

# Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index (NICEI)

## Quarter 3 (July - September) 2025

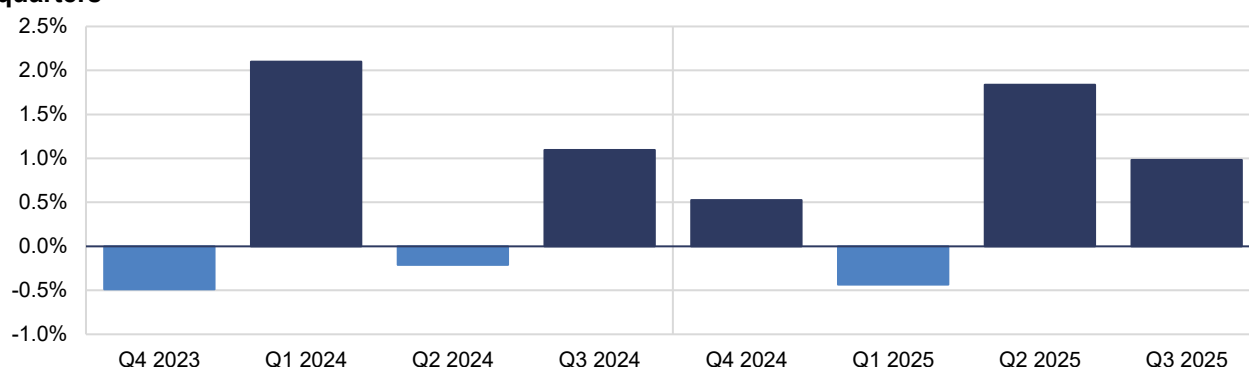
Theme: Economy

Frequency: Quarterly

Geographical Area: Northern Ireland

Date: 15 January 2026

**Chart 1: Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index (NICEI) quarter on quarter change (%), last 8 quarters**



NICEI Quarterly change	NICEI Annual change	NICEI Pre-pandemic change (Q4 2019)*	NICEI Annualised change**	Private Sector		Public Sector	
<b>+1.0%</b>	<b>+2.9%</b>	<b>+12.0%</b>	<b>+2.6%</b>	Quarterly	Annual	Quarterly	Annual
				<b>+1.2%</b>	<b>+3.4%</b>	<b>+0.1%</b>	<b>+1.3%</b>
				Pre-pandemic	Annualised	Pre-pandemic	Annualised
				<b>+12.8%</b>	<b>+2.9%</b>	<b>+8.8%</b>	<b>+1.6%</b>

\* We have included the pre-pandemic change (i.e. Q3 2025 vs. Q4 2019) to illustrate to users the impact compared to the last quarter before pandemic.

\*\*Annualised change: Q4 2023 to Q3 2024 compared with Q4 2024 to Q3 2025.

### Key Points

- Economic Activity in Northern Ireland increased by 1.0% in real terms over the quarter to Quarter 3 2025. Compared to Quarter 3 2024, NI output has increased by 2.9%; and is now 12.0% above the pre-pandemic level seen in Quarter 4 2019. When assessing annualised change NI output has increased by 2.6%.
- The largest contribution to change this quarter came from increased activity in the Services sector (0.6 percentage points (pps)).
- NI Private sector output as measured by the NICEI increased by 1.2% over the quarter and increased by 3.4% over the year. NI Public sector output as measured by the NICEI increased by 0.1% over the quarter and by 1.3% over the year.
- Although the measures are not produced on a fully equivalent basis, [UK Gross Domestic Product \(GDP\)](#) increased by 0.1% over the quarter and by 1.3% over the year to Quarter 3 2025. UK GDP is now 5.2% above its pre-pandemic level seen in Quarter 4 2019.

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**Official statistics in development** (previously called Experimental Statistics) are official statistics that are undergoing a development, and may be new or existing official statistics. They are published to involve users and stakeholders in their development and as a means to ensure they will meet user needs going forward. As these statistics are still in development, they are subject to retrospective revision in any future releases. The methodology and quality assurance are still in development and are subject to change.

In October 2018, the Methodology Advisory Service (MAS) in the ONS completed a review into the NICEI, which made a number of recommendations to enhance the robustness of the measure of output for the NI economy. These include improvements to the measure of Public Sector Output (i.e. Health, Education and Collective Public Services) and some Private Sector additions (i.e. Imputed Rents and Financial Intermediation Services Indirectly Measured (FISIM)).

NISRA is currently working on implementing the MAS recommendations, with a view to producing a quarterly measure of GDP for NI, which builds upon the NICEI. It is our goal that the new quarterly measure of GDP will undergo assessment by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) to ensure compliance with the standards of the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to. You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing [regulation@statistics.gov.uk](mailto:regulation@statistics.gov.uk) or via the [OSR website](#).

Feedback on these statistics is particularly welcome from users and will be used to further develop the statistics. Please email [economicstats@nisra.gov.uk](mailto:economicstats@nisra.gov.uk).

# 1 Context

The NICEI is a quarterly measure of economic activity in NI based on available official statistics<sup>1</sup>. The NICEI statistics in this release are official statistics in development<sup>2</sup>, which are still undergoing evaluation and are subject to revision (please refer to the background notes for further information). The NICEI is broadly equivalent to the output measure of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and is used to measure the performance of the NI economy. NISRA is currently working to develop a quarterly measure of GDP for NI which builds upon the NICEI.

Following NISRA's [consultation](#) on changes to statistical outputs, the NICEI statistical bulletin has been scaled back to headline results only; some detailed analysis and economic commentary has been removed. Data will continue to be provided in the existing supplementary tables.

In line with guidance detailed in the [UK National Accounts Blue Book 2024](#) (published on 31 October 2025), figures in this publication have been weighted using the Northern Ireland 2023 Gross Value Added (GVA) figures published in April 2025. The base year is now 2023.

This report covers the period 1 July to 30 September 2025 (Quarter 3 2025).

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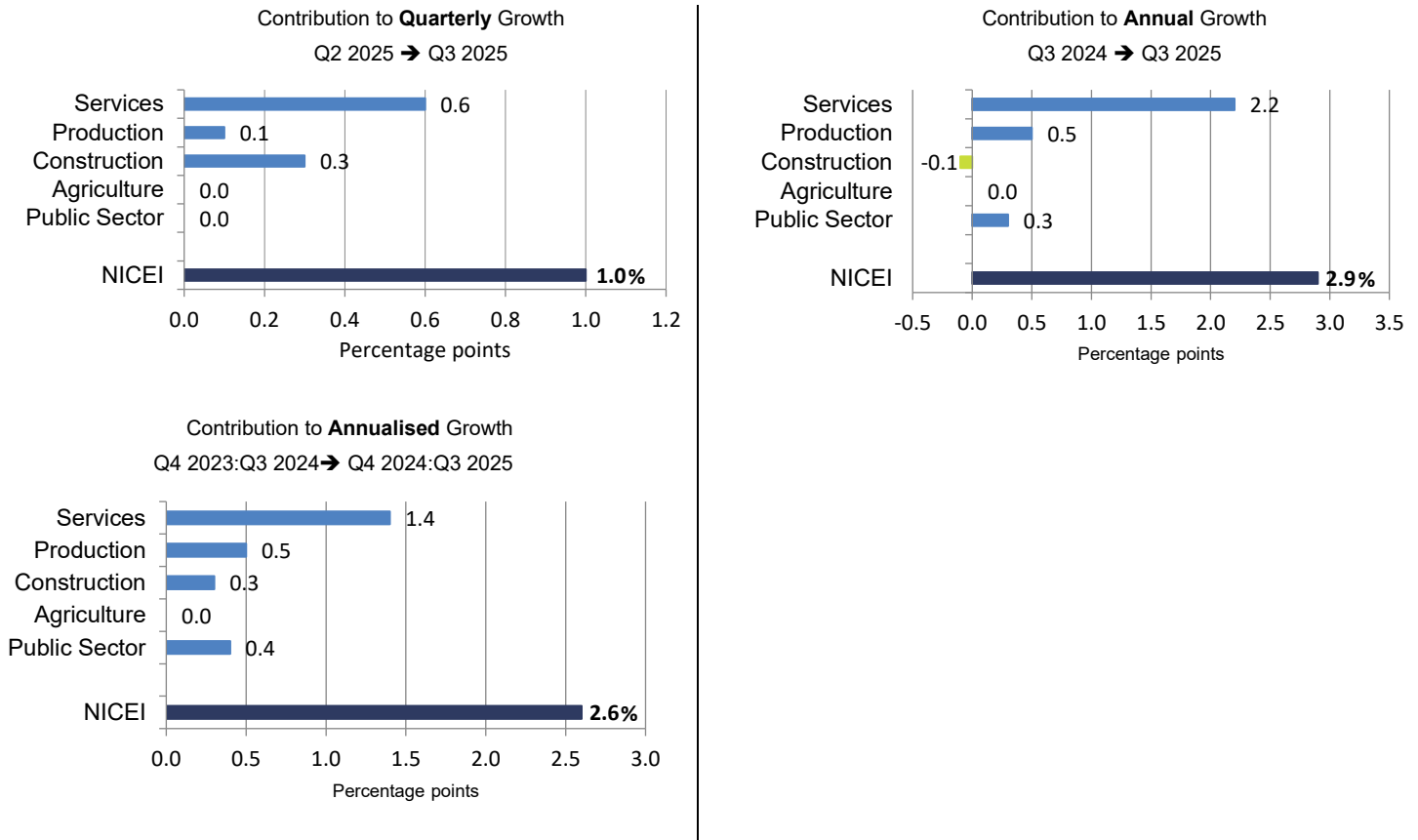
<sup>1</sup> Published quarterly indices (Index of Services, Index of Production, Quarterly Construction Enquiry), public sector employee jobs data from the Quarterly Employment Survey, plus agricultural output data from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, are weighted using the ONS Regional Accounts Gross Value Added (GVA) data and combined to provide a proxy measure of total economic output.

<sup>2</sup> Official statistics in development (previously known as experimental statistics) are official statistics that are undergoing a development; they may be new or existing statistics, and will be tested with users, in line with the standards of trustworthiness, quality, and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

## 2 Contribution of sectors to overall NICEI<sup>3</sup>

The largest contribution to change over the quarter and year came from increased economic activity in the Services sector.

Chart 2: NICEI, Contribution of sectors to quarterly, annual and annualised growth\*



\* May not sum due to rounding

The increase in the NICEI of 1.0% over the latest quarter was mainly driven by increased activity in the Services sector (0.6 pps), followed by the Construction<sup>4</sup> sector (0.3 pps).

Over the year the NICEI increased by 2.9% to Quarter 3 2025. This was driven by positive contributions from the Services sector (2.2 pps), the Production sector (0.5 pps) and the Public sector (0.3 pps).

The 2.6% annualised increase in the NICEI (i.e. average of the four quarters to Quarter 3 2025 compared with the previous four quarters) was mainly driven by increased activity in the Services sector (1.4 pps). The Production, Public and the Construction sectors also made positive contributions.

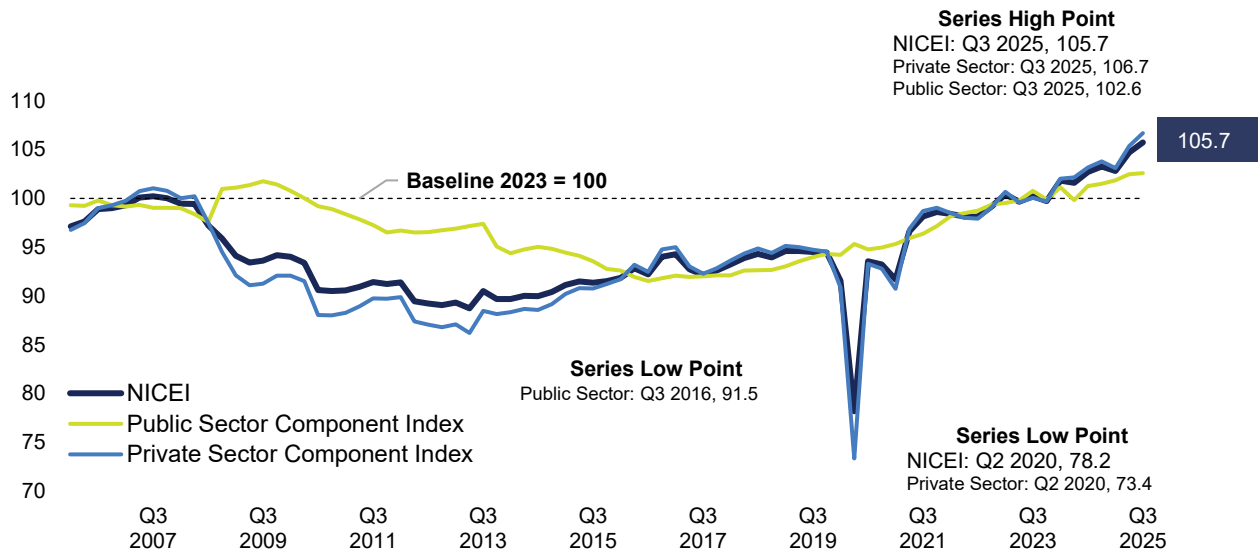
<sup>3</sup> After a seasonal adjustment review conducted in May 2025, the Agriculture series is now seasonally adjusted in line with IOS and IOP. The Construction (excluding the Public sector) series does not have seasonal variation and therefore does not require seasonal adjustment.

<sup>4</sup> Private sector Construction i.e. excluding public sector.

### 3 Long-term NICEI

A new series high was reached in Quarter 3 2025, with NI economic output now 35.2% above the series low point in Quarter 2 2020.

Chart 3: Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index (NICEI), Q1 2006 – Q3 2025



### 4 Economic Commentary

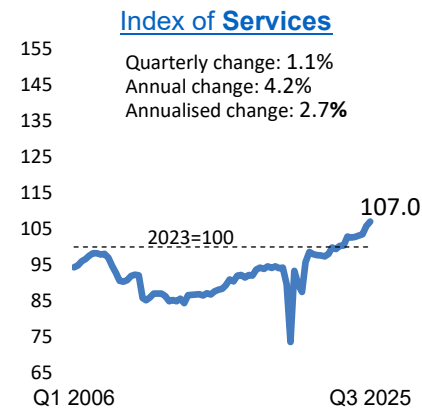
Over the third quarter of 2025, economic activity in Northern Ireland increased by 1.0%. The largest contribution to growth came from increased activity in the Services sector (0.6 pps). Over the year economic activity increased by 2.9%, with positive contributions from the Services sector, the Production sector and the Public sector.

Looking at the longer-term trend, NI economic activity increased gradually between 2013 and 2019, following the prolonged downturn post the 2007 financial crisis. However, the onset of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic brought about a sharp downturn in output, with the NICEI reaching a series low in Quarter 2 2020. Since the pandemic, economic activity in NI has recovered substantially to reach a new series high in Quarter 3, 2025. Output is now 35.2% above the series low point in Quarter 2 2020. Economic activity in Northern Ireland has increased in 22 of the last 40 quarters.

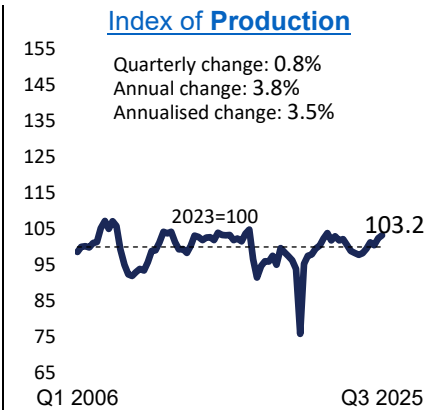
## Sectoral Insights to Quarter 3 2025

### Output by sector<sup>5</sup>

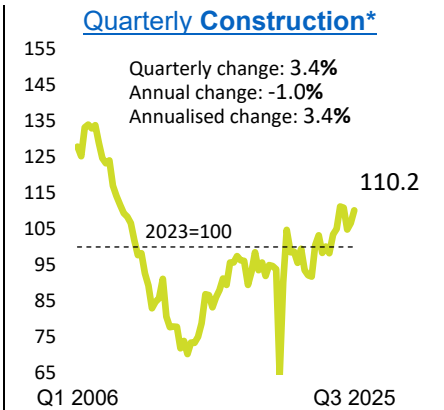
To access further detail, click on the underlined titles which link to the publications on the [NISRA website](#)



Change by Sector	Quarterly	Annual	Annualised
<b>(G,I)</b> Wholesale & retail, motor vehicle repair,	0.6%	3.7%	3.9%
<b>(K-N)</b> Business services & finance	2.0%	7.4%	2.1%
<b>(H,J)</b> Transport, storage, information & communication	-0.4%	2.4%	-0.5%
<b>(P-S)</b> Other services	0.7%	2.5%	-1.1%



Change by Sector	Quarterly	Annual	Annualised
<b>(C)</b> Manufacturing	0.4%	3.5%	4.0%
<b>(D)</b> Electricity, gas, steam & air conditioning	2.3%	6.0%	-0.1%
<b>(E)</b> Water supply, sewerage & waste	-2.6%	1.4%	1.5%
<b>(B)</b> Mining & quarrying	-1.4%	15.4%	9.9%



Change by Sector	Quarterly	Annual	Annualised
New work	4.1%	3.8%	3.6%
Repair & Maintenance	0.8%	-8.5%	3.1%

\* All construction i.e. including public sector

<sup>5</sup> Each sector is seasonally adjusted independently of the overall. It is not appropriate to directly compare the changes in the main sectors to the changes in the overall index.

## Sub-sector results

The Index of Services (IOS) increased by 1.1% over the quarter (July - September) to reach a series high and by 4.2% over the year. Over the quarter, the Business services and finance sector increased by 2.0%, the Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles; accommodation and food service sector increased by 0.6%, the Other services sector increased by 0.7% and the Transport, storage, information and communications sector decreased by 0.4%.

Over the year the Business services and finance sector increased by 7.4%, the Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles; accommodation and food service sector increased by 3.7%, the Other services sector increased by 2.5% and the Transport, storage, information and communications sector increased by 2.4%.

The Index of Production (IOP) increased by 0.8% over the quarter (July - September) and increased by 3.8% over the year. Over the quarter, the increase in NI production output was driven by a rise in two main sectors - Manufacturing (0.4%) and Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (2.3%). Offset by a fall in Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling) (2.6%) and Mining and quarrying (1.4%).

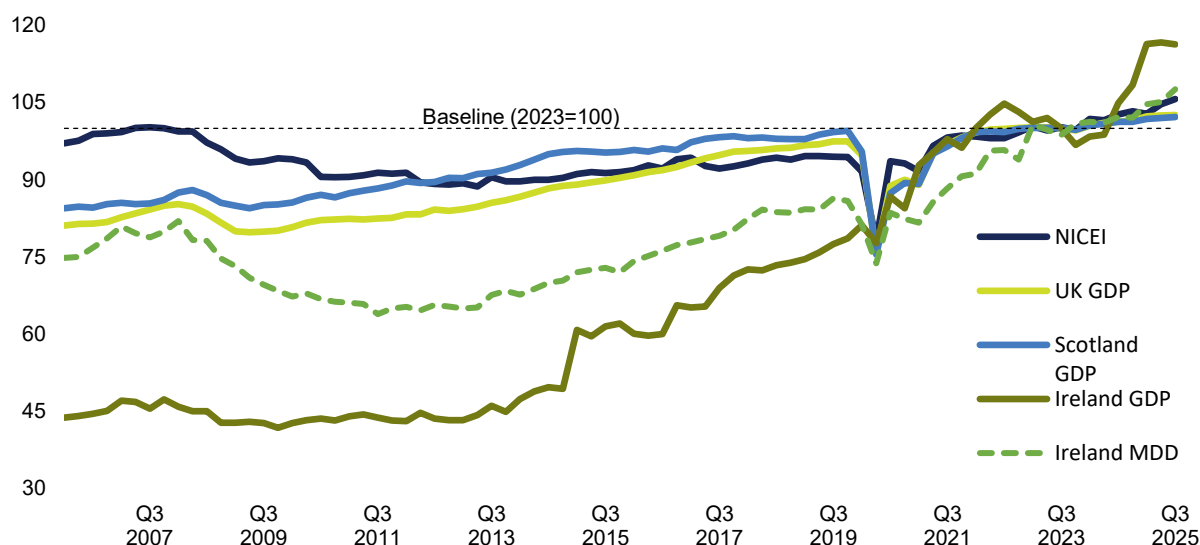
Over the year the increase in NI production output was driven by a rise in all four main sectors – Manufacturing (3.5%), Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (6.0%), Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling) (1.4%), and Mining and quarrying (15.4%).

The total volume of Construction output increased by 3.4% over the quarter and decreased by 1.0% over the year. The quarterly increase in output was driven by increases in both New Work (4.1%) and Repair & Maintenance (0.8%). Over the year the decrease in output was driven by a decrease in Repair & Maintenance (8.5%) and an increase in New Work (3.8%).

## 5 Comparison with measures of GDP

NICEI is 12.0% above the pre-pandemic position seen in Q4 2019 and is outperforming both the Scottish and UK economies in this regard. Ireland's GDP is now 47.9% above the pre-pandemic level after rising sharply post pandemic. Ireland's MDD is now 25.2% above the pre-pandemic level.

Chart 4: NICEI\*, comparison with selected GDP measures Q1 2006 – Q3 2025\*\*



\* The NICEI methodology has been shown to provide a close short-term approximation to the UK GDP series, readers are advised that due to differences in the underlying methodologies the measures presented here should not be considered as precisely like-for-like.

\*\* Ireland's GDP figure has been volatile over recent years, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) highlights the impact Globalisation has had on Ireland's GDP figures.

Chart 4 above indicates that, over the time period, NI, Scotland and UK output all fell to their lowest level in Q2 2020 while in contrast Ireland's GDP lowest level recorded was in Q4 2009 and Ireland's MDD lowest level was recorded in Q3 2011.

The NICEI reached a new series high in Quarter 3 2025. The NI output series is now 5.5% higher than the peak seen in Q3 2007, prior to the economic downturn.

In contrast, UK GDP is now estimated to be 20.3% higher than it's pre-economic downturn high point seen in Quarter 1 2008. This suggests that the UK has had a shorter downturn since the 2008 recession and a faster recovery.

Over the last 10 years the UK has reported increases in GDP in 33 of the last 40 quarters while the NICEI has reported increases in economic activity in 22 of the last 40 quarters.

Chart 4 shows Modified Domestic Demand (MDD) for Ireland. The impact of globalisation activities on economic statistics, as seen in Ireland's GDP 2015 results, presented significant measurement and communication challenges for the Central Statistics Office (CSO) particularly around indicators of domestic performance. MDD is a domestically focused indicator developed by CSO to take out the distorting effects of globalisation.

Table 1 provides a summary of changes over the quarter, year, pre-pandemic and rolling four quarters for the NICEI and other selected GDP measures.

**Table 1: Quarterly, annual, pre-pandemic and annualised change, NICEI compared with selected GDP measures, Quarter 3 2025**

	Change on quarter	Change on year	Pre-Pandemic change	Rolling annual average change
NICEI	↑ 1.0%	↑ 2.9%	↑ 12.0%	↑ 2.6%
UK	↑ 0.1%	↑ 1.3%	↑ 5.2%	↑ 1.6%
Scotland	↑ 0.2%	↑ 0.9%	↑ 2.7%	↑ 1.2%
Ireland	↓ 0.3%	↑ 10.9%	↑ 47.9%	↑ 14.8%
<i>Ireland MDD</i>	↑ 2.3%	↑ 5.3%	↑ 25.2%	↑ 3.5%

Comparing economic activity in both NI and UK, NI economic activity increased over the quarter by 1.0%, while activity in the UK grew by 0.1% over the same period. NI also had stronger growth over the year (2.9% vs 1.3%) and over the rolling annual average period (2.6% vs 1.6%). Comparing against the pre-pandemic quarter (Q4 2019) economic activity in NI has shown stronger growth than the UK (12.0% vs 5.2%).

Similarly, comparing economic activity in both NI and Scotland, NI economic activity increased over the quarter by 1.0% while Scotland grew by 0.2% over the same period. NI also had stronger growth over the year (2.9% vs 0.9%) and over the rolling annual average period (2.6% vs 1.2%). Comparing against the pre-pandemic quarter (Q4 2019) economic activity in NI has shown stronger growth than Scotland (12.0% vs 2.7%).

Whilst Ireland's GDP decreased by 0.3% over the latest quarter it has recorded the strongest growth since pre-pandemic (47.9%) using the GDP measure. Modified Domestic Demand (MDD) which removes the distorting effects of [globalisation](#), experienced a growth of 2.3% over the quarter and a growth of 25.2% since the pandemic.

## 6 List of Tables

Data accompanying this bulletin are available from the [NISRA website](#) in both Open Document and Excel formats. The spreadsheet includes the following tables.

Table 1: NICEI and component indices by quarter, Q1 2006 – Q3 2025 (2023=100)

Table 2: NICEI and component indices by year, 2006 – 2025 (2023=100)

Table 3: Data for Chart 1: Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index (NICEI), Quarter on quarter change (%), Q1 2006 – Q3 2025

Table 4: Breakdown of NI Businesses & Employees by country of ownership, 2025

Table 5: Proportion of NI Regional GVA by Sector, 2023

Table 6: Data for Chart 2: NICEI, Contribution to quarterly, annual and annualised growth to Q3 2025

Table 7: Data for Chart 3: Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index (NICEI), Q1 2006 – Q3 2025

Table 8: Data for Chart 4: NICEI, comparison with selected GDP measures Q1 2006 – Q3 2025

Table 9: Data for Table 1: Quarterly, annual, pre-pandemic and annualised change, NICEI compared with selected GDP measures to Q3 2025

Table 10: Comparison of the NICEI Series Quarter on Quarter change at Q3 2025 and Q2 2025

Table 11: NICEI Sector Contributions to Quarterly Change, Q4 2015 – Q3 2025 (2023=100)

## 7 Further Information

Data published within this bulletin is available to download from our [website](#) and the new NISRA [Data Portal](#). Detailed background information documents and methodology information have also been published [online](#).

As a user of these statistics, we would welcome feedback on this release, in particular on the content, format and structure. If you wish to receive regular NICEI updates via email or join the NICEI expert user group please contact: [economicstats@nisra.gov.uk](mailto:economicstats@nisra.gov.uk)

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**Next NICEI publication: 26 March 2026**