



Profile of Singapore's Legal Industry

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Introduction

The legal industry plays an important role in Singapore's economy. A strong legal industry is both an enabler for other sectors of the economy, as well as an economic engine in its own right.

In 2017, there were about 1,000 firms in the legal industry, employing 12,900 workers¹, of which about half were lawyers.

The nominal value added (VA) of the legal industry in Singapore reached \$2.1 billion in 2017, contributing to approximately 0.5% of Singapore's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Over the same period, legal services amounting to \$0.9 billion were exported from Singapore.

This article presents a profile of Singapore's legal industry and discusses its contribution to the Singapore economy.

Majority of Law Practices are Singapore Law Practices

Singapore's legal industry landscape comprises Singapore Law Practices (SLPs), Foreign Law Practices (FLPs), Qualifying Foreign Law Practices (QFLPs) and Joint Law Ventures (JLVs)². In addition, there are Formal Law Alliances (FLAs) where one or more SLPs and one or more FLPs and/or QFLPs enter into a "best friends" relationship and collaborate as freestanding law practices.³

SLPs, FLPs, QFLPs and JLVs differ in terms of the scope of Singapore law-related legal services that they are allowed to offer in or from Singapore.

A SLP is allowed to provide Singapore law-related legal services in all areas of legal practice, while a FLP is allowed to provide Singapore law-related legal services only in the limited context of international commercial arbitration or in relation to the Singapore International Commercial Court, through certain types of registered lawyers.

1 Estimated by the Ministry of Law.

2 A JLV is a legal entity formed between a SLP and either a FLP or a QFLP.

3 The member law practices in a FLA remain distinct entities and may only provide legal services that their respective law practices and lawyers are allowed to provide under the Legal Profession Act.

The QFLP scheme allows a foreign law practice which obtains a QFLP license to provide Singapore law-related legal services in permitted areas of legal practice through certain types of registered lawyers. There is an application and selection process prior to a QFLP licence being awarded.

Similarly, a JLV is allowed to provide Singapore law-related services in permitted areas of legal practice through certain types of registered lawyers. However, the constituent FLP/QFLP in a JLV can only practise law in or from Singapore through the JLV.

In 2017, most law practices are SLPs, followed by FLPs, QFLPs and JLVs (Chart 1).

Among SLPs, about 81% employed 1 to 5 lawyers; 16% employed 6 to 30 lawyers, while the remaining SLPs employed over 30 lawyers each (Chart 2).

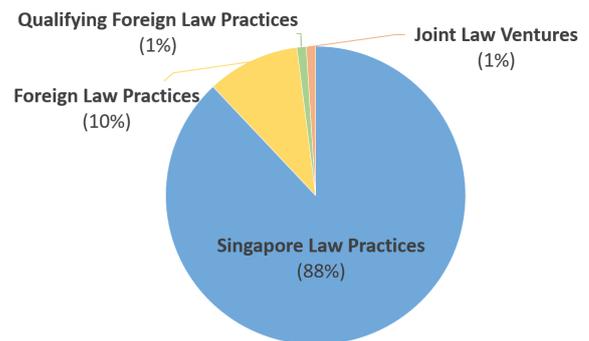
SLPs Contributed Two-Thirds of the Legal Industry's Value Added

The nominal VA of the legal industry in Singapore grew by more than 40% over the past decade, from \$1.5 billion in 2008 to \$2.1 billion in 2017, following liberalisation of the legal sector in 2008 – the year in which the Ministry of Law (MinLaw) introduced the QFLP scheme, enhanced the JLV and FLA schemes, and allowed FLPs to provide Singapore law-related services in the context of international commercial arbitration. The annualised growth rate of the nominal VA of the legal industry for the period between 2008 and 2017 was 4%.

In 2017, SLPs contributed around two-thirds of the legal industry's VA. FLPs and QFLPs contributed 16% and 14% respectively, while JLVs contributed 3% (Chart 3).

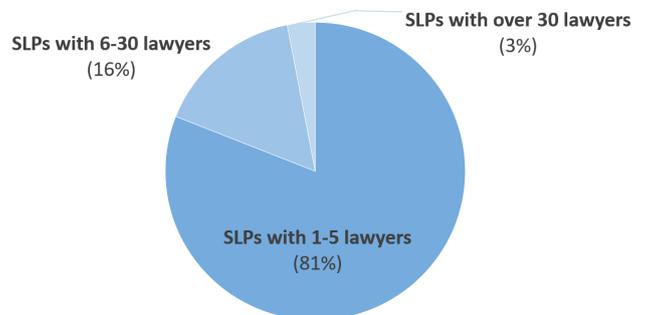
Among the SLPs, those which employed over 30 lawyers contributed 62% of the SLPs' VA. SLPs which employed 1 to 5 lawyers contributed 18%, and SLPs which employed 6 to 30 lawyers contributed 20% (Chart 4).

CHART 1 DISTRIBUTION OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF LAW PRACTICES, 2017



Source: Ministry of Law (Legal Services Regulatory Authority)

CHART 2 DISTRIBUTION OF SINGAPORE LAW PRACTICES (SLPs) BY SIZE, 2017



Source: Ministry of Law (Legal Services Regulatory Authority) and Supreme Court

CHART 3 CONTRIBUTION OF VALUE ADDED BY DIFFERENT TYPES OF LAW PRACTICES, 2017

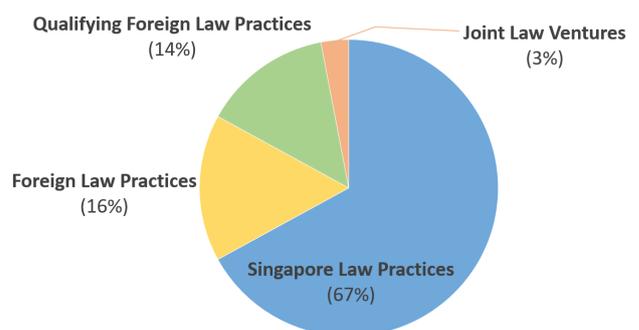
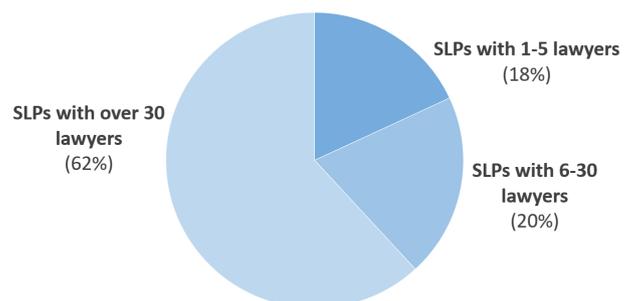


CHART 4 VALUE ADDED CONTRIBUTION OF SINGAPORE LAW PRACTICES (SLPs) BY SIZE, 2017



Source for Charts 3 and 4: Singapore Department of Statistics
Note: The value added breakdown for 2017 is estimated.

Exports of Legal Services Grew Over the Last Decade

Between 2008 and 2017, the value of legal services exported from Singapore more than doubled, from \$0.4 billion to \$0.9 billion. The value of legal services exported as a percentage of operating receipts increased from 19% in 2008 to 29% in 2017 (Chart 5).

The growth in exports of legal services suggests that there is scope for Singapore lawyers and SLPs to venture out of Singapore to meet and capture a greater share of international demand for legal services.

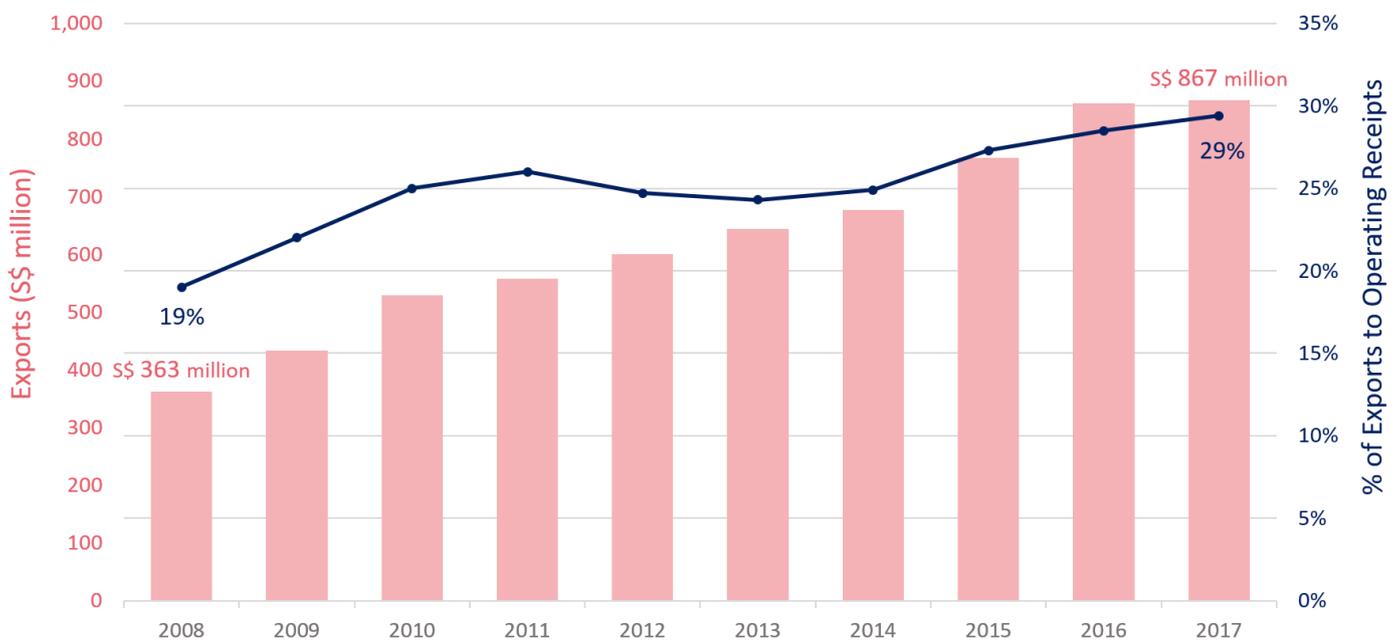
Conclusion

The legal industry plays an important role in maintaining Singapore’s role as an international financial and commercial centre.

Strong rule of law and high quality of legal services provide a foundation for economic growth, and give businesses the confidence to invest in Singapore.

MinLaw will build upon Singapore’s strengths as an international legal services hub to further develop the legal industry, focusing on potential high growth practice areas.

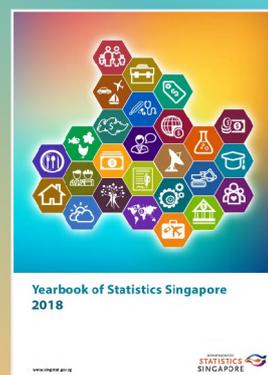
CHART 5 VALUE OF LEGAL SERVICES EXPORTED FROM SINGAPORE, 2008 - 2017



Source: Singapore Department of Statistics

Obtain the latest official statistics on economic and socio-demographic characteristics of Singapore from the **Yearbook of Statistics 2018**. It contains over 270 statistical tables and infographics.

Download a copy at: www.singstat.gov.sg/yos



Outcomes of the 8th Session of the ASEAN Community Statistical System (ACSS) Committee

By
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Introduction

The ASEAN Community Statistical System (ACSS) Committee had its origins as the ASEAN Heads of Statistical Offices Meeting (AHSOM), with its first meeting convened in 1997. The AHSOM, with strong support from the ASEAN Secretariat, spearheaded and laid the foundation for statistical cooperation within ASEAN. The reconstitution of AHSOM into the ACSS Committee, and the official endorsement by the 43rd Meeting of the ASEAN Economic Ministers in August 2011 in Indonesia, further fortified the ACSS Committee's role as a valuable partner in supporting regional policy making by addressing the statistical needs of the ASEAN community.

On 9 to 11 October 2018, the Singapore Department of Statistics hosted and chaired the 8th session of the ACSS Committee (ACSS8). Aligned with the overall ASEAN Singapore 2018 tagline of "Resilient & Innovative", and as part of the ACSS Committee's continuous commitment to further enhance regional statistical cooperation and respond proactively to emerging statistical requirements, the following theme was adopted for the 2018 ACSS work programme:

"Innovation in Statistics Collection, Compilation, Dissemination and Communication to Meet Increasing Data Requirements of the ASEAN Community"

Close to 60 delegates, comprising the heads and representatives of ASEAN National Statistical Offices, the ASEAN Secretariat, development partners and international organisations, graced the session with their presence and active participation in the discussions.

Key Deliverables at ACSS8

In meeting the increasing statistical requirements of ASEAN regional policy makers for the monitoring of ASEAN community goals, the ACSS8 adopted the ACSS Protocol for New Data Request from ASEAN Sectoral Bodies. The protocol, taking into consideration the statistical capacity of ASEAN Members States, will guide the prioritisation of future new data requests from the ASEAN Sectoral Bodies for statistical indicators as well as the allocation of resources for provision of statistics in a timely manner.

Another important initiative was the review of the ASEAN Statistical Indicators (ASI) to ensure that the indicators compiled by the ACSS remain relevant to the regional policy makers. The ACSS8 endorsed the updated list of ASI which incorporated new priorities from the various sectoral bodies, including new areas of statistics on the National Accounts and Sustainable Development Goals indicators.

The ACSS8 recognised the considerable benefits of more Open Data practices through easier access to official statistics required for informed policy planning, decision making, research and analyses at the ASEAN regional and national levels.

The Concept Note on ACSS Open Data Initiative for Statistics was adopted by the ACSS8 and will serve as a reference in implementing Open Data Initiative initially at regional level and, upon further assessment, at the national level.

Besides meeting increasing data requirements through the compilation and dissemination of more relevant indicators, the ACSS made advancements in improving the communication of statistics.

The ACSS8 noted with appreciation the development of the 'ASEAN Statistical Highlights 2018' publication with good visualisation and storytelling elements to better communicate key regional statistics. This special publication for distribution at the 33rd ASEAN Summit in November 2018 will further enhance the visibility and usefulness of ASEAN statistics.

The ACSS8 also welcomed the launch of a new ASEAN Statistics category in the SingStat Mobile Application by the Singapore Department of Statistics. Users in the region and beyond can now access widely used ASEAN statistics while on-the-go through the SingStat Mobile App which is available for free download on mobile devices.

Key Achievements at the National Level

At the national level, the ASEAN Member States also demonstrated their dedication in meeting increasing data requirements of their national data users. The ACSS8 commended the various efforts of the ASEAN Member States, such as the development of new indicators and the further strengthening of statistical capacity and cooperation within the respective countries.

Specifically, for the preparation for the upcoming Population and Housing Census, Economic Census and Agriculture Census, the ACSS8 was encouraged by the innovative approaches to data collection, compilation, dissemination and communication that the ASEAN Member States were considering.

Some examples include:

- (i) the adoption of the register-based approach that maximises the use of administrative data;
- (ii) the use of Big Data such as geospatial information and mobile positioning data;
- (iii) the efforts in providing respondents with a more positive survey experience through multi-modal data collection; and
- (iv) the plans to communicate and disseminate Census findings in an interesting and engaging manner through infographics and other visuals.

Development Partners and International Organisations

The ACSS8 expressed appreciation to the development partners and international organisations for playing a critical role in building and levelling up ASEAN's statistical capacity and expertise over the years. Their sharing of relevant experiences and best practices on conducting the Population and Housing Census, Economic Census or Agriculture Census enabled the ACSS8 to gain valuable insights.

Special thanks were accorded to the European Union (EU)-ASEAN Capacity Building Project for Monitoring Integration Progress and Statistics (COMPASS) in providing Technical Assistance to support the development of the ACSS and the ASEAN integration monitoring system over the period of 2014 to 2018.

The ACSS8 was pleased to note the upcoming commencement of the ASEAN Regional Integration Support by the EU (ARISE) Plus Programme in support of ASEAN statistics capacity building activities.

Conclusion

The meeting was fruitful and concluded on a positive note, with the ACSS8 achieving commendable progress through the deliberations.

The ACSS8 appreciated the excellent chairmanship of the Singapore Department of Statistics, and the warm hospitality and impeccable arrangements for the session.

The ACSS8 also welcomed the ACSS Chairmanship of the Thailand National Statistical Office in 2019.

The **Joint Media Statement of the ACSS8** is available from:

www.singstat.gov.sg/whats-new/latest-news/ACSS8



Delegates at the ACSS8 Open Session on 10-11 October 2018



ASEAN Statistical Highlights 2018



An initiative of the 8th Session of the ASEAN Community Statistical System Committee (ACSS8), the **ASEAN Statistical Highlights 2018** features infographics and storytelling elements to better communicate key ASEAN statistics. Selected statistics are featured below.

Socio-Demography

ASEAN Population in 2017 reached **642.4 million**

ASEAN Population Density was **141.3 persons/km²**

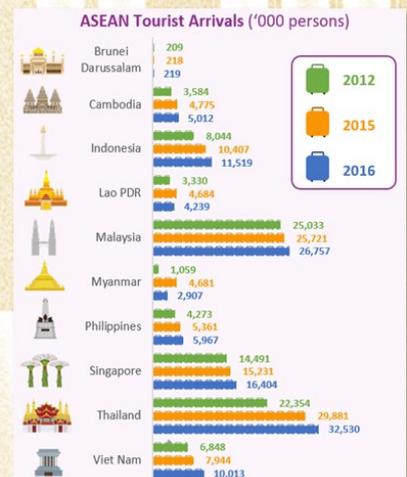


Gross Domestic Product

ASEAN GDP at Current Prices (Billion USD)



Connectivity



Trade



Investment

Net ASEAN FDI Inflows^a by Sectors, 2017 (million USD)

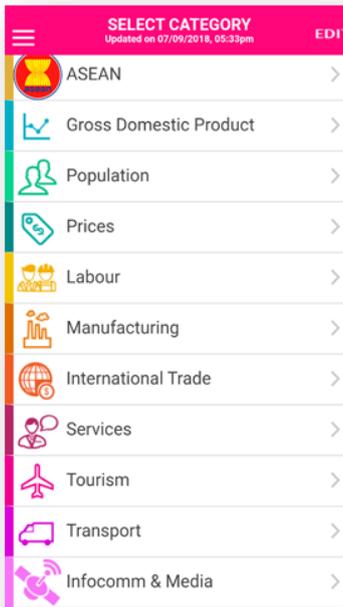


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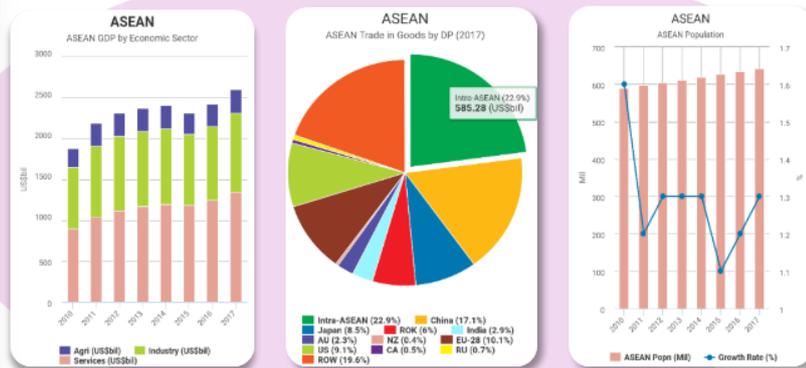




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GDP

- ✓ GDP
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- ✓ GDP by Economic Sector
- ✓ GDP Growth at Constant Prices

Trade

- ✓ ASEAN Trade in Goods
- ✓ ASEAN Trade in Goods by Development Partners
- ✓ ASEAN Trade in Services
- ✓ ASEAN Trade in Services by Category

Investment

- ✓ ASEAN Net FDI Inflows by Sector
- ✓ Intra- and Extra-ASEAN Net FDI Inflows
- ✓ ASEAN Net FDI Inflows by ASEAN 6 and CLMV
- ✓ Major ASEAN Net FDI Inflow Sources

Connectivity

- ✓ ASEAN Tourist Arrivals
- ✓ Major ASEAN Tourist Arrival Sources
- ✓ ASEAN International Air Passengers
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Are the Old-Age Support Ratio Trends Similar Across Different Working-Age Groups?

The old-age support ratio (OASR) is the ratio of persons in the working-age group to those who are older. It is one of the frequently used indicators for monitoring changes in the age structure of a population.

The working-age group of 15-64 years is conventionally used in the computation of OASR. Since the early 2010s, Singapore has also been publishing the OASR based on the working-age group of 20-64 years, in view of the later entry of youths into the workforce due to their pursuit of tertiary education.¹ Arguably, one may suggest an even later entry age for the youths and a later retirement age for the elderly in Singapore.

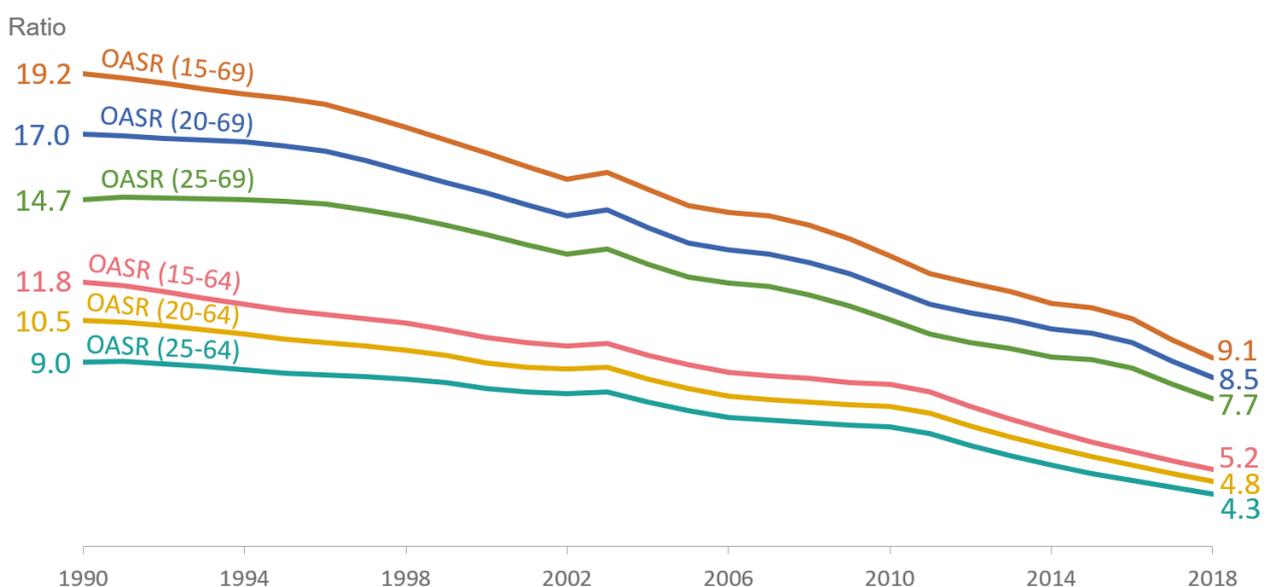
Singapore’s labour force participation rate of those aged 20-24 years has been falling over the years. Conversely, an increasing proportion of those aged 65 years and over continues to work beyond the current minimum retirement age of 62 years.²

Therefore, to look at the trends in the OASRs for varying working-age cut-offs using the standard 5-year age groups intervals, the following six working-age groups are considered:

- Conventional group of 15-64 years
- Group of 20-64 years generally used in Singapore
- Group of 25-64 for later entry into the workforce
- For the same starting ages of 15, 20 and 25 years, with a later cut-off age at 69 years to take into account those who work beyond 64 years old

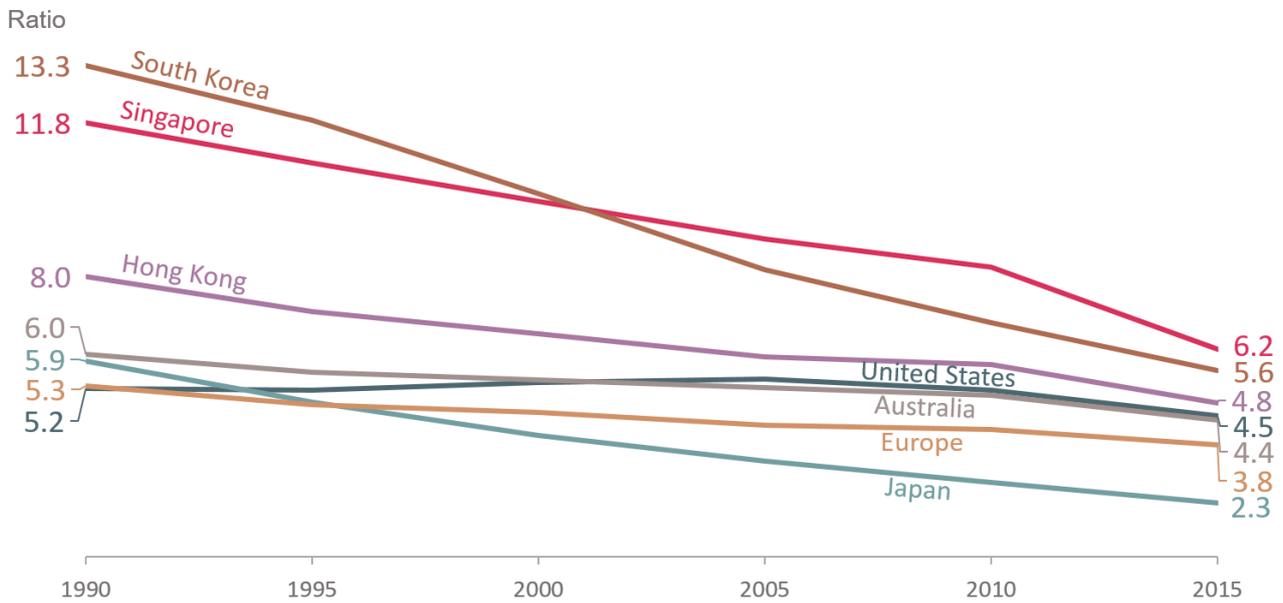
OASRs from 1990 to 2018 based on the six working-age cut-offs listed above for the Singapore resident population (i.e. Singapore citizens and permanent residents) are plotted in Chart 1, which shows that **the OASR has been trending downwards over the years for the different working-age cut-offs.** This trend is likely due to factors such as rising life expectancies and falling birth rates.

CHART 1 OLD-AGE SUPPORT RATIO (OASR) BASED ON VARIOUS WORKING-AGE GROUPS, 1990—2018



1 More historical data on Singapore’s OASR indicators as well as resident population by age group, ethnic group and sex, are available on the [SingStat Website](#).
 2 Based on resident population, with reference from the Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Ministry of Manpower.

CHART 2 INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON OF OLD-AGE SUPPORT RATIO (OASR) BASED ON WORKING-AGE GROUP 15-64 YEARS, 1990–2015



The declining OASR in Singapore between 1990 and 2015 mirrors the falling trend in other economies³ such as South Korea, Hong Kong and Japan (Chart 2).

Statistical indicators such as the OASR allow researchers, policymakers and the public to monitor

how the age structure of the population changes over time.

In view of the declining OASR, economies could take steps to enable their older residents to lead active lives, or to continue working if they wish to.

Singapore's Total Population as at end-June 2018:

5.64 Million

- 3.47 Mil Citizens
- 3.99 Mil Residents
- 0.52 Mil Permanent Residents

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Population Trends 2018

STATISTICS SINGAPORE

³ Data source for the indicator “Potential Support Ratio (Age 15-64 / Age 65+) De Facto population as of 1 July of the year indicated” for other economies: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017). [World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision, DVD Edition](#).

SingStat Website

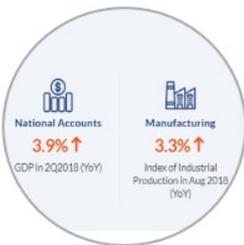
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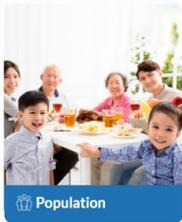
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Name	Description
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variables string (query)	Specify list of variable(s) to be returned by indicating the variableCode(s) for the table. There should be no spacing between the variable codes. Example: variableCode 1,variableCode 2
<input type="text" value="M601301.1.8"/>	
between string (query)	Specify a range within which the data values are to be filtered to give the returned result. The start and end points of the range are to be included. There should be no spacing between the values and commas. Example: 1560,1677
<input type="text" value="between - Specify a range within which the data values ar"/>	
sortBy string (query)	Sort the returned records in descending or ascending order by the following fields: time, level, value, variableCode and variableName. Example: value desc variableCode asc
<input type="text" value="value asc"/>	
offset string (query)	Specify the first n number of records to be excluded in the returned result. Example: offset=50
<input type="text" value="0"/>	
limit string (query)	Specify the number of records to be included in the returned result. Example: limit=50
<input type="text" value="2000"/>	
timeFilter string (query)	Return records of specific time points based on the type of selected table (monthly, half-yearly, quarterly, annual). There should be no spacing between commas. Example: For the quarterly table, timeFilter=2017_4Q,2018 1Q For the annual table, timeFilter=2017,2018 For the monthly table, timeFilter=2018 Mar For the half yearly table, timeFilter=2016 H1
<input type="text" value="2015,2016"/>	
search string (query)	Return records that contain the search string. Example: search=pre-paid This will return records containing the word 'pre-paid'.
<input type="text" value="utilities"/>	

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Test your statistical knowledge!

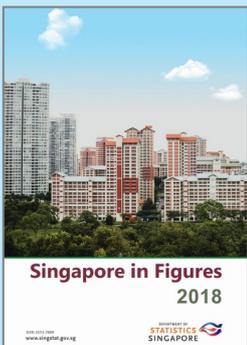
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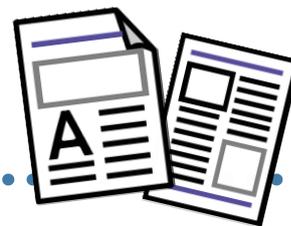
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