

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

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (February 9) the results of the Monthly Survey on Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) for January 2021.

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The current diffusion index (DI) on business receipts amongst SMEs went up from 35.6 in December 2020 in the contractionary zone to 38.1 in January 2021, whereas the one-month's ahead (i.e. February 2021) outlook DI on business receipts was 41.9. Analysed by sector, the current DIs on business receipts for most of the surveyed sectors rose in January 2021 as compared with previous month. Though contracting to a lesser extent, the current DIs on business receipts for some sectors were far below the 50-mark in January 2021, particularly for the restaurants (from 14.3 to 24.0), retail trade (from 32.0 to 35.8) and wholesale trade (from 32.4 to 37.1).

The current DI on new orders for the import and export trades increased from 41.5 in December 2020 to 42.4 in January 2021, whereas the outlook DI on new orders in one month's time (i.e. February 2021) was 44.2.

## Commentary

A government spokesman said that business sentiment among SMEs remained subdued in January 2021 despite some relative improvement, with the sub-indices across all sectors staying below the boom-bust divide. In particular, the sub-indices for restaurants and retail trade remained deep in the contractionary zone, reflecting the severe disruptions to consumption-related activities caused by the fourth wave of local epidemic.

The spokesman added that putting the epidemic under control at the soonest possible with the concerted effort of the whole community is of pivotal importance to the revival of business confidence and hence the attainment of a full-fledged economic recovery. The Government will monitor the developments 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/hkstat/sub/sp300.jsp?productCode=B1080015](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp300.jsp?productCode=B1080015)).

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)).