of economies in the country groupings is available in the [UNIDO Country Classification Edition 2026](#) report.

Growth rates of manufacturing production are calculated from the national index numbers aggregated to the given country group or geographical region using weights based on the countries' contribution to world MVA. Since the first quarter of 2026, the base year has been adjusted to 2020 in accordance with other UNIDO publications. The manufacturing trade data (in current US dollars) are aggregated to selected country groups and growth rates are calculated in another step.

Users can find further information on the methodology of index of industrial production, estimation procedures, and a compilation of country groups' indices in a [methodological document](#) available at the [UNIDO Statistics Portal](#). Similarly, detailed information on manufacturing trade can be found in a separate [methodological document](#). The indices and data themselves are published in UNIDO's [IIP database](#) and [Monthly Manufacturing Trade database](#), also available at the [UNIDO Statistics Portal](#).

ⁱ United Nations. International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), Rev. 4. United Nations, 2008, p. 308.

UNIDO country groups, edition 2026



All data featured in this report can be accessed at
UNIDO Statistics Portal



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