S&P Global UK Services PMI®

Fastest rate of job shedding for nearly four years





Essential Intelligence

S&P Global UK Services PMI®

Contents

Key findings

Overview

Comment

Demand and outlook

Employment and capacity

Inflation

UK Composite PMI

Services sub-sectors Purchased goods and services Data

International PMI

Methodology

Further information

About the report

The S&P Global UK Services PMI[®] provides a timely snapshot of service sector performance. The report tracks monthly changes in activity, demand, employment and prices, compiled from survey responses from a representative panel of local service providers.

PMI by S&P Global

Purchasing Managers' Index[™] (PMI[®]) surveys are now available for over 40 countries and also for key regions including the eurozone. They are the most closely watched business surveys in the world, favoured by central banks, financial markets and business decision makers for their ability to provide up-to-date, accurate and often unique monthly indicators of economic trends.

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PMI[®] by S&P Global

Key findings

December 2024

Employment declines for the third month in a row

Marginal increase in business activity

Input cost inflation accelerates to an eight-month high

S&P Global UK Services PMI Business Activity Index December 2024

51.1

The Services PMI Business Activity Index is a diffusion index calculated from a question that asks for changes in the volume of business activity compared with one month previously. The index varies between 0 and 100, and is the sum of the percentage of 'higher' responses and half the percentage of 'unchanged' responses. A reading above 50 indicates an increase compared to the previous month, and below 50 a decrease. The index is seasonally adjusted.

For more information on the PMI survey methodology, click <u>here</u>.



Fastest rate of job shedding for nearly four years

December data from the S&P Global UK Services PMI[®] indicated a subdued end to 2024. Weak demand and higher payroll costs led to the steepest decline in service sector employment since January 2021.

Meanwhile, survey respondents were still cautious about the outlook for business activity in 2025. The degree of positive sentiment regarding growth prospects during the year ahead was unchanged from the 23-month low recorded in November. Service providers widely commented on concerns about cutbacks to business and consumer spending, alongside the impact of rising employers' National Insurance contributions.

At 51.1 in December, the headline seasonally adjusted S&P Global UK Services PMI[®] Business Activity Index was up slightly from 50.8 in November and above the neutral 50.0 value for the fourteenth consecutive month. However, the latest reading signalled only a marginal expansion of business activity. Moreover, on average in the final quarter of 2024, the index was the lowest for one year.

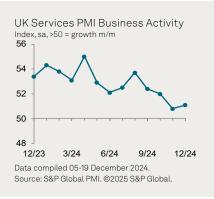
Subdued sales pipelines continued to hold back business activity growth in December. The latest survey indicated that total new orders were close to stagnation across the service economy. The respective index was the lowest since October 2023 and pointed to only a fractional increase in total new work. Anecdotal evidence typically cited falling confidence among clients in the wake of the Autumn Budget, especially due to forthcoming increases in employers' National Insurance contributions. Where new business growth was reported, this was often linked to resilient demand for technology services.

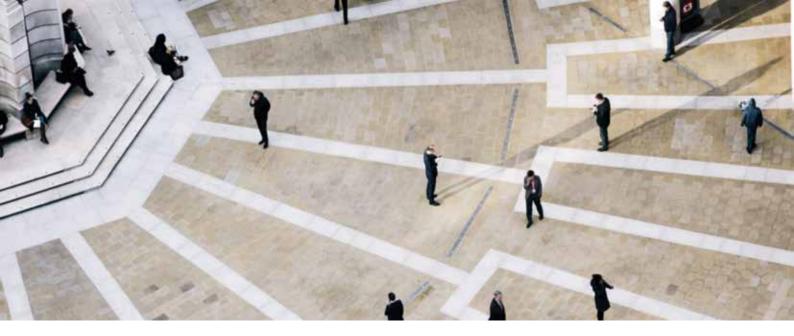
Lacklustre domestic and overseas economic conditions were commonly cited as weighing on customer demand. As a result, new export sales decreased for the first time since September 2023. Survey respondents commonly reported lower orders from EU clients, while some noted a boost from strong demand in US markets.

Employment was a weak spot for the service sector at the end of 2024. Lower staffing numbers have been recorded in each of the past three months and the latest reduction was the fastest since January 2021. Nearly twice as many survey respondents (23%) reported a fall in workforce levels as those that signalled a rise (12%). Service providers widely commented on hiring freezes and the non-replacement of leavers due to rising payroll costs.

Constrained recruitment plans, tight budget setting among clients, and worries about the broader UK economic outlook all contributed to subdued business optimism in December. The degree of positive sentiment was the joint-lowest for two years (equalling that seen in November).

Some firms suggested that rising cost inflation had dampened the growth outlook. The latest increase in input prices was the fastest since April 2024. Efforts to pass on higher salary payments and raw material costs led to a robust rise in prices charged across the service sector. The rate of inflation hit a six-month high in December and remained well above the pre-pandemic average.





Comment

Tim Moore, Economics Director at S&P Global Market Intelligence, said:

"The service sector ended last year with only a marginal upturn in business activity and a near-stalling of incoming new work. Survey respondents suggested that falling business and consumer confidence, largely due to worries about domestic economic prospects in 2025, had led to a considerable loss of growth momentum. While most parts of the UK service economy noted weak demand and cutbacks to client budgets, there remained pockets of strong growth in areas such as technology services.

"A post-Budget slump in business optimism persisted in December, with output growth expectations for the year ahead unchanged from November's 23-month low. Concerns about the impact of rising payroll costs, alongside a general unease about the climate for business investment, were reported as the main factors weighing on prospects for growth in 2025.

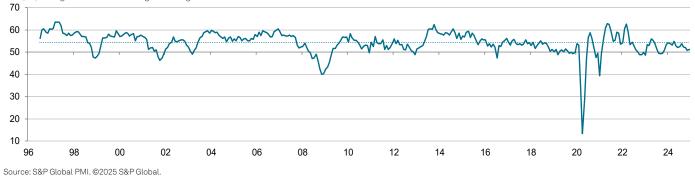
"Rising input price inflation added to the gloomy near-term outlook for service providers, with overall cost pressures reaching an eight-month high in December. Prices charged inflation meanwhile intensified at the end of last year and remained well in excess of prepandemic trends.

"Faced with subdued demand conditions and hikes to employment costs, many service providers opted to curtail their staff hiring and delay backfilling roles in December. Nearly one-in-four survey respondents saw an overall decline in their payroll numbers. Excluding the pandemic, this represented the steepest pace of job shedding for more than 15 years."

Contact

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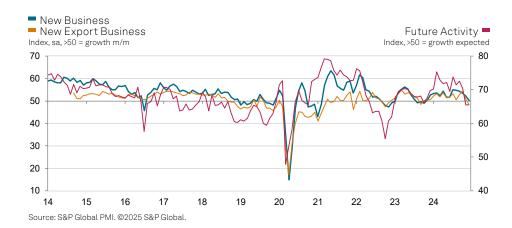




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Demand and outlook



New business intakes were close to stagnation at the end of 2024.

The respective seasonally adjusted index signalled only a fractional rise in new order intakes during December. Moreover, the rate of growth eased to its lowest since the current period of expansion began in November 2023.

New business expansion has lost momentum in each of the past five months. Service providers widely noted lacklustre sales pipelines due to weak business and consumer demand.

Many survey respondents cited reduced client confidence following the Autumn Budget, particularly in relation to planned increases in employers' National Insurance contributions. Where new business gains were reported, firms typically commented on strong demand for technology services and AI investment spending.

New export orders meanwhile returned to contraction territory in December, which ended a 14-month period of expansion. Lower volumes of new work from abroad were linked to a combination of Brexit trade frictions and weak underlying demand across Europe. Some service provided reported strengthening sales in US markets and other non-EU export destinations.

Meanwhile, service sector companies were upbeat about their business activity prospects in 2025. Around 48% expect a rise, while 17% forecast a decline. The degree of optimism was nonetheless unchanged from the 23-month low seen in November, largely due to concerns about the broader UK economic outlook.

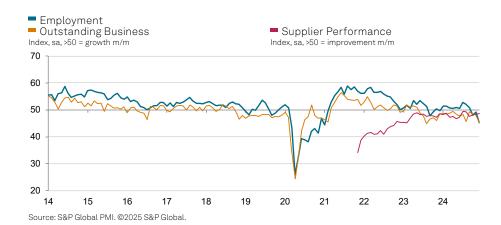


Source: S&P Global PMI. ©2025 S&P Global.





Employment and capacity

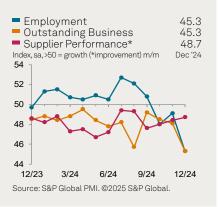


UK service providers reported an accelerated pace of job shedding in response to weak demand and rising payroll costs.

December data indicated a decline in staffing numbers for the third consecutive month. The seasonally adjusted Employment Index was the lowest since January 2021 and signalled a solid reduction in workforce levels. Aside from the pandemic, the latest decrease in employment was the steepest for just over 15 years.

Around 23% of the survey panel reported a fall in employment during December, while only 12% signalled a rise. Those indicating a decrease in staffing levels overwhelmingly commented on the impact of additional payroll costs, in particular those related to rising employers' National Insurance contributions in April 2025. Many firms noted hiring freezes and the non-replacement of voluntary leavers due to cost considerations, while some also reported staff redundancies.

A lack of pressure on business capacity was also a factor leading to lower employment levels in December. This was signalled by the steepest decline in backlogs of work across the service economy since August 2023.



Supplier performance

The Supplier Performance Index registered 48.7 in December, up fractionally from 48.4 in November but still below the crucial 50.0 nochange threshold. As a result, the latest reading signalled a marginal deterioration in overall supplier performance.

Ongoing delays with international shipping were reported as a reason for worsening supplier performance at the end of 2024. Service providers also noted a general downturn in the quality of work undertaken by key suppliers since the pandemic.



Inflation

Input price inflation reached its highest level for eight months.

Around 25% of the survey panel reported an increase in their average cost burdens during December, while only 2% recorded a decline. The resulting seasonally adjusted Input Prices Index was the highest since April 2024 and pointed to an accelerated pace of cost inflation for the fourth month running.

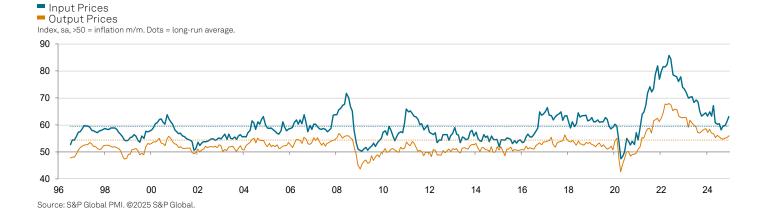
Anecdotal evidence mainly attributed higher input prices to greater salary payments and the pass through of increasing raw material costs by suppliers (particularly food).

December data indicated a robust and accelerated rise in average prices

charged by service sector firms. The seasonally adjusted Output Prices Index was the highest since June 2024 and well above the pre-pandemic average.

Higher prices charged reflected stronger cost pressures and the need to protect margins from elevated wage inflation. That said, a number of service providers noted that competitive pressures and subdued client demand had limited their ability to pass on rising costs to clients.





PMI[®] by <u>S&P Global</u>

UK Composite PMI®

New business declined for the first time since November 2023.

Moreover, the seasonally adjusted S&P Global UK PMI Composite Output Index posted 50.4 in December, down from 50.5 in November and the lowest reading since October 2023. Weaker private sector output growth has now been recorded for four months in a row.

December data indicated a marginal reduction in new order volumes, thereby ending a 12-month period of expansion. Subdued demand and rising payroll costs meanwhile contributed to the sharpest fall in private sector employment since January 2021.

Overall cost pressures were the highest since April. This led to a robust and accelerated rise in prices charged by UK companies at the end of 2024.

Composite / Manufacturing

Output / Employment Index, sa, >50 = growth m/m



Source: S&P Global PMI. ©2025 S&P Global. Source: S&P Global PMI. ©2025 S&P Global. Note: Composite PMI indices are GDP-weighted averages of comparable manufacturing and services PMI indices.



Note: Composite PMI indices are GDP-weighted averages of comparable manufacturing and services PMI indices.

Index, sa, >50 = growth m/m / Index, >50 = growth expected 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 12/21 12/22 12/23 12/24

Input Prices / Output Prices Index, sa, >50 = inflation m/m



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New Business / Future Output Index, sa, >50 = growth m/m / Index, >50 = growth e



Services sub-sectors

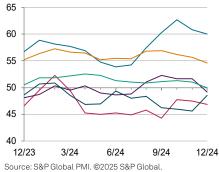
Computing & IT services
 Financial intermediation

Business Activity Index, sa, >50 = growth m/m



Hotels, restaurants & catering
Other personal & consumer services

New Business Index, sa, >50 = growth m/m



Note: Sector indices are smoothed using a three-month moving average (3mma).

Computing & IT services

Source: S&P Global PMI. ©2025 S&P Global

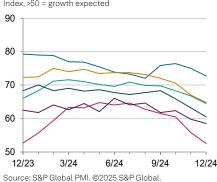
Business activity increased at a robust pace in the Computing & IT services sub-sector during the final quarter of 2024. Output growth continued to outpace that seen in all other categories, despite the rate of expansion easing to its lowest since the three months to August.

Computing & IT service providers once again recorded a steep rise in new work and a strong degree of confidence regarding the year ahead business outlook. Hotels, restaurants & catering

Hotels, restaurants & catering saw a marginal expansion of business activity in the three months to December. The rate of growth was nonetheless the fastest seen since the first quarter of 2024.

Employment was a weak spot in the latest survey period, with staffing numbers dropping more quickly than in any other sub-sector. Moreover, the pace of job shedding was the sharpest since the three months to June. Business-to-business services
 Transport & communication services

Future Activity Index, >50 = growth expected



Financial intermediation

Service providers in the Financial intermediation category signalled a solid rise in business activity in the final three months of 2024. However, the latest upturn was the weakest recorded for just over one year.

Latest data pointed to a renewed decline in staffing levels, which ended a near four-year period of workforce expansion.



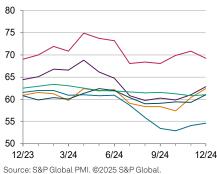


Employment



Hotels, restaurants & catering
Other personal & consumer services

Input Prices Index, sa, >50 = inflation m/m



Note: Sector indices are smoothed using a three-month moving average (3mma).

Other personal & community services

Source: S&P Global PMI. ©2025 S&P Global

Service providers in the Other personal & community services sub-sector indicated that business activity stabilised in the final quarter of 2024, despite a modest reduction in new work.

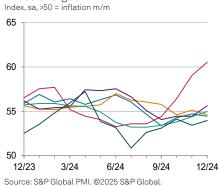
Employment decreased at the sharpest pace since the first quarter of 2021 and at the second-quickest rate of all monitored sub-sectors.

Business-to-business services

Business services signalled another fractional reduction in activity levels during the three months to December. New orders decreased for the first time since November 2023, although the rate of contraction was only slight.

Latest data indicated another fall in business optimism across the subsector. Levels of confidence were the weakest since the three months to September 2023. Business-to-business services
 Transport & communication services

Prices Charged



Transport & communication services

Activity levels fell slightly in the Transport & communication subsector, but the latest reduction was the least marked since the first quarter of 2024. However, business optimism regarding the year ahead outlook remained relatively subdued. Confidence levels decreased to the lowest since the three months to March 2023.



Purchased goods and services

The following lists show items reported as being up in price, down in price or in short supply during the latest survey period. Items may be listed as having both risen and fallen in price. This may reflect alternative supply sources (e.g. domestic versus imported), or differences in unit prices due to differing volumes ordered.

Up in price

Metals Copper Steel Electrical/Electronic Computer Computer Hardware Control Technology Components Electrics Information Technology Semiconductor Design Tools Software Televisions Chemicals Bottled Gas Chemicals Lubricants Oils Polyphenyl Ether Plastics Plastic RPET Paper/Timber Board Cardboard Cartons Paper Paper Goods Packaging Bubble Wrap Packaging Tape

Food Animal Feed Beverage Butter Chicken Chocolate Food Turkey Wheat (For Milling) Energy DERV Electricity Energy Fuel Heating Costs Motor Vehicle Fuel Other Services **Cleaning Services** Contracted services Courier Delivery Services Legal Services **Painting Services** Pavroll Professional Services Property Maintenance Services Finance Cost of Finance Fuel duty Insurance Insurance Premiums Laboratory Charges National Insurance (NIC) Office Expenses

Professional Fees

Rent Salaries Software Costs Staff Costs Staff Insurance Benefits Тах Wages Technology IT Services Labour General Labour Part-time Staff Recruitment Specialist Staff Subcontractors Transportation Air Freight from Asia Carriage Freight Freight - Air Freight to USA Logistics Shipping Transport Vehicle Trailers Miscellaneous Components Consumables Engineering Parts Glass Goods Heaters Imported Goods Imported Spare Parts

Ink

IT Equipment Laundry Light Materials Minerals Ocean Freight Office Space Parts Plant Equipment Print Printed Materials Private Medical Insurance Raw Materials Shop Supplies Software Licences Surgical Instruments Telecommunications Utilities

Down in price

Metals Aluminium Steel Electrical/Electronic Electronic Components Chemicals BOPP Low Density Polyethylene PET Polymer Paper/Timber Imported Timber (China) Paper Food Fruit Vegetables Energy Diesel Electricity Fuel Gas Petrol Power Transportation Haulage

Travel Costs Vehicles Miscellaneous DVD Replication Garden Machinery

Short supply

Metal Manufactures Copper Cable Electrical/Electronic Computer Hardware Equipment Spares (from US) Chemicals Paint

Paint Specialist Additives Packaging Tape Spring Onion Vegetables Technology Digital Services IT Services Labour Agency Labour General Labour Gualified Candidates Skilled Labour Specialist Staff Technology Skills

Food

Grapes

Fruit

Construction Building Materials Construction Materials

Miscellaneous

Components Hairdressing Products Nail Products Parts Raw Materials Wholesale Insurance

Data

Services

Index, sa, 50 = no change over previous month. *50 = no change over next 12 months.

	Business Activity	New Business	New Export Business	Future Activity*	Employment	Outstanding Business	Input Prices	Prices Charged
07/24	52.5	54.9	53.3	73.8	52.7	48.2	60.4	55.6
08/24	53.7	54.8	50.4	71.5	52.1	45.7	58.2	55.0
09/24	52.4	54.4	52.9	72.5	50.8	49.2	59.5	54.7
10/24	52.0	53.5	54.3	70.5	48.0	48.5	59.8	55.1
11/24	50.8	52.3	50.7	65.5	49.1	48.1	61.3	55.4
12/24	51.1	50.2	48.5	65.5	45.3	45.3	63.1	56.0

Composite (Manufacturing and Services) Index, sa, 50 = no change over previous month. *50 = no change over next 12 months.

Business New Export Future Outstanding Activity New Business Business Employment Business Input Prices Prices Charged Activity* 07/24 52.8 54.5 51.6 74.4 52.4 48.0 59.9 55.3 54.4 48.8 72.4 52.1 46.2 54.6 08/24 53.8 57.9 09/24 52.6 54.0 50.4 72.1 50.5 48.7 59.2 54.5 10/24 51.8 52.7 50.2 70.6 48.4 47.6 58.4 54.6 50.5 66.3 48.9 46.8 54.8 11/24 51.3 49.0 60.1 66.0 12/24 50.4 49.3 47.0 45.6 44.9 61.8 55.4

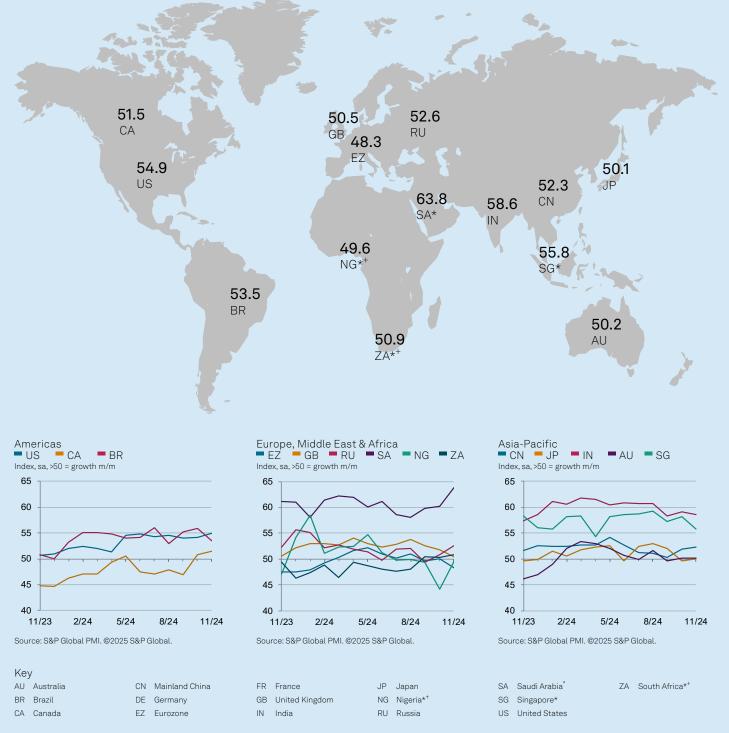
Services sub-sectors

Index, sa, 50 = no change over previous month. *50 = no change over next 12 months. Dec '24 Note: Sector indices are smoothed using a three-month moving average (3mma).

	Business Activity	New Business	Future Activity*	Employment	Outstanding Business	Input Prices	Prices Charged
Computing & IT services	56.5	60.0	72.8	50.9	50.6	54.6	54.5
Financial intermediation	53.2	54.6	64.8	47.5	53.5	62.4	54.6
Hotels, restaurants & catering	51.8	46.9	52.6	43.1	46.0	69.2	60.5
Other personal & consumer services	50.1	49.2	58.6	45.4	43.1	62.9	55.6
Business-to-business services	49.8	50.0	64.6	50.5	46.5	61.1	55.0
Transport & communication services	49.3	48.5	60.5	47.0	45.2	61.0	53.9

International PMI

Composite Output (manufacturing and services) Index, sa, >50 = growth m/m Nov '24



*Sector coverage also includes construction, wholesale and retail. *Sector coverage also includes agriculture and energy.

PMI[®] by S&P Global

Advanced economies Emerging economies





Source: S&P Global PMI, ©2025 S&P Global,

Expansion

Regions are growing at a faster rate than the six-month trend. Regions furthest right are growing at the strongest rate, and the highest regions are seeing the greatest acceleration in growth.

Slowdown

Regions are growing at a slower rate than the six-month trend. Regions furthest right are growing at the strongest rate, and the lowest regions are seeing the greatest deceleration in growth.

GH Ghana*+

IE Ireland

IT Italy

IN India

HK Hong Kong SAR*

Contraction

Regions are contracting at a faster rate than the six-month trend. Regions furthest left are contracting at the strongest rate, and the lowest regions are seeing the greatest acceleration in the rate of contraction.

Recovery

Regions are contracting at a slower rate than the six-month trend. Regions furthest left are contracting at the strongest rate, and the highest regions are seeing the greatest deceleration in the rate of contraction.

Key

AE United Arab Emirates* EG Egypt* AU Australia ES Spain BR Brazil FR France CA Canada DE Germany CN China GB United Kingdom

*Sector coverage also includes construction, wholesale and retail. *Sector coverage also includes agriculture and energy.

JP Japan KE Kenya*⁺ K7 Kazakhstan LB Lebanon*

MZ Mozambique*+

NG Nigeria*+ QA Qatar* RU Russia SA Saudi Arabia* SG Singapore*

UG Uganda*⁺ US United States ZA South Africa* ZM Zambia*⁺

Methodology

The S&P Global UK Services PMI[®] is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to a panel of around 650 service sector companies.

The sectors covered include consumer (excluding retail), transport, information, communication, finance, insurance, real estate and business services. The panel is stratified by detailed sector and company workforce size, based on contributions to GDP. Data collection began in July 1996.

Survey responses are collected in the second half of each month and indicate the direction of change compared to the previous month. A diffusion index is calculated for each survey variable. The index is the sum of the percentage of 'higher' responses and half the percentage of 'unchanged' responses. The indices vary between 0 and 100, with a reading above 50 indicating an overall increase compared to the previous month, and below 50 an overall decrease. The indices are then seasonally adjusted.

The headline figure is the Services

Business Activity Index. This is a diffusion index calculated from a question that asks for changes in the volume of business activity compared with one month previously. The Services Business Activity Index is comparable to the Manufacturing Output Index. It may be referred to as the 'Services PMI' but is not comparable with the headline manufacturing PMI figure.

The Composite Output Index is a weighted average of the Manufacturing Output Index and the Services Business Activity Index. The weights reflect the relative size of the manufacturing and service sectors according to official GDP data. The Composite Output Index may be referred to as the 'Composite PMI' but is not comparable with the headline manufacturing PMI figure.

Underlying survey data are not revised after publication, but seasonal adjustment factors may be revised from time to time as appropriate which will affect the seasonally adjusted data series.

For further information on the PMI survey methodology, please contact economics@spglobal.com.

Survey size 650 service providers

Survey history

July 1996

Survey questions

Business activity, new business, new export business, future activity, employment, outstanding business, input prices, prices charged

Sector coverage

International Standard Industry Classification (ISIC) code

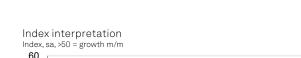
- H Transportation and storage
- Accommodation and food service activities
- J Information and communication
- K Financial and insurance activities
- L Real estate activities
- M Professional, scientific and technical activities
- N Administrative and support service activities
- P Education*
- Q Human health and social work activities*
- R Arts, entertainment and recreation
- S Other service activities
- *Private sector only

10

9

No change, from decline

8



3

Source: S&P Global PMI. ©2025 S&P Global

Key								
1	Growth, from no change	4	Growth, slower rate	7	Decline, faster rate			
2	Growth, faster rate	5	No change, from growth	8	Decline, same rate			
3	Growth, same rate	6	Decline, from no change	9	Decline, slower rate			

4

5

6

55

50

45

40

Further information

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We are widely sought after by many of the world's leading organizations to provide credit ratings, benchmarks, analytics and workflow solutions in the global capital, commodity and automotive markets. With every one of our offerings, we help the world's leading organizations plan for tomorrow, today.

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