
APPENDICES

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Appendix 1 - Summary technical description of Building Crafts Survey

1. Survey name and status

Official name: “Business Survey on the Situation and Outlook in the Building Crafts Sector”.

Abbreviated names: “Business Survey of the Building Crafts Sector” or “Building Crafts Survey”.

On 2 June 2008, the Survey was submitted for review to the Quality Label Committee of the National Council for Statistical Information (Conseil National de l'Information Statistique: CNIS), which designated it as a statistical operation “of public interest” and certified its statistical quality.

2. Producer

INSEE, Department of Short-Term Analysis, Business Surveys Division.

3. Frequency

Quarterly: January, April, July, and October.

4. General purposes of Survey, main topics covered, and Survey variables

The purpose of the Building Crafts Survey is to supply timely information on conditions in the building crafts sector, for economic analysis and short-term forecasting of sector activity at national and European levels.

The Survey seeks to record business owners' opinions on their recent business activity and outlook. It does so by tracking the volume of business activity and related variables such as changes in turnover and workforce size. Business owners also provide estimates of their investments and an opinion on their cash-flow position, as well as on their customers' settlement times. The Survey thus provides information on the business trend in each sector of the building industry, along with explanations of these trends.

The questions are worded to facilitate fast response. Most questions are qualitative with a choice of three answers expressed in “increasing/unchanged/decreasing” or “above normal/normal/below normal” form. There are approximately fifteen questions. The responses to the quantitative questions (total turnover and turnover by project category; workforce size; share of work performed in public-sector projects) are preprinted: the enterprise is asked to update its responses only once a year, in April, when the structural constants are revised.

5. Characteristics of sample (units surveyed, survey field, sampling method, coverage rate, and response rate)

The units surveyed are enterprises (legal units). The Survey is conducted on a stratified sample of 1,500 building crafts enterprises. Sampling is performed by sector, though aggregation of several categories at NAF700 level and using three brackets for enterprise size.

The sectors covered are defined by the following codes of the French Product Classification (NAF Rev. 1): Division 45 (excluding 45.1, 45.2C, 45.2D, 45.2E, 45.2F, 45.2N, 45.2P, 45.2R, 45.2U, 45.3H, and 45.5Z). For NAF Rev. 2, which will come into effect in 2010, see box p. 13.

The sample consists of an enterprise panel, which is tracked continuously and revised once a year. Revision operations include removal of enterprises that have discontinued operations, and random sampling without replacement of the number of units needed to obtain a sample of the desired size. The principal sampling frame is INSEE's Annual Enterprise Survey (EAE), soon to be replaced by the Annual Industry Survey (ESA) in the construction industry.

The coverage rate of the building industry is under 2% as a percentage of turnover by building enterprises, slightly under 2% as a percentage of their workforce, and approximately 1% of the number of enterprises in the industry²³.

In 2008, the mean response rate was 48% as a percentage of enterprises having returned a questionnaire out of total number of questionnaires sent, and 65% in turnover-weighted terms.

²³ Estimate based on 2005 Annual Enterprise Survey (EAE).

6. Collection period and publication date

The Survey is performed quarterly. Collection takes place by postal mail from the end of the month before the Survey month m to a few days before the end of month m : questionnaires are posted around the 27th of month $m-1$, reminders are sent out around the 10th of month m , and results are published at the end of month m .

7. Processing of results

The results of a Survey are initially published in provisional form at the end of the Survey execution month. Three months later, when the following Survey is published, they are revised to incorporate late responses: these are referred to as the final figures.

INSEE calculates weighted averages of actual and imputed responses in the primary strata. Depending on the question, the weighting is based on the enterprise's turnover (total or by project category) or workforce size. The primary averages computed in the primary aggregation are aggregated to the various levels of publication or analysis using a weighted average based on adjustment coefficients. These are derived from sources external to the business survey: INSEE's Annual Enterprise Survey (EAE), to be replaced shortly by the corresponding Annual Industry Survey (Enquête Sectorielle Annuelle: ESA). The coefficients are updated annually when the sample is renewed.

8. Precision of balances of opinion

The rigorous method for computing the precision of a balance of opinion (or, more accurately, of its standard deviation linked to the sampling error) is described in detail in Caron, Ravalet, and Sautory (1996). When this method is applied to the balances of opinion for the total building crafts sector (field of survey), the sampling-related margin of uncertainty obtained does not exceed three points of the balance at the most aggregated level.

9. Users and uses of results

The Building Crafts Survey is used by:

- economic analysts and forecasters at INSEE, the Directorate-General of the Treasury and Economic Policy (DGTPE, a unit of the French Ministry of Economy, Industry, and Employment), and other institutes in France and abroad, as well as in international organisations such as the European Commission (most notably the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs [DG-Ecfin]), Eurostat, the European Central Bank (ECB), and OECD;
- decision-makers such as government officials, enterprises, and trade organisations;
- economists;
- economic journalists.

Survey results serve to track short-term developments in the economic sectors covered, as well as to prepare short-term business forecasts at two or three quarters:

- At national level, they are one of the sources used to prepare short-term analyses of the French economy.
- Some INSEE Regional Offices rely on Survey results as a source of initial indications on local construction-industry conditions. For this purpose, they use a reprocessing method that applies regional weightings to the detailed Survey figures. When used for such tracking of regional short-term developments, the Survey provides insights that allow regional analysts to corroborate or, on the contrary, to qualify impressions formed by examining other sources. This type of application seeks to meet the strong demand for short-term information often expressed by regional government bodies, local elected officials, and regional trade organisations.

10. Role and contribution of Survey in existing statistical system covering the same field

Business surveys are published very rapidly—faster than quantitative statistics. They also provide a relatively comprehensive and consistent view of an activity sector, shedding light on areas that are covered with considerable lags, if at all, by traditional statistics. They are a key source for gauging the expectations of businesses. At national level, some Survey results are also used to compile the short-term forecasts of production and workforce size in the construction industry published in INSEE's *Notes de Conjoncture* and *Points de Conjoncture*.

Appendix 2 - Main short-term questions in Building Crafts Survey

Summary of question topic	Response	Type of response	Frequency of question
Trend in your turnover in past three months (total and by project category)	increasing unchanged decreasing	three-choice	quarterly
Likely trend in your turnover in three months ahead (total and by project category)	increasing unchanged decreasing	three-choice	quarterly
Trend in subcontracting orders booked in past three months	increasing unchanged decreasing	three-choice	quarterly
General outlook for total building industry	increasing unchanged decreasing	three-choice	quarterly
Cash-flow position since previous survey	better comparable worse	three-choice	quarterly
Trend in settlement times (overall and by customer category)	getting shorter unchanged getting longer	three-choice	quarterly
Hiring problems	yes no	two-choice	quarterly
Apprentice training	yes no	two-choice	quarterly
Total number of persons employed in past three months	increasing unchanged decreasing	two-choice	quarterly
Likely trend in number of persons employed in three months ahead	increasing unchanged decreasing	three-choice	quarterly

Summary table of questions asked in each Survey month

	January, July, and October	April
Structural data (total turnover and turnover by project category, share of subcontracting work, total workforce, share of work performed on public-sector projects)		x
Short-term data		
Past turnover	x	x
. all projects	x	x
. construction of new buildings	x	x
. improvement and maintenance of dwellings	x	x
. other improvement and maintenance	x	x
of which: public-sector projects	x	x
of which: private-sector projects	x	x
Expected turnover	x	x
. all projects	x	x
. construction of new buildings	x	x
. improvement and maintenance of dwellings	x	x
. other improvement and maintenance	x	x
Subcontracting orders booked	x	x
General business outlook	x	x
Cash-flow position	x	x
Settlement times	x	x
. all projects	x	x
Hiring problems	x	x
Apprentice training	x	x
Past workforce size	x	x
Expected workforce size	x	x
Investment expenditures	x	x

Appendix 3 - *Questionnaire model, 2009*

The four quarterly questionnaires in a given year are identical.

Space for INSEE use only
QN23H/V 0001 SIRET -

INSEE contact for this questionnaire:

Phone:
Fax:
E-mail:

Paris, [date]

**QUARTERLY BUSINESS SURVEY
OF BUILDING CRAFTS
April 2009**
Please return this questionnaire by [date]

We invite you to respond to this survey online at <http://conjoncture.entreprises.insee.fr>.
If you have lost your codes, please email our support staff at assistance-conjoncture@insee.fr,
giving your SIREN [business registration] number and the name of the survey.

Dear Respondent,

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your response will help to assess current conditions in your industry. The summary of the Survey results, in the *Informations Rapides* series, will be released on the INSEE website on the Survey publication date (www.insee.fr: (1) click on red box entitled "Thèmes" at the top; (2) in the list of topics on the left, click on "Conjoncture"; (3) click on "Indicateurs de Conjoncture").

Éric Dubois
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The National Council for Statistical Information [CNIS] has recognised this Survey as being **in the public interest**, certified its **statistical quality**, and classified it as non-compulsory. CNIS Quality Label no. 2009T703EC valid for 2009.
Under Article 6 of Act no. 51-711 of 7 June 1951 (amended) on legal obligation, coordination, and confidentiality in the field of statistics, the information provided in response to this questionnaire shall in no circumstances be used for the purpose of tax audits or investigation of illegal business practices. This questionnaire is confidential and intended for use by INSEE's Head Office.
Act 78-17 of 6 January 1978 on information technology, data files, and civil liberties gives private individuals concerned the right to access and correct data concerning them. This right may be exercised by filing a request with the INSEE Head Office.

COMMENTS

Name and position of respondent:

Phone:

E-mail:

Your email address will enable INSEE to alert you when business surveys become available on our online data-collection site: <http://conjoncture.entreprises.insee.fr>. We shall use the address for that sole purpose. Please correct any errors in the business address.

When you have filled in this questionnaire, please fold it so that the INSEE address (lower right) is visible in the window of the prepaid return envelope enclosed.

I - PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

1. Principal economic activity of your enterprise:

2. Breakdown of your turnover (sales), net of taxes, in metropolitan France, in **2008**:

	Total turnover (line FL of profit-and-loss statement in tax return)	Building work			
		New buildings		Improvement and maintenance	
		Dwellings	Other	Dwellings	Other
Totals in euros					
% of business performed on subcontracting basis		%			

3. Share of building work performed on public-sector projects %

4. Average workforce size in your enterprise in **2008** **employees**

II - HOW IS YOUR BUSINESS DOING?

(Circle the appropriate arrow)	Total projects	New buildings	Improvement and maintenance	
			Dwellings	Other
1a. Change in past 3 months.....	↗ → ↘	↗ → ↘	↗ → ↘	↗ → ↘
of which – public-sector projects.....	↗ → ↘			
– private-sector projects	↗ → ↘			
1b. Change in subcontracting orders booked in past 3 months.....	↗ → ↘			
2. Likely change in 3 months ahead.....	↗ → ↘	↗ → ↘	↗ → ↘	↗ → ↘

III - WHERE IS THE BUILDING INDUSTRY HEADING?

What is your business outlook for the building industry as a whole in the 3 months ahead? ↗ → ↘

IV - WHAT IS YOUR FINANCIAL POSITION?

1. Since the previous survey, your financial position is better comparable worse

2. Your customers' settlement times have been..... getting shorter unchanged getting longer

V - HOW ARE YOUR INVESTMENTS?

1. Did you make investments in **2008** ?..... YES NO

2. Will your expected investment expenditures in **2009** be:
 above comparable to below what they were in **2008**?

VI - WHAT IS THE EMPLOYMENT TREND IN YOUR ENTERPRISE?

1. Are you experiencing hiring problems? YES NO

2. Are you training apprentices? YES NO

3. Change in your total workforce (whether salaried or not) in past 3 months ↗ → ↘

4. Likely change in your total workforce (whether salaried or not) in 3 months ahead ↗ → ↘

