

# Results of monthly survey on business situation of small and medium-sized enterprises for December 2021

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (January 11) the results of the Monthly Survey on Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) for December 2021.

The current diffusion index (DI) on business receipts amongst SMEs increased from 45.5 in November 2021 in the contractionary zone to 46.0 in December 2021, whereas the one-month's ahead (i.e. January 2022) outlook DI on business receipts was 48.0. Analysed by sector, the current DIs on business receipts for majority of the surveyed sectors rose by varying degrees in December 2021 as compared with previous month, particularly for the real estate (from 42.9 to 49.1) and wholesale trade (from 43.4 to 48.7). On the other hand, decrease was observed in the import and export trades (from 46.8 to 45.8).

The current DI on new orders for the import and export trades decreased from 47.4 in November 2021 to 46.6 in December 2021, whereas the outlook DI on new orders in one month's time (i.e. January 2022) was 47.5.

## Commentary

A government spokesman said that business sentiment among SMEs improved slightly in December 2021, along with stronger hiring sentiment.

The spokesman added that the threat of the Omicron variant is the biggest uncertainty surrounding the economic outlook. The recent tightening of local social distancing measures in response to the epidemic developments will likely affect business sentiment somewhat. In order to keep the local epidemic under control as soon as possible, the community should remain vigilant, strive towards more widespread vaccination and abide by the anti-epidemic measures. The Government will monitor the situation closely.

## Further information

The Monthly Survey on Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises aims to provide a quick reference, with minimum time lag, for assessing the short-term business situation faced by SMEs. SMEs covered in this survey refer to establishments with fewer than 50 persons engaged. Respondents were asked to exclude seasonal fluctuations in reporting their views. Based on the views collected from the survey, a set of diffusion indices (including current and outlook diffusion indices) is compiled. A reading above 50 indicates that the business condition is generally favourable, whereas that below 50 indicates otherwise. As for statistics on the business prospects of prominent establishments in Hong Kong, users may

refer to the publication entitled "Report on Quarterly Business Tendency Survey" released by the C&SD.

It should be noted that the results of the survey should be interpreted with care. The survey solicits feedback from a panel sample of about 600 SMEs each month and the survey findings are thus subject to sample size constraint. Views collected from the survey refer only to those of respondents on their own establishments rather than those on the respective sectors they are engaged in. Besides, in this type of opinion survey on expected business situation, the views collected in the survey are affected by the events in the community occurring around the time of enumeration, and it is difficult to establish precisely the extent to which respondents' perception of the business situation accords with the underlying trends. For this survey, main bulk of the data were collected in the last week of the reference month.

More detailed statistics are given in the "Report on Monthly Survey on the Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises". Users can download the publication at the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1080015&scode=300](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1080015&scode=300)).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact Industrial Production Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7246; email: [sme-survey@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:sme-survey@censtatd.gov.hk)).

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## **[AFCD appeals to public not to attempt to approach wild pigs](#)**

In response to an appeal made by an organisation to members of the public to guide wild pigs away from urban areas, a spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department today (January 11) strongly appealed to members of the public not to approach, or attempt to come into contact with or disturb, the animals in any way for safety's sake. Members of the public should keep calm and stay away from wild pigs upon encountering them.

Wild pigs are dangerous wild animals, especially those that have become accustomed to scavenging and being fed in urban areas, or are huge in size. They may bite or knock down members of the public while getting food from citizens.

In addition, wild pigs may also transmit zoonotic diseases, such as tuberculosis, hepatitis E, influenza A and Streptococcus suis infection, thereby posing threats to public health.

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## Exchange Fund Bills tender results

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

Exchange Fund Bills tender results:

Tender date : January 11, 2022  
Paper on offer : EF Bills  
Issue number : Q2202  
Issue date : January 12, 2022  
Maturity date : April 13, 2022  
Amount applied : HK\$236,254 MN  
Amount allotted : HK\$71,390 MN  
Average yield accepted : 0.14 PCT  
Highest yield accepted : 0.16 PCT  
Pro rata ratio\* : About 0 PCT  
Average tender yield : 0.16 PCT

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Tender date : January 11, 2022  
Paper on offer : EF Bills  
Issue number : H2231  
Issue date : January 12, 2022  
Maturity date : July 13, 2022  
Amount applied : HK\$57,230 MN  
Amount allotted : HK\$18,000 MN  
Average yield accepted : 0.21 PCT  
Highest yield accepted : 0.22 PCT  
Pro rata ratio\* : About 48 PCT  
Average tender yield : 0.25 PCT

\*"Pro rata ratio" refers to the average percentage of allotment with respect to each tender participant's tendered amount at the "highest yield accepted" level.

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Hong Kong Monetary Authority tenders to be held in the week beginning January 17, 2022:

Tender date : January 18, 2022  
Paper on offer : EF Bills  
Issue number : Q2203

Issue date : January 19, 2022  
Maturity date : April 20, 2022  
Tenor : 91 Days  
Amount on offer : HK\$65,606 MN

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Tender date : January 18, 2022  
Paper on offer : EF Bills  
Issue number : H2232  
Issue date : January 19, 2022  
Maturity date : July 20, 2022  
Tenor : 182 Days  
Amount on offer : HK\$17,000 MN

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Tender date : January 18, 2022  
Paper on offer : EF Bills  
Issue number : Y2285  
Issue date : January 19, 2022  
Maturity date : January 18, 2023  
Tenor : 364 Days  
Amount on offer : HK\$5,000 MN

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## Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, January 11, 2022 is 95.4 (same as yesterday's index).

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## Fish ball sample detected with methylmercury at level that may have breached Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) Regulations

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (January 11) announced that a loose-packed fish ball sample was detected with methylmercury, a metallic contaminant, at a level which may have contravened the Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) Regulations. The CFS is following up on the incident.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS collected the above-mentioned sample from a restaurant in Mong Kok for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained methylmercury at a level of 0.2 part per million. The CFS' risk assessment revealed that if prolonged consumption of the compounded food occurs, the concerned metal level may pose an adverse effect on health."

The spokesman said that the CFS had informed the restaurant concerned and had requested it to stop the sale of the affected product.

"Methylmercury is the major form of mercury in fish. At high levels, mercury can affect foetal brain development, and affect vision, hearing, muscle co-ordination and memory in adults. Furthermore, as some international organisations such as the World Health Organization have pointed out, consuming predatory fish species is the main source of mercury intake for human beings. The report of the CFS' Total Diet Study has also pointed out that large fish or predatory fish species may contain high mercury levels (for example, tuna, alfonso, shark, swordfish, marlin, orange roughy and king mackerel). Hence, groups particularly susceptible to the adverse effects of mercury, such as pregnant women, women planning pregnancy and young children, should opt for fish that are smaller in size for consumption and avoid consumption of the above-mentioned types of fish to minimise excessive exposure to metal contaminants in food," he added.

According to the Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) Regulations (Cap. 132V), any person who sells food with metallic contamination in an amount that is dangerous or prejudicial to health is liable upon conviction to a fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. An investigation is ongoing.