

Objective

The data presented in this report were compiled from the results of the Annual Survey of Services 2007. The purpose of the survey is to obtain detailed information of firms in the services sector for the compilation of business and economic indicators to monitor the performance of services industries. The data are also used as inputs for the compilation of national accounts, input-output tables and balance of payments. These statistics are used extensively by the government, business community and academicians in their policy-making, business planning and research.

Legal Authority

The survey was conducted under the Statistics Act (Chapter 317), which made the submission of returns mandatory. The Act also stipulated that the contents of individual returns received would be kept confidential and used only for statistical purposes.

Scope and Coverage

The survey covered all establishments, including statutory boards, engaged in wholesale trade. Please refer to Appendix I for the list of activities covered. Government ministries and departments were outside the scope of the survey.

Methodology

Sample Selection

The sampling frame was based on the list of 'live' establishments obtained from the Department's Commercial Establishment Information System (CEIS). Information in the CEIS is regularly updated through simple postal surveys of newly registered companies, businesses and societies, and through extracting relevant information from administrative and other sources such as ACRA, newspaper advertisements, Registry of Societies, various business and trade associations and business and telephone directories.

The sampling method for the survey was based on stratified random sampling. All establishments in the sampling frame were first stratified by activity and within each activity, establishments were stratified by operating receipts into three size strata (large, medium and small). All establishments in the large size stratum were selected with certainty whereas the firms in the medium and small size strata were selected using simple random sampling without replacement. The Lavallée and Hidioglou method was used to determine the size stratum

boundaries and sample sizes that minimize the total sample size required to achieve the target level of precision of estimation.

Data Collection

The survey was primarily conducted by mail inquiry, using a standard questionnaire (Appendix II). Respondents were given a month to complete and submit their returns together with a copy of relevant financial statements. A reminder was sent to establishments which failed to respond without reasonable explanations. A second reminder was sent to establishments which did not respond to the first reminder.

A generalised survey system, Survey Answering Guide Expert (SAGE) was used in the annual survey. The system supports multiple modes of data collection via mail and internet. Secured transmission of statistical information via the internet was enabled through a service known as E-Survey. Queries or clarifications with respondents on omissions and inconsistencies were conducted through telephone, field visits or correspondence.

Response

The mailing list for the survey comprised 4,846 establishments. At the close of the survey, 1,053 establishments were excluded from the survey for one reason or another. Such cases included those that were dormant, untraceable or had not started business operations yet. Some had ceased operations or were engaged in activities that were outside the coverage of the survey. For final tabulation and analysis, returns from 3,793 establishments were used.

Data Processing

The Department processed completed returns received via mail using the conventional data entry method. Data submitted via internet were captured directly into the database. All data of completed returns were manually scrutinised and edited before they were coded and processed by computer. The manually edited data were entered via net-worked personal computers to a data server for processing. The data were then computer-edited for code validity, completeness and consistency in order to detect the less obvious errors and inconsistencies that had escaped manual detection or had occurred during the data entry phase. The erroneous data were amended and re-processed. Tabulation was carried out only after all records had passed the computer editing.

Estimation Method

Stratified (Horvitz-Thompson) estimator was used to estimate population totals. Within the take-some and take-all strata, imputation was performed using either historical or donor method, whichever that is most appropriate for the non-response cases.

Enumeration Unit

The enumeration or reporting unit used in the survey was the 'establishment'. An establishment is defined as a business or organisation unit engaged in one activity and operating in a single location. Thus, conceptually, for a multi-activity firm or organisation, units engaged in separate activities in the same location constitute distinct establishments. Similarly, each branch of a multi-branch organisation at a different location is conceptually a different establishment. However, if in practice, the accounts are centrally kept such that it is not possible to obtain separate data for each individual unit or branch, the organisation or enterprise is treated as a single reporting unit and allowed to submit a consolidated return covering all the units or branches.

Year of Reference

The period of reference was the calendar year 2007. However, for establishments whose accounting year differed from the calendar year, they were asked to report according to the accounting or financial year covering the major part of 2007.

Type of Business Activity

Type of business activity refers to both principal and secondary activities. The principal activity is defined as the one in which the establishment devoted most of its resources or from which it derived most of its income. Secondary activities are those incidental or ancillary to the principal activity. The classification of the type of activity of the establishment is based on its principal activity and is in accordance with the "Singapore Standard Industrial Classification, 2005".

Type of Legal Organisation

The type of legal organisation refers to that of the enterprise rather than the establishment that is a statistical unit and not a legal entity. In a multi-establishment or multi-branch organisation, the legal status of each establishment or branch follows that of the enterprise or its head office. The types of legal organisation distinguished are sole-proprietorship, partnership, private limited company, public limited company, co-operative and others.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Area of Premises Area of premises refers to that occupied by the establishment for business purposes only. It does not include the area of open spaces, car parks, staff accommodation and unoccupied premises.

Capital Expenditure This refers to purchases of fixed assets and cost of alteration and major repairs to fixed assets during the year.

Cost of Purchases Sold This refers to total purchases of goods for resale adjusted for changes in stocks.

Depreciation This refers to the value, at current replacement cost, of reproducible fixed assets such as buildings, plants and machinery used during a period of time as a result of normal wear and tear, foreseen obsolescence and the normal rate of accidental damage.

Earnings-Expenditure Ratio Defined as the ratio of operating surplus to operating expenditure.

Employment Employment covers all persons engaged by the establishment as at 30 June 2007 or date nearest to it if the establishment is not in operation on that day. It includes those temporarily away on leave. Persons engaged are classified under the following categories –

(i) Paid Employees

Paid employees refer to workers on the payroll of the establishment and they include those on fixed remuneration, piece rate, and commission, as well as those engaged on contract and paid directly by the establishment. Paid employees are further categorised into full-time and part-time on the basis of whether or not they work more than 30 hours in a normal week.

(ii) Working Directors

Working directors refer to those who are actively engaged in running the business of the establishment.

(iii) Working Proprietors/Partners

Working proprietors or partners refer only to those who are actively engaged in running the business of the establishment.

(iv) Unpaid Family Workers

Unpaid family workers refer to relatives of proprietors or partners working in the establishment without receiving a fixed amount of remuneration.

Employee

Refers to employment excluding working proprietors and partners.

Expenditure

This item refers to the amount paid and payable for the purchase of goods and services during the reference year except capital expenditure. It comprises two broad components - operating and other expenditure.

(i) Operating Expenditure

This refers to all current expenditure incurred by the establishment in its business with adjustment for changes in stocks. It includes remuneration, purchases, indirect taxes, work given out, rental and maintenance of machinery and equipment, legal, accounting and other professional services, rental and maintenance of premises, depreciation, transport and travelling, utilities, advertisement, entertainment, stationery and printing, postage and telecommunications and other general expenses that are connected with the establishment's operation.

(ii) Other expenditure

This comprises non-operating expenditure such as bad debts written off, donations, fines, forfeitures, losses on sale of fixed assets and interest paid.

Fixed Assets

Fixed assets refer to all physical assets owned by the establishment. They include land, building and structure; transport equipment; computer and peripheral equipment; other machinery, equipment and furniture and fittings. Value of fixed assets as at beginning and end of 2007 are based on net book value. Purchases, alterations and major repairs or "capital expenditure" during the year are valued at actual costs incurred. Value of assets sold during the year refers to their book value and not the amount realised.

**Goods & Services
Tax (GST)**

This item refers to the indirect tax imposed on each sale of goods and services. It comprises two major components - input tax and output tax.

(i) Input Tax

This refers to the amount of GST paid by the registered suppliers on purchases from other registered suppliers but a credit may be claimed for this tax.

(ii) Output Tax

This refers to the amount of GST included in the price of goods and services sold by the supplier.

Gross Receipts

Gross receipts cover both the amount received and receivable for services rendered and other transactions made during the reference year. It comprises two broad components - operating and other receipts.

(i) Operating Receipts

This includes those arising from services rendered, commission charges, sale of goods, rental of premises, machinery and equipment and head office remittance for current expenses.

(ii) Other Receipts

This comprises non-operating income such as gains from sale of fixed assets, donations, grants/subsidies, subscriptions, interest, dividends, and other investment income.

Gross Sales Margin

This refers to the gross mark-up percentage of merchandise trade and is derived by using the following formula:

$$\text{Gross Sales Margin} = \left[\frac{\text{Sales of Goods}}{\text{Cost of Purchases Sold}} - 1 \right] \times 100\%$$

Net Profit/(Loss)

Net profit/loss refers to the amount derived during the year, excluding extraordinary items or amount due to prior year adjustments.

Operating Surplus

This refers to the amount of operating receipts less operating expenditure plus depreciation of fixed assets.

Profitability Ratio

Defined as the ratio of operating surplus to operating receipts. It shows the proportion of operating receipts that is converted to profits.

Remuneration

This refers to total remuneration of employee, which comprises three

components, namely, wages and salaries, employers' contribution to Central Provident Fund (CPF)/pension funds and other benefits. Remuneration of working proprietors and partners are excluded.

(i) Wages and Salaries

This refers to gross emoluments paid to employees during 2007, inclusive of commissions, bonuses, overtime pay and allowances before deduction of employees' contribution to CPF or any other deduction.

(ii) Employers' Contribution to CPF/Pension Funds

This refers to the net amount contributed by employers towards their employees' CPF/pension funds. It does not include the amount paid to retired employees under company pension scheme.

(iii) Other Benefits

This comprises medical benefits, cost of food, accommodation and other benefits in kind provided by employers. Allowances given to unpaid family workers are also included here.

(iv) Directors' Fee

This item refers only to the amount paid to directors for attending board of directors' meetings. It does not include the fees paid to directors who are actively engaged in running the establishment.

Stocks

This item refers to the book value of stocks owned by the establishment and comprised merchandise, raw materials, parts and accessories for rendering services to others.

Value Added (At Basic Price)

This comprises the value of operating surplus, remuneration and indirect taxes. The impact of taxes including Goods & Services Tax (and subsidies) on products is removed.