Objective

The data presented were compiled from the results of the Annual Survey of Services 2018.

The objective of the survey is to gather information on the services sector for studying the structure and performance of the various activities in the sector. The data are also used for the compilation of national accounts, input-output tables and other related studies. In addition, the results are used by policy makers, economic planners, academicians, the business community and other interested users in their work.

Legal Authority

The survey is conducted under the Statistics Act (Chapter 317), which makes the submission of returns mandatory. Individual returns received are kept in confidence in accordance with the Statistics Act.

Scope and Coverage

The survey covered establishments engaged in retail trade, excluding establishments and individual self-employed persons not registered with the Accounting & Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA).

Sample Selection

The sampling frame is based on the list of 'live' establishments obtained from the Department's establishment database. The database is updated regularly using information obtained from administrative and survey sources.

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 Hidiroglou method was used to determine the size stratum boundaries and sample sizes that minimise the total sample size required to achieve the target level of precision of estimation.

Data Collection

Respondents could submit their survey returns via the internet and mail. 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 or email.

Respondents were given 6 weeks to complete and submit their returns. 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.

Response

The survey covered a total of 5,925 establishments in the retail trade industry. At the close of the survey, 391 establishments were excluded for one reason or another, such as those that had ceased, or were dormant, untraceable, not in operation yet or engaged in activities outside the scope of the survey. For compilation purpose, survey returns from 4,308 establishments were used. In addition, administrative data were used to supplement the survey data for final tabulation and analysis.

Data Processing

All data of completed returns were computer-edited for code validity, completeness and consistency to detect errors and inconsistencies. The erroneous data were then 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 the population totals. For non-response cases, imputation was performed.

Year of Reference

The period of reference is the calendar year 2018. 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 2018.

Type of Business Activity

The type of business activity refers to the principal activity undertaken by the establishment. The principal activity is defined as the one in which the establishment devotes most of its resources or from which it derives most of its income. The classification of the principal activity of the establishment is based on the “Singapore Standard Industrial Classification, 2015 (Version 2018)”.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

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.

Establishment Defined as a business or organisation unit engaged in one activity and operating in a single location. Thus, 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.

Operating Expenditure This refers to all expenditure incurred by the establishment in its business, with adjustment for changes in inventory. 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, fuel, freight charges, and other expenses that are connected with the establishment's operation. It excludes Additional Registration Fee and Certificates of Entitlement for motor vehicles and motorcycles.

Operating Receipts This refers to income earned from business operations, i.e. income from services rendered, sale of goods, commission fees and rental of premises, machinery and equipment. It excludes Additional Registration Fee and Certificates of Entitlement for motor vehicles and motorcycles.

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

Remuneration Total remuneration comprises three components, namely, wages and salaries, employers' contribution to Central Provident Fund (CPF)/pension funds and other benefits. These are reported separately for each category of persons engaged.

(i) Wages and Salaries

This refers to gross emoluments paid to employees during 2018, inclusive of commissions, bonuses, overtime pay and allowances before deduction of employees' contribution to CPF or any other deduction. For proprietors or partners, the item refers to amount paid to or withdrawn by them during the year. However, this amount is not included in the analysis and tables of the report.

(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 and 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.

Retail Sales Per Square Metre

Defined as retail sales divided by total floor area (in square metres). Floor area includes selling space, office space and storage space at the premise, but excludes those rented out, open spaces, open car parks, staff accommodation and unoccupied premises. Space occupied by concessionaires is also included for department stores and supermarkets.

Value Added (At Basic Price)

This comprises the value of operating surplus, remuneration and taxes (less subsidies) on production.