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Quarterly survey of the building crafts sector - January 2019

In January 2019, small building firms report a decrease in their past activity but the prospects remain favourable

Craftsmen are again less optimistic about their past activity

In January 2019, more business managers of small building firms than in October 2018 have indicated a decline in their past activity. The corresponding balance of opinion has decreased again sharply and has gone below its long-term average, reaching its lowest level since October 2016. By contrast, the balance on expected activity has recovered moderately after having dropped in October 2018 and stands above its long-term average.

However, building craftsmen's optimism about the general business outlook in the building sector is more muted: the corresponding balance has decreased since Spring 2018 while remaining well above its long-term average.

Employment expectations are more favourable, despite a more negative assessment on past staff size

The balance of opinion on development of staff size over the last few months has diminished strongly and has gone below its long-term average, reaching its lowest level since October 2015.

Conversely, many more business craftsmen than in October 2018 plan to increase their staff size over the next few months. The corresponding balance has bounced back and stands above its long-term average.

Half of small building firms face difficulties in recruiting staff

In January 2019, 51% of small building firms have experienced recruiting problems, a share slightly on the rise, equivalent to that measured in July 2018 and significantly higher than the long-term average. At the same time, 35% of building craftsmen have indicated training apprentices. This share has been dwindling since early 2018 and stands below its long-term average.

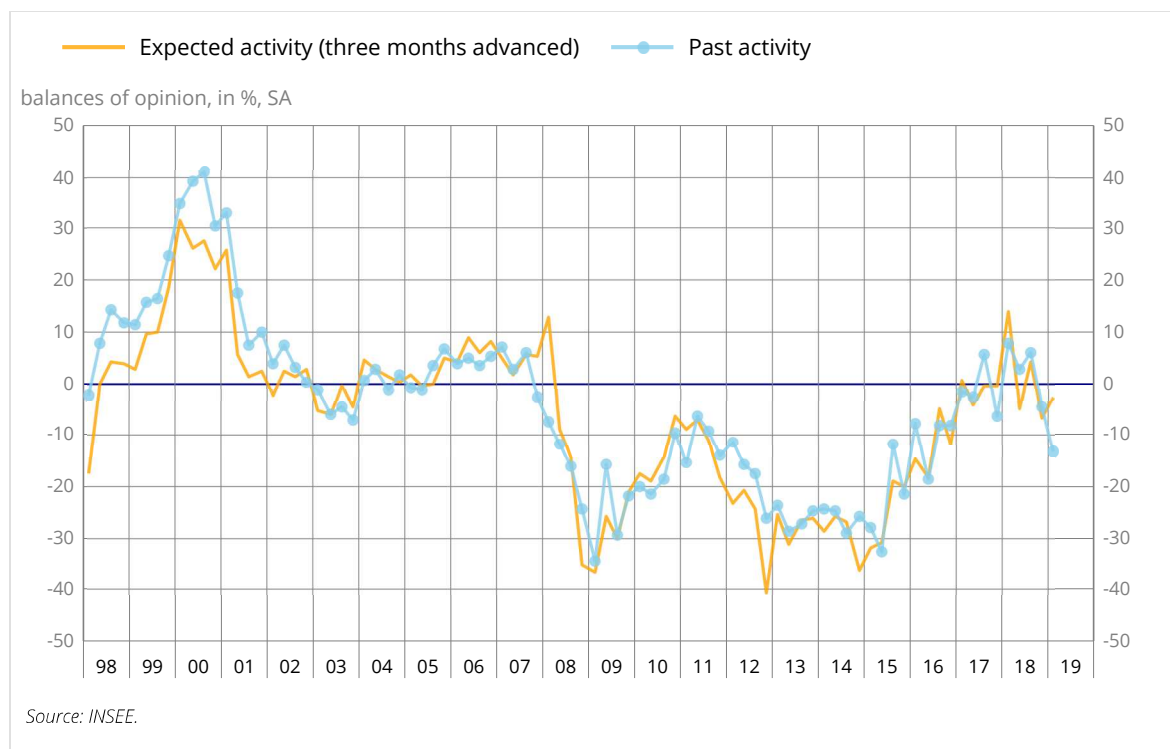
Building crafts sector economic outlook

	Mean*	April 18	July 18	Oct. 18	Jan. 19
Past activity	-5	3	6	-5	-13
Expected activity	-9	-5	4	-6	-3
General business outlook	-20	8	5	-3	-6
Past employment	-4	-4	-1	-1	-8
Expected employment	-4	0	6	-2	2
Recruiting problems (in %)	41	43	51	49	51
Apprentice training (in %)	38	38	37	36	35

* Mean since October 1990.

Source: French business survey, building crafts sector - INSEE

Activity tendency in the building crafts sector



For further information

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