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Brazil's regional profile and opportunities for Finnish companies

Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland

BRAZIL'S REGIONAL PROFILE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FINNISH COMPANIES

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Brazil is one of the world's largest countries by economy, population and territory, with vast regional diversity that makes market access decisions complex.
- The Southeast Region is the main economic hub and largest consumer market, generating more than half of Brazil's gross domestic product (GDP) and hosting over 40% of the population.
- While economic activity is concentrated in the Southeast, other regions also play key roles in dynamic sectors of the economy.
- Brazil's geographic spread of production creates significant import demand across multiple federative units, underscoring the importance of regional markets for international trade.

1. INTRODUCTION

Brazil is one of the largest countries in the world in terms of economy, population and territory. Considering that economic activities in Brazil occur across a vast territory and that its regions have highly diverse profiles, decisions on how to access the market involve a high degree of complexity. For this reason, obtaining information on the regions in Brazil that are most attractive for leading sectors of the Finnish economy is essential for companies seeking to successfully enter the market.

This report aims to provide useful information and analysis on business opportunities for Finnish companies across different regions of Brazil and to support them in defining their regional strategies in the country. This report is organised into three sections, in addition to the Introduction:

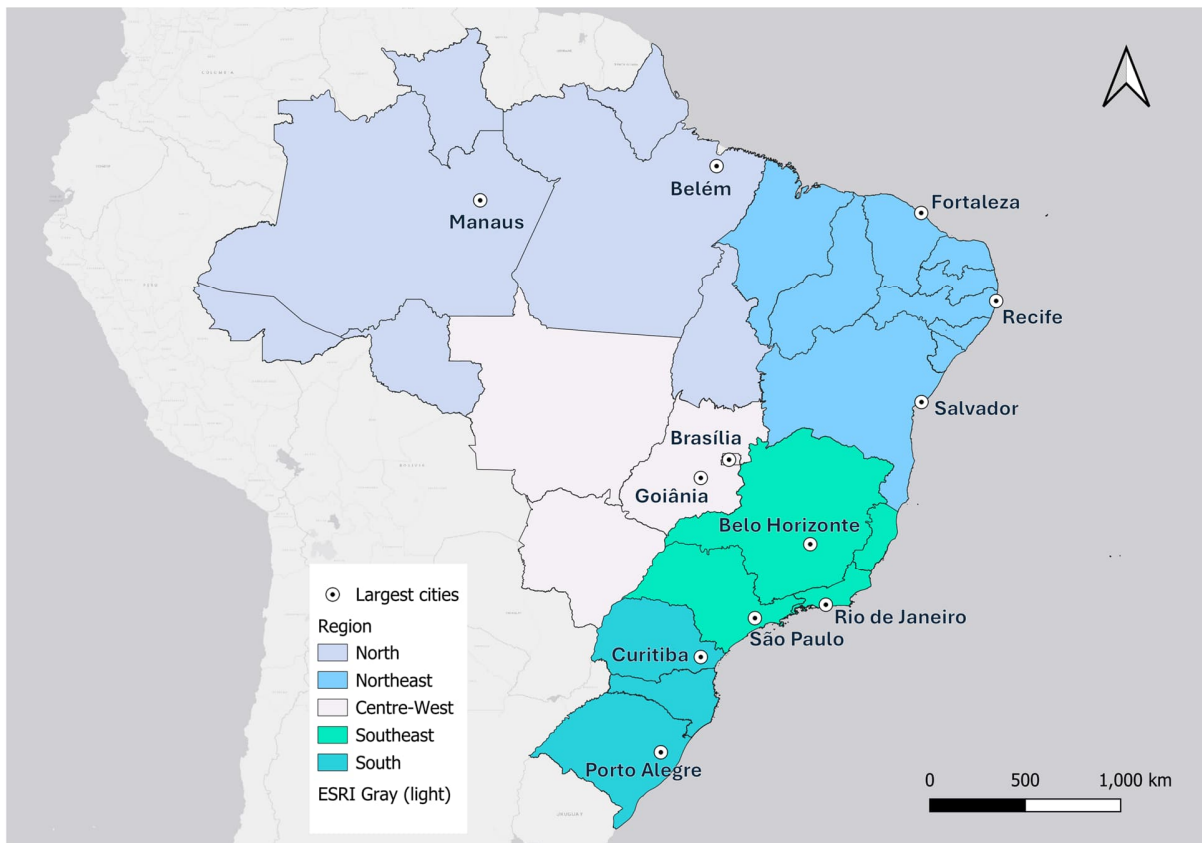
- Section 2 provides context on Brazil's regional division and the economic relevance of each region, highlighting the areas that account for most of the country's economic activity, the federative units that have recorded the highest growth and the main sources of imports into Brazil.

- Section 3 provides detailed information on the regions in Brazil recording the highest import demand for products from the leading sectors of the Finnish economy.
- Section 4 presents the conclusions and highlights the main opportunities for Finnish companies.

2. REGIONS OF BRAZIL AND THEIR ECONOMIC RELEVANCE

With an area of 8.5 million square kilometres, Brazil is the world’s fifth-largest country in terms of territory. To facilitate the production of statistics and administrative decentralisation, Brazil has been divided into five regions based on natural and socioeconomic criteria¹. The map below shows the five regions of Brazil.

Regions of Brazil



¹ For information on the federative units within each region and their abbreviations, please refer to the annex at the end of the report.

Brazil's regions have highly diverse profiles in terms of area, population and level of economic development. For instance, the North Region has one of the smallest populations (18 million people in 2022), living within an area of 3.8 million square kilometres. This area accounts for 45% of Brazil's territory and is larger than the territory of India. In contrast, more than 88 million people live in the Southeast Region, within an area of 925 thousand square kilometres.

Regarding economic development, there is a clear distinction between northern Brazil and the central and southern areas of the country. While GDP per capita in the South, Southeast and Centre-West regions ranges between €10,025 and €11,750, the levels in the Northeast and North regions are substantially lower, standing at approximately half the values recorded in the wealthier parts of Brazil. The table below presents additional information on the geographic and socioeconomic profiles of Brazil's regions.

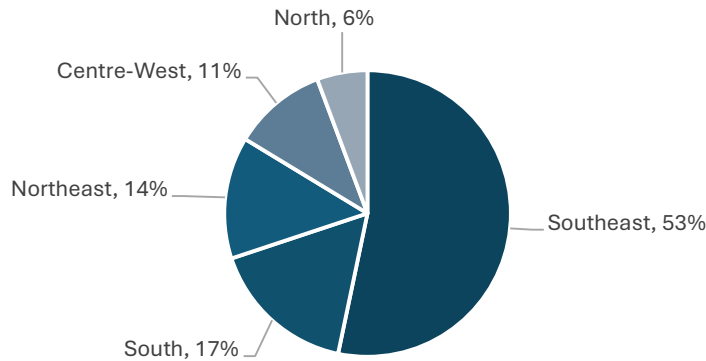
Area, population and GDP per capita by Brazilian region, 2022

Region	Area (million sq. Km)	Population (million inhabitants)	GDP per capita (€)
North	3.8	18	5 740
Northeast	1.6	57	4 488
Centre-West	1.6	17	11 750
Southeast	0.9	88	11 201
South	0.6	31	10 025
Brazil	8.5	211	8 787

Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics
 Note: € 1 = R\$ 5.44 (2022 average)

With more than 40% of Brazil's population, the Southeast Region is the country's main economic hub, accounting for over half its the GDP. The region hosts Brazil's largest consumer market and the two largest cities in the country: São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The Southeast Region is followed by the South, Northeast and Centre-West regions, with shares of Brazil's GDP ranging between 11% and 17%. The North Region accounts for the smallest share of GDP, at 6%.

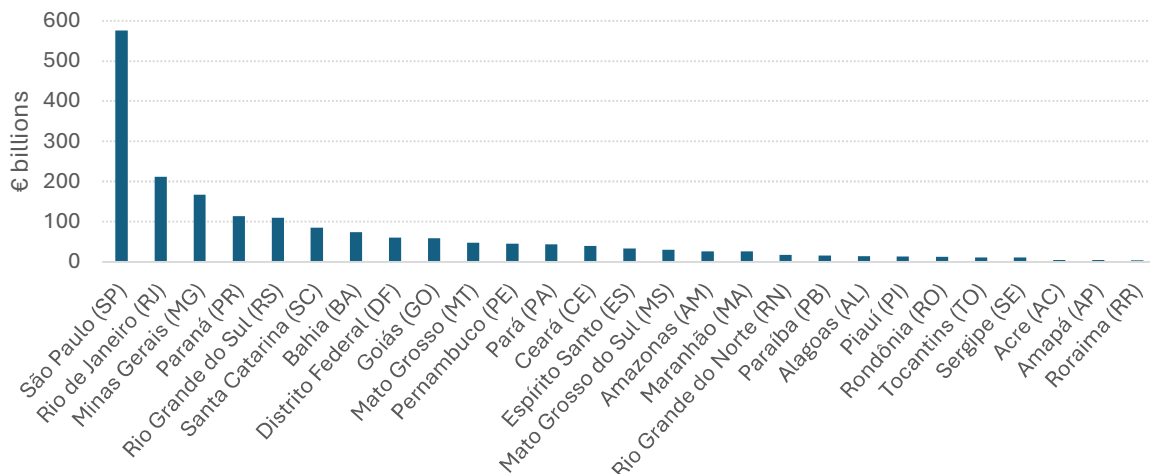
Brazil's GDP by region, 2022



Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics

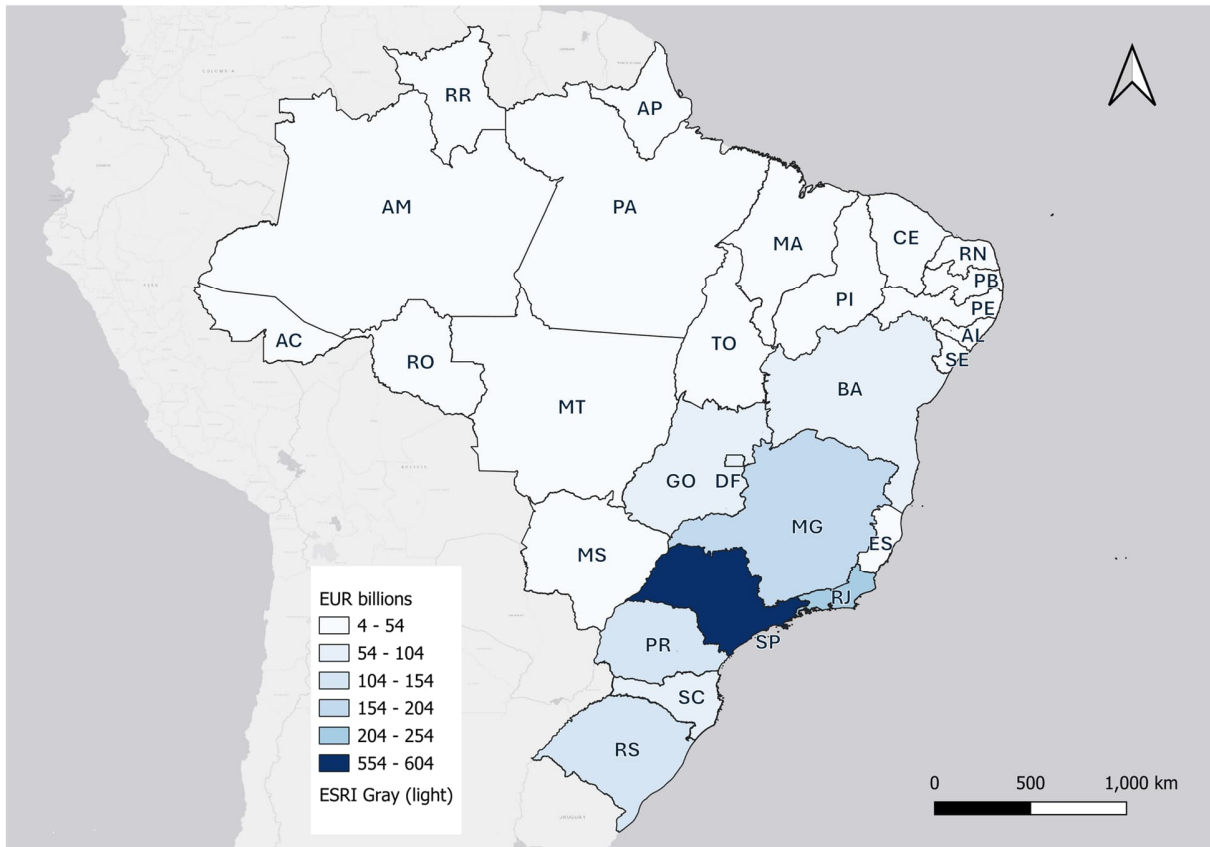
Brazil is composed of 26 states and the Federal District (*Distrito Federal*). These entities are known as federative units. São Paulo is by far the Brazilian federative unit with the largest economy, with a GDP of €575 billion in 2022. The state is followed by Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais, also located in the Southeast Region. Next come the three states that comprise the South Region. Bahia, in the Northeast, has the largest GDP outside the Southeast and South regions. The chart and map below present information on Brazil’s GDP by federative unit.

GDP by federative unit, 2022



Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics
 Note: € 1 = R\$ 5.44 (2022 average)

GDP by federative unit, 2022



Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics

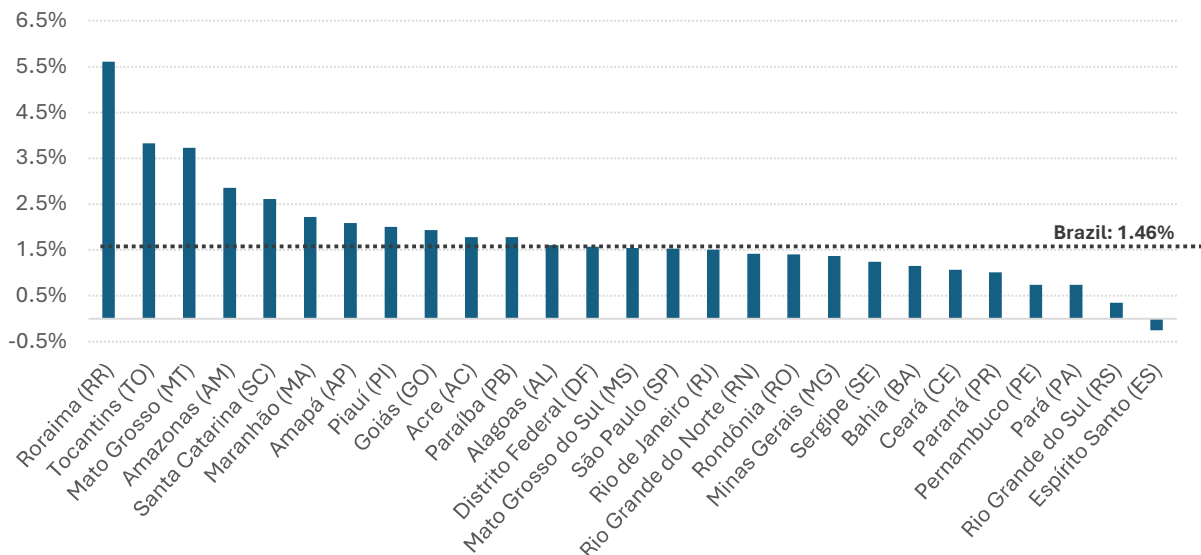
Note: € 1 = R\$ 5.44 (2022 average)

Although output in Brazil is highly concentrated in the Southeast Region, several other areas of the country host important activities in key and dynamic sectors of the Brazilian economy. For example, the Centre-West region's economic growth has been driven by a highly competitive agribusiness sector, with Brazil leading global agricultural production of several crops. Agribusiness is also an important industry in the South Region, which additionally hosts major activities in manufacturing and forest-based industries. The Northeast Region of Brazil has been consolidating its position as a leading centre for renewable energy, particularly solar and wind power. The region has also emerged as a hub for sectors such as agriculture and the digital economy. Finally, the North Region offers numerous opportunities in areas such as mining and the sustainable use of resources, as a significant part of the Amazon is located there.

As a result, many regions in Brazil have recorded growth rates significantly higher than that of the country as a whole. This includes not only states growing from a lower base, such as Roraima and Tocantins, but also federative units with greater economic weight, including Mato Grosso, Amazonas and Santa Catarina.

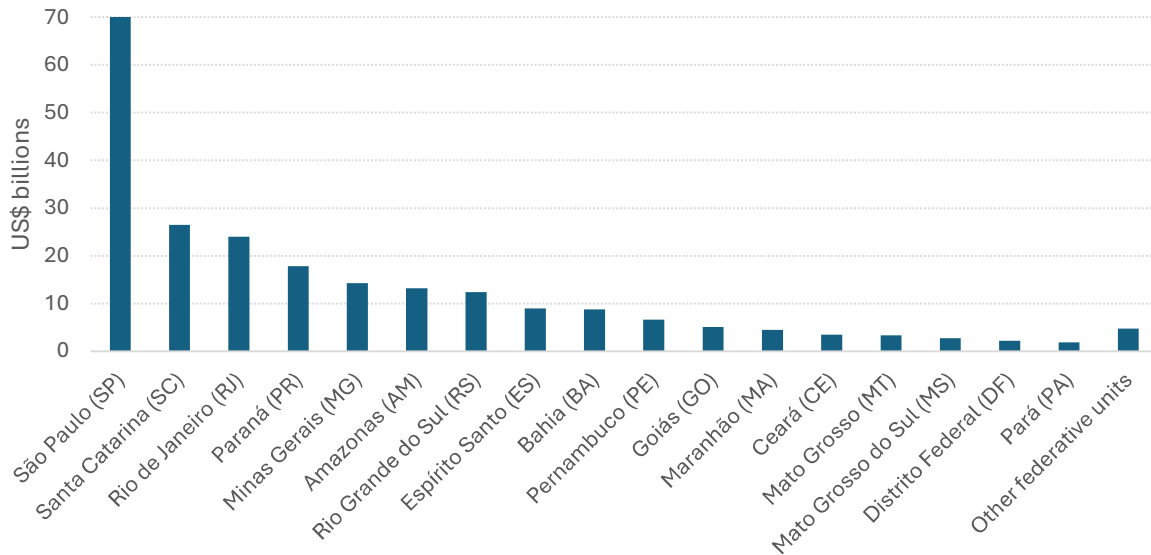
Another consequence of the spread of economic activity across various regions of Brazil is the sizable demand for imports throughout several federative units. Although São Paulo is Brazil’s largest importer, with annual imports averaging US\$70 billion over recent years, other areas of the country are also important destinations for exports. For instance, six federative units have recorded average annual imports between US\$12 billion and US\$27 billion, while the figure for five states has ranged between US\$5 billion and US\$9 billion. The next two charts present information on GDP growth and imports by Brazilian federative unit over the last five years for which data are available.

Average annual GDP change by federative unit, 2017-2022



Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics

Annual average Brazilian imports by federative unit, 2020-2024



Source: Brazil's Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

3. REGIONAL DEMAND FOR THE MAIN PRODUCTS EXPORTED BY FINLAND TO BRAZIL

This section will present data on the Brazilian federative units that have been demanding, through imports, products from the leading sectors of the Finnish economy. Products with the highest volumes of exports from Finland to Brazil were selected according to four digits of the harmonised system (HS4). In the following paragraphs, the report will list these products and present information on the import demand by Brazilian federative unit. It is worth noting that the breakdown refers to total Brazilian imports for each product, i.e. imports from all countries are considered.

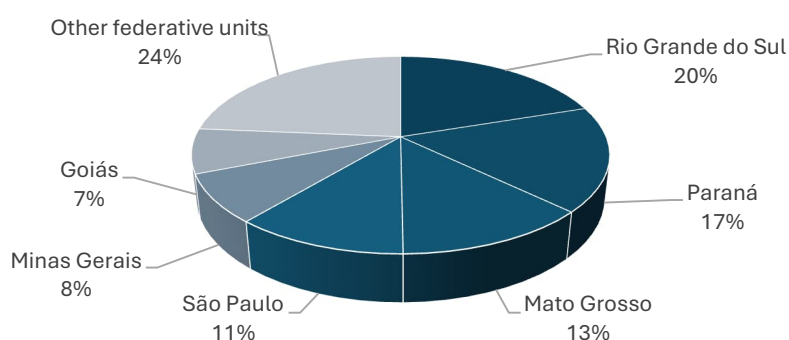
FERTILISERS

The main federative units importing fertilisers in Brazil are the country’s agricultural powerhouses. These federative units host export-oriented agricultural activities and are major producers of fertiliser-intensive crops including soybeans, maize, sugarcane, coffee and cotton. Some of the states, particularly Mato Grosso and Goiás in the Centre-West Region, have experienced rapid agricultural expansion and have vast areas under cultivation, resulting in strong demand for fertilisers.

HS4 code	3105
HS4 name	Mineral or chemical fertilisers containing two or three of the fertilising elements nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium; other fertilisers; goods of this chapter in tablets or similar forms or in packages of a gross weight not exceeding 10 kg
Annual average Brazilian imports from Finland, 2020-2024	US\$ 101 million

Source: Brazil’s Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

Share of Brazilian imports by federative unit, 2020-2024



Source: Brazil’s Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS

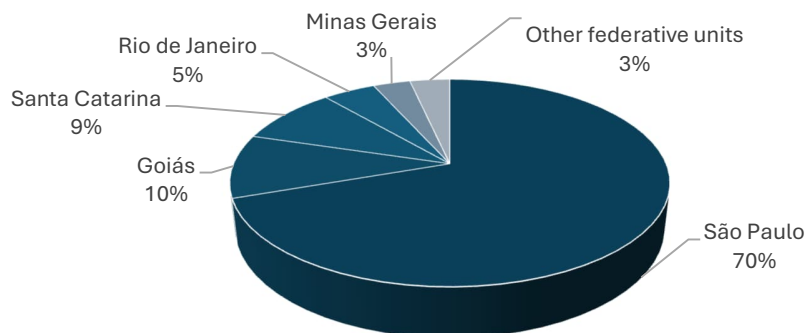
As the main industrial and logistical hub of the Brazilian pharmaceutical sector, São Paulo accounts for the bulk of imports in the industry. The state hosts most importers, manufacturers and distributors of pharmaceuticals in Brazil and benefits from significant infrastructure advantages and market demand.

HS4 code	3006
HS4 name	Pharmaceutical goods specified in note 4 to this chapter
Annual average Brazilian imports from Finland, 2020-2024	US\$ 34 million

Source: Brazil's Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

Note: Products under this code include surgical stitches, medical dilators, bleeding stoppers, X-ray test products, clinical trial kits, dental and bone cements and first-aid kits.

Share of Brazilian imports by federative unit, 2020-2024



Source: Brazil's Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

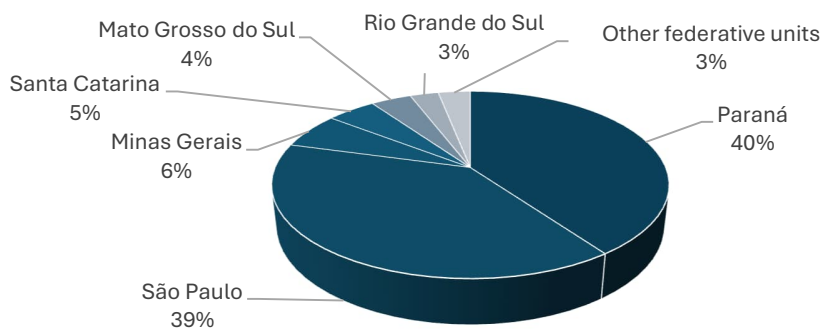
PULP AND PAPER MACHINERY

In Brazil, forest industries are strongly concentrated in the southern regions, and the states of Paraná and São Paulo are the leading sources of imports of pulp and paper machinery in the country. These states are the two main sources of revenue in the pulp and paper sector in Brazil, hosting a strong industrial base and an export-oriented industry that requires substantial investment in machinery to remain competitive in international markets.

HS4 code	8439
HS4 name	Machinery for making pulp of fibrous cellulosic material or for making or finishing paper or paperboard
Annual average Brazilian imports from Finland, 2020-2024	US\$ 55 million

Source: Brazil's Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

Share of Brazilian imports by federative unit, 2020-2024



Source: Brazil's Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

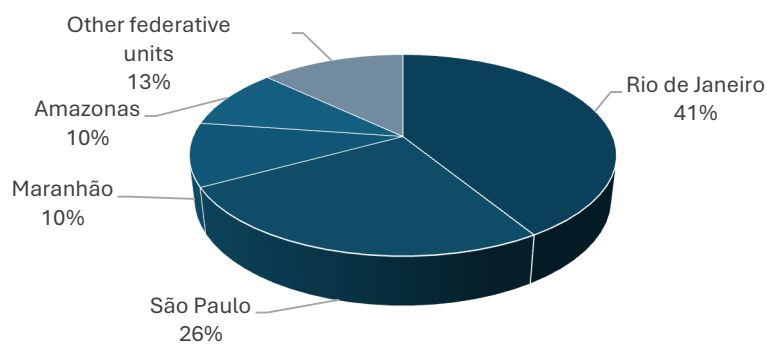
BOILERS

As the four largest producers of thermal power in Brazil, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Maranhão and Amazonas are the main importers of boilers in the country. In addition, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro are Brazil’s main economic hubs with excellent port infrastructure, logistics networks and a highly diversified manufacturing base that requires boilers for industrial processes in sectors including chemicals, pulp and paper and food.

HS4 code	8402
HS4 name	Steam or other vapour generating boilers (other than central heating hot water boilers capable also of producing low pressure steam); super-heated water boilers
Annual average Brazilian imports from Finland, 2020-2024	US\$ 33 million

Source: Brazil’s Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

Share of Brazilian imports by federative unit, 2020-2024



Source: Brazil’s Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

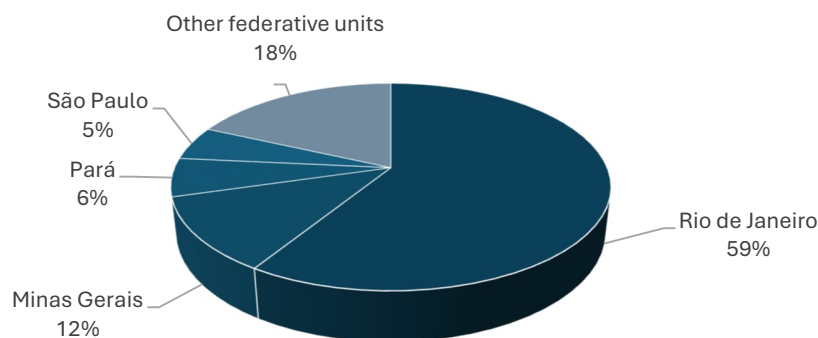
BORING AND SINKING MACHINERY

Sources of imports of boring and sinking machinery² in Brazil are associated with the location of projects that require this type of equipment most intensively. As the main hub of Brazil’s offshore oil and gas industry, Rio de Janeiro is the leading importer of boring and sinking machinery in the country. The state is followed by Minas Gerais and Pará, the two main regions for the mining sector in Brazil. Next comes the state of São Paulo, Brazil’s major hub for the construction industry.

HS4 code	8430
HS4 name	Other moving, grading, levelling, scraping, excavating, tamping, compacting, extracting or boring machinery, for earth, minerals or ores; piledrivers and pile-extractors; snowploughs and snow-blowers
Annual average Brazilian imports from Finland, 2020-2024	US\$ 29 million

Source: Brazil’s Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

Share of Brazilian imports by federative unit, 2020-2024



Source: Brazil’s Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

² Boring and sinking machinery refers to heavy equipment used to drill, bore, excavate or drive piles into the ground, and it is typically used in mining, construction and infrastructure projects to break rock, open tunnels, prepare foundations or extract minerals.

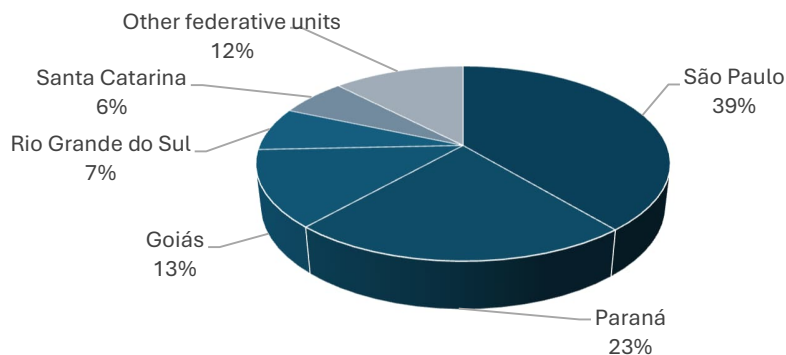
TRACTORS

São Paulo, Paraná, Goiás, Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina are major agribusiness hubs in Brazil and lead imports of tractors in the country. They host several farms that produce export-oriented crops and require high levels of mechanisation. The largest importers of tractors in Brazil are also major locations for the distribution of agricultural machinery, particularly the states of São Paulo, Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul.

HS4 code	8701
HS4 name	Tractors (other than tractors of heading 8709)
Annual average Brazilian imports from Finland, 2020-2024	US\$ 28 million

Source: Brazil's Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

Share of Brazilian imports by federative unit, 2020-2024



Source: Brazil's Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

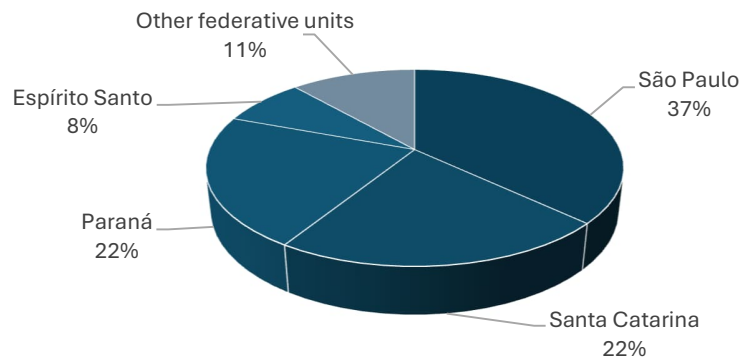
AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY MACHINERY

São Paulo, Paraná and Santa Catarina are the leading states for imports of agricultural and forestry machinery, as they are among Brazil’s most productive agricultural regions with intensive production systems that require specialised machinery. In addition, these states are important hubs for planted forests and the production of wood products in the country.

HS4 code	8436
HS4 name	Other agricultural, horticultural, forestry, poultry-keeping or bee-keeping machinery, including germination plant fitted with mechanical or thermal equipment; poultry incubators and brooders
Annual average Brazilian imports from Finland, 2020-2024	US\$ 24 million

Source: Brazil’s Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

Share of Brazilian imports by federative unit, 2020-2024



Source: Brazil’s Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

ENERGY EQUIPMENT

Rio de Janeiro and Espírito Santo import large volumes of electric generating sets because this type of equipment is essential for supplying energy to platforms and vessels that support the operations of the oil and gas industry.

The Brazilian Northeast, particularly Piauí and Paraíba, has become a national leader in wind and solar power generation, hosting farms that require substations to connect to the national grid and rely on critical power conversion equipment.

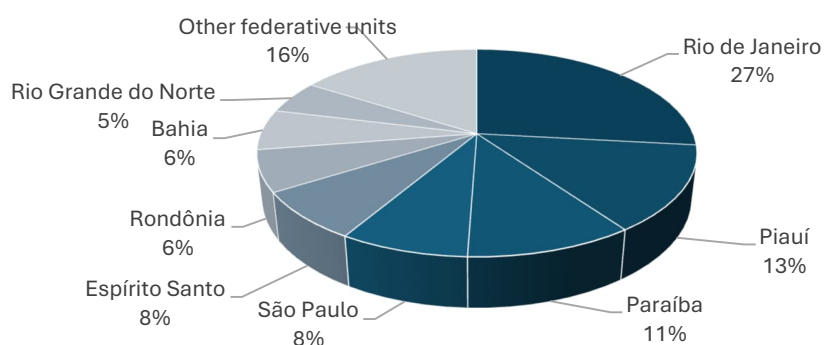
Finally, the demand for electric generating sets in São Paulo is associated with the need for reliable, uninterrupted power in business and infrastructure.

HS4 code	8502
HS4 name	Electric generating sets and rotary converters
Annual average Brazilian imports from Finland, 2020-2024	US\$ 15 million

Source: Brazil's Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

Note: Electric generating sets (gensets) are engines that convert fuel into electrical power, often for backup or primary electricity supply, while rotary converters are machines that convert electrical voltage or frequency, often to match different grid requirements.

Share of Brazilian imports by federative unit, 2020-2024



Source: Brazil's Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

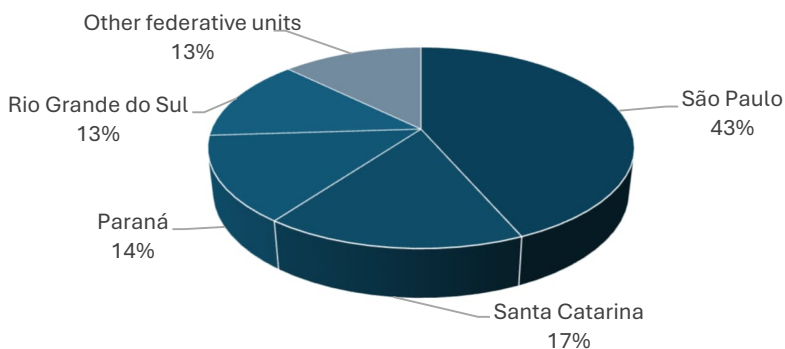
PAPER AND PAPERBOARD

São Paulo, Santa Catarina, Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul concentrate Brazil’s largest packaging, printing, publishing and paper converting industries, which are the primary users of coated paper and paperboard. Their industrial structures create the highest demand for high-quality coated grades that are not fully supplied domestically.

HS4 code	4810
HS4 name	Paper and paperboard, coated on one or both sides with kaolin (china clay) or other inorganic substances, with or without a binder, and with no other coating, whether or not surface-coloured, surface-decorated or printed, in rolls or rectangular
Annual average Brazilian imports from Finland, 2020-2024	US\$ 28 million

Source: Brazil’s Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

Share of Brazilian imports by federative unit, 2020-2024



Source: Brazil’s Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

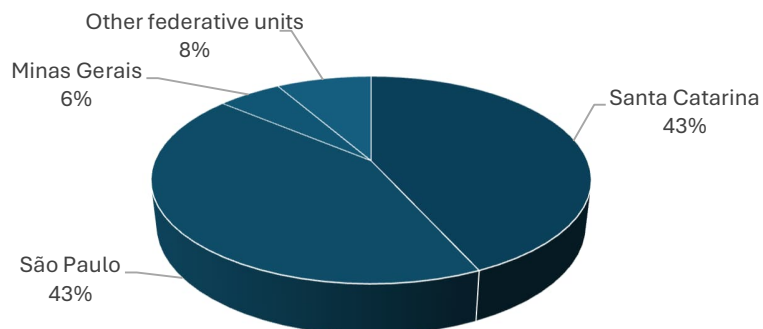
NICKEL

São Paulo and Santa Catarina are key hubs for the stainless steel and metallurgical industries, hosting several steel mills and foundries that import nickel as a raw material. Additionally, São Paulo’s imports are driven by strong demand from the battery and chemical industries.

HS4 code	7502
HS4 name	Unwrought nickel
Annual average Brazilian imports from Finland, 2020-2024	US\$ 19 million

Source: Brazil’s Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

Share of Brazilian imports by federative unit, 2020-2024



Source: Brazil’s Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

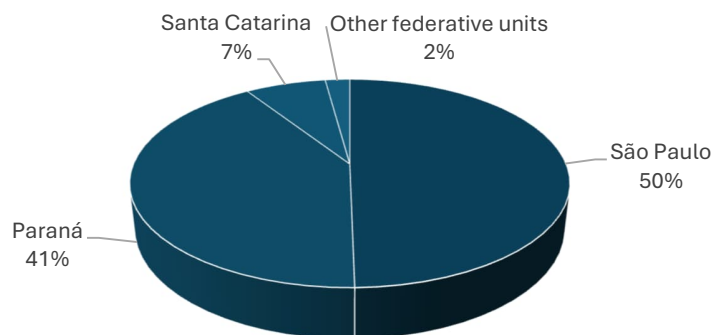
ENZYMES

São Paulo is Brazil’s leading importer of enzymes, with demand primarily driven by sectors including food and beverages and pharmaceuticals. Paraná hosts a strong agribusiness and food-processing cluster that includes the meat, poultry and dairy industries and uses imported enzymes to enhance productivity.

HS4 code	3507
HS4 name	Enzymes; prepared enzymes not elsewhere specified or included
Annual average Brazilian imports from Finland, 2020-2024	US\$ 15 million

Source: Brazil’s Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

Share of Brazilian imports by federative unit, 2020-2024



Source: Brazil’s Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Comex Stat)

The table below presents a summary of the analysis developed in the previous sections, highlighting the Brazilian states with the greatest levels of import demand for the main products exported by Finland to Brazil.

Regional demand for the main products exported by Finland to Brazil

Product	Main markets
Fertilisers	Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná and Mato Grosso
Pharmaceutical products	São Paulo
Pulp and paper machinery	Paraná and São Paulo
Boilers	Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo
Boring and sinking machinery	Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and Pará
Tractors	São Paulo, Paraná and Goiás
Agricultural and forestry machinery	São Paulo, Santa Catarina and Paraná
Energy equipment	Rio de Janeiro, Piauí and Paraíba
Paper and paperboard	São Paulo, Santa Catarina and Paraná
Nickel	Santa Catarina and São Paulo
Enzymes	São Paulo and Paraná

4. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES

Brazil ranks among the world's largest nations in terms of economy, population and territory. Its vast size and regional diversity make market access decisions highly complex. The country's regions differ significantly in area, population and economic development, with the Southeast standing out as the main economic hub. Home to over 40% of Brazil's population and generating more than half of its GDP, this region hosts the largest consumer market.

Although economic activity is concentrated in the Southeast, other regions also play a critical role in dynamic sectors of the economy. This geographic spread of production drives substantial import demand across multiple federative units, reflecting the importance of regional markets for international trade.

In Brazil, demand for agricultural inputs is concentrated in key hubs in the South, such as Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul, and in the Centre-West, including Mato Grosso and Goiás, alongside the state of São Paulo.

Imports related to forest industries originate mainly from southern Brazil, with São Paulo, Paraná and Santa Catarina accounting for the largest volumes.

In energy-related sectors, Rio de Janeiro stands out as Brazil's main hub for oil and gas, while states in the Northeast, particularly Piauí and Paraíba, have shown strong demand for renewable energy equipment. For thermal power equipment, the main markets in the country are Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Maranhão and Amazonas.

In mining, the resource-rich states of Minas Gerais and Pará play a leading role, whereas Santa Catarina and São Paulo serve as important hubs for steel and metallurgy.

Finally, São Paulo's large consumer market and robust industrial base make it a major destination for healthcare-related products.

For additional information on Brazil's regional economic profile and business opportunities across the country, please do not hesitate to contact Team Finland Brazil. For information on the network in the country, please access <https://finlandabroad.fi/web/bra/team-finland-verkosto>.

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ANNEX

Regions and federative units of Brazil

North	
Acre	AC
Amapá	AP
Amazonas	AM
Pará	PA
Rondônia	RO
Roraima	RR
Tocantins	TO
Northeast	
Alagoas	AL
Bahia	BA
Ceará	CE
Maranhão	MA
Paraíba	PB
Pernambuco	PE
Piauí	PI
Rio Grande do Norte	RN
Sergipe	SE
Centre-West	
Distrito Federal	DF
Goiás	GO
Mato Grosso	MT
Mato Grosso do Sul	MS
Southeast	
Espírito Santo	ES
Minas Gerais	MG
Rio de Janeiro	RJ
São Paulo	SP
South	
Paraná	PR
Rio Grande do Sul	RS
Santa Catarina	SC