

# Business Expectations Survey

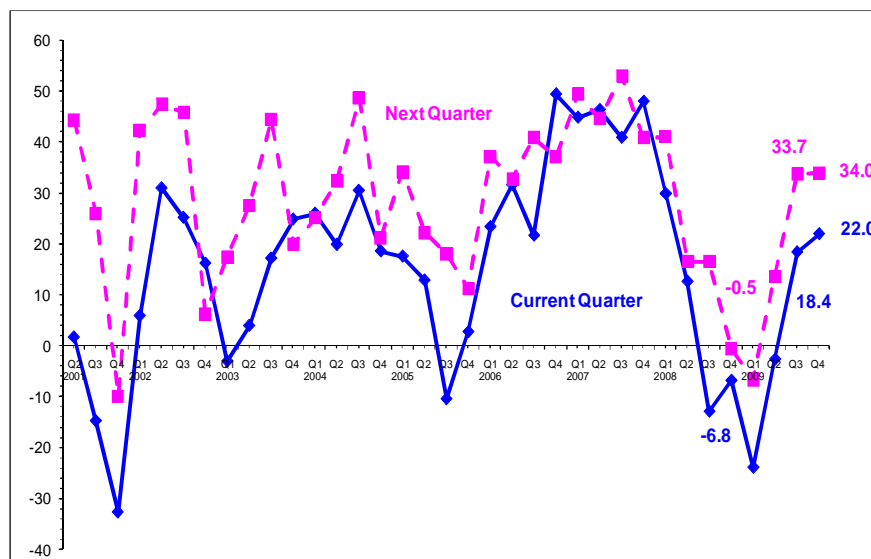
## Fourth Quarter 2009

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### Business Sentiment Continues to Improve in Q4 2009

#### Overall Business Outlook on the Macroeconomy

Overall Business Confidence Index  
Q2 2001 – Q4 2009



*Businesses continue to have an optimistic outlook in Q4 2009 and Q1 2010.*

Business optimism continues to improve in Q4 2009. Optimists outnumbered pessimists by a larger margin in Q4 2009 than in previous surveys. This is the third consecutive quarter since Q1 2009 that business sentiment has shown an improvement after the broadly cautious outlook that prevailed in 2008. The current quarter business confidence index (CI)<sup>1</sup> rose to 22.0 percent compared to 18.4 percent in Q3 2009 and -6.8 percent in Q4 2008. Similarly, the business confidence index for the next quarter (Q1 2010) also improved to 34.0 percent compared to 33.7 percent in Q3 2009 and -0.5 percent in Q4 2008. The more buoyant business sentiment reflected expectations of better economic performance in the current and next quarters with clearer indications of improving conditions in the global economy. It was also in tandem with improving business confidence in countries such as the United States, Japan, Europe, Australia, India, Singapore, Malaysia, and Hongkong. The survey results also suggested that businesses do not anticipate that typhoons Ondoy and Pepeng would have a long-lasting and significant impact on the overall positive direction of economic activity.

Businesses attributed their more favorable outlook to the following factors: 1) supportive macroeconomic conditions such as low inflation

<sup>1</sup> The CI is computed as the percentage of firms that answered in the affirmative less the percentage of firms that answered in the negative with respect to their views on a given indicator. A positive CI indicates a favorable view.



and interest rates, relatively stable peso, and sustained foreign exchange inflows from foreign investments and overseas Filipinos' (OFs) remittances; 2) expected increase in consumer spending due to the holiday season and the forthcoming election; and 3) introduction of new and enhanced business strategies.

*Business morale in the NCR is more upbeat than in AONCR.*

Respondents from both the National Capital Region (NCR) and the Areas Outside the NCR (AONCR) reported a more positive outlook for the Q4 2009 relative to Q3 2009. However, NCR respondents were more upbeat in their outlook on the economy than those from AONCR. The same trend was observed in the outlook for Q1 2010. This indicated firms' expectations that economic conditions would be more favorable in NCR than in AONCR.

A detailed analysis of AONCR responses (consisting of Regions I, III, IV, VII, XI, and XII)<sup>2</sup> showed that firms in these regions have a generally positive outlook in Q4 2009. However, firms in Regions I and IV were less optimistic during the quarter than in the earlier quarter due to the effect of typhoons Ondoy and Pepeng on business operations. Looking ahead to the next quarter, the regions' optimism was slightly tempered relative to Q4, even as all regional respondents remained positive in their outlook on the economy.

*Optimism is evident across all types of businesses*

All types of businesses involved in international commodity trading (i.e., importers, exporters and those engaged in dual activities) anticipated better economic conditions in Q4 2009 as their confidence indices were higher compared to those a quarter ago. Firms engaged in both importing and exporting activities were the most optimistic, while exporters were the least bullish as they continue to face tepid—although slightly improving—global demand.

In terms of the quarter-ahead outlook, broad optimism across all business types was observed. Positive sentiment improved among exporters and dual-activity firms, while sentiment turned less favorable for importers.

*Large firms are quite bullish in their outlook*

By employment size,<sup>3</sup> large firms (relative to other sizes of firms) continued to be the most optimistic in their outlook for both Q4 2009 and Q1 2010.

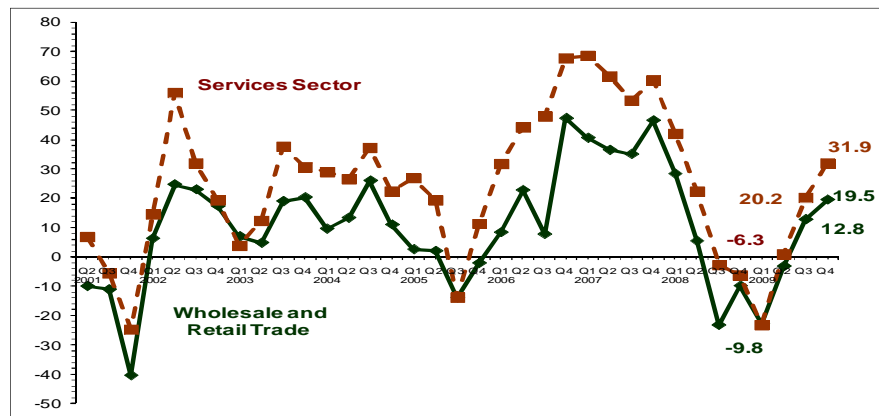
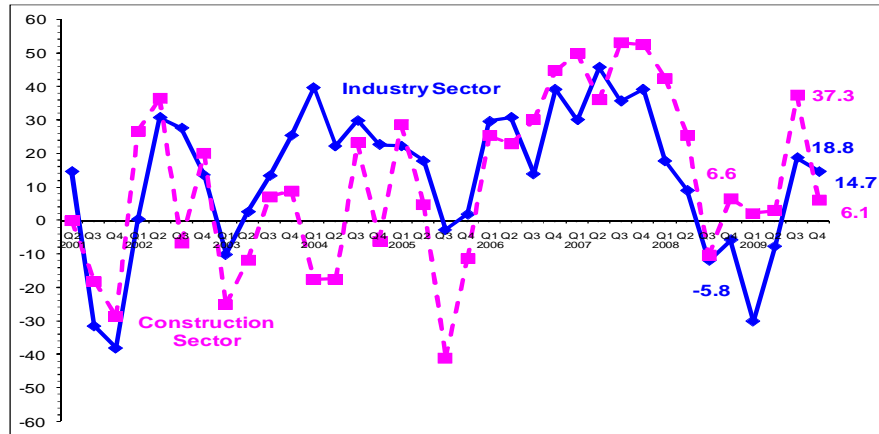
<sup>2</sup> While the survey covered 17 regions, the bulk of the respondents were from Regions I, III, IV, VII, XI and XII. Region I (Ilocos) includes the provinces of Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union and Pangasinan; Region III (Central Luzon) is composed of Aurora, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales; Region IV (Southern Tagalog) comprises Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Marinduque, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Palawan, Quezon, Rizal and Romblon; Region VII (Central Visayas) covers Cebu, Bohol, Negros Oriental and Siquijor; Region XI (Davao) consists of Compostela Valley, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur and Davao Oriental; and Region XII (SOCCSKSARGEN) is made up of North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato and Sarangani.

<sup>3</sup> Small firms have less than 100 employees; medium firms, 100-500 employees; while large firms have over 500 employees.



Sectoral Outlook

Current Quarter Business Outlook Index by Sector  
Q2 2001 – Q4 2009



Positive sentiments are observed across all sectors.

Favorable business sentiment was noted across all sectors in Q4 2009, partly due to expectations of improved global economic prospects. The services sector had the most favorable business outlook due largely to improved optimism of the financial intermediation and hotels and restaurants sub-sectors. In particular, the more buoyant outlook of the financial intermediation sub-sector reflected the resilience of the domestic banking system. Meanwhile, the improvement in the business outlook of hotels and restaurants sub-sector signaled expectations of higher spending of holiday revellers during the Yuletide season.

The sentiment of the wholesale and retail trade sectors was also more favorable quarter-on-quarter and year-on-year, due to expectations of stronger business opportunities as a result of heightened consumer demand during the Christmas season.

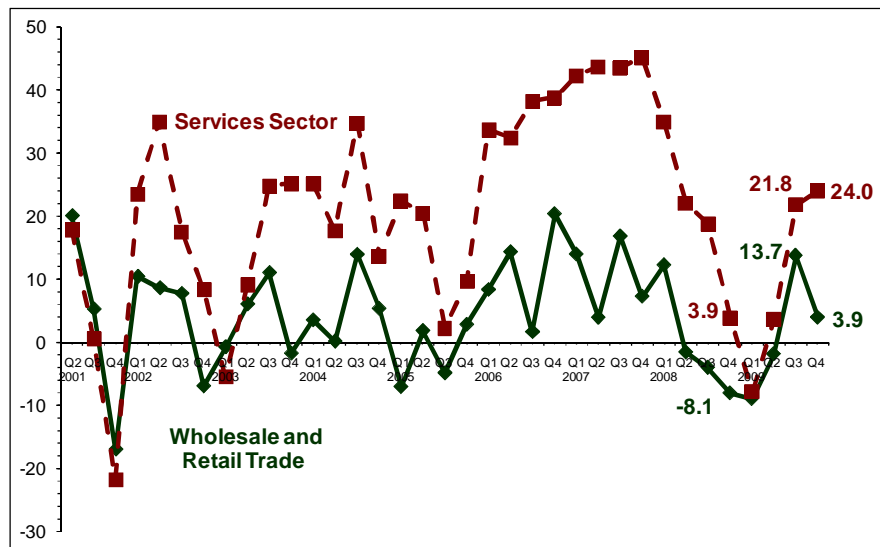
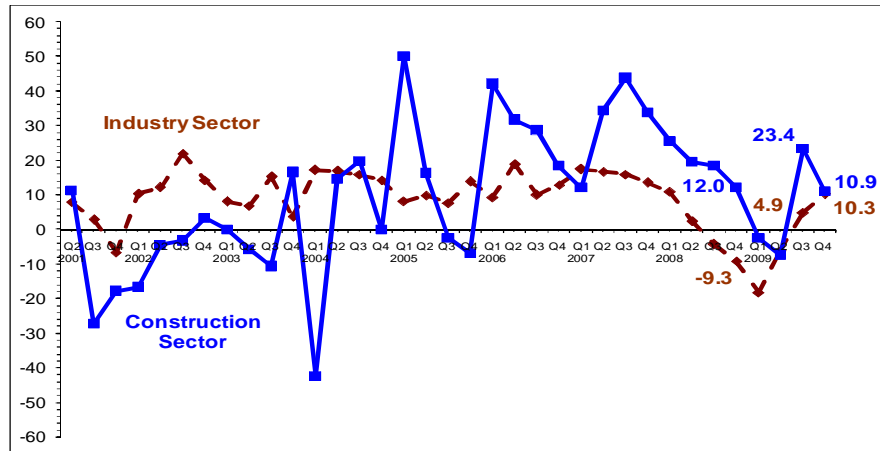
On the other hand, the industry and construction sectors were less upbeat in Q4 2009 compared to a quarter ago.



All sectors, particularly the construction sector, remained optimistic for Q1 2010. Business sentiments of the industry, wholesale and retail trade, and services sectors were broadly steady, while the construction sector turned more bullish. Respondents attributed their improved optimism to the expected reconstruction and rehabilitation activities arising from the damages caused by typhoons Ondoy and Pepeng as well as the continuing government infrastructure spending to help lift economic growth.

**Business Confidence on Own Operations**

**Business Confidence Index on Own Operations by Sector  
Current Quarter, Q2 2001 – Q4 2009**



*Firms are optimistic about their own business operations.* Respondents are generally enthusiastic that their own business operations would improve in Q4 2009. Firms in the services sector were the most bullish, followed by those in the industry sector. The optimism in these two sectors was partly due to the increase in the volume of business activity and total orders in the current and next quarters.

On the other hand, firms in the construction and wholesale and retail trade sectors expected less favorable business operations compared to the previous quarter.

*Firms report slightly higher capacity utilization.* Reflecting the improved outlook of firms in the industry sector regarding their own operations, the average capacity utilization in Q4 2009 slightly rose to 69.8 percent compared to last quarter's 68.8 percent. This is consistent with the results of the Monthly Integrated Survey of Selected Industries (MISSI) of the National Statistics Office (NSO), which showed an increasing trend for the period February - August 2009.<sup>4</sup>

#### Access to Credit and Financial Condition

*Credit access and financial conditions further improve.* Credit access continued to improve in Q4 2009, with more firms experiencing some modest improvement in their access to credit.

Financial conditions remained tight but showed signs of easing as fewer respondents expected liquidity problems in Q4 2009 compared to the previous quarter and a year ago.

#### Employment and Expansion Plans

*Employment outlook remains positive.* The employment outlook for Q1 2010 remained positive, albeit slightly lower than the previous quarter but higher compared to a year ago. The employment outlook continued to be favorable for all sectors, with the construction and services sectors being the most optimistic.

*Industrial firms with expansion plans increase.* Consistent with the improvement in the outlook on business operations of the industry sector, more industrial firms indicated expansion plans for Q1 2010 compared to the last quarter's survey.

#### Business Constraints

*Competition, weak demand, and financial problems are seen as major risks.* Competition, weak demand (leading to low sales volume), and financial problems were considered by the respondents as the key challenges to business activity in Q4 2009. The top three business constraints were the same risks identified by respondents in Q3 2009.

<sup>4</sup> The average capacity utilization on MISSI was based on a sample of large manufacturing firms while that of the BES used sample firms from the industry and construction sectors.



### Expectations on Key Economic Indicators<sup>5</sup>

*Higher inflation, stable interest rates and a stronger peso are expected in Q4 2009.*

More firms anticipated inflation to accelerate in Q4 2009. This expectation could be attributed to the increases in the prices of basic commodities caused by the damages to crops and infrastructure during the recent typhoons as well as the anticipated increases in oil prices once the current oil price controls imposed by the government are lifted.

Despite rising expectations of higher inflation, firms anticipated interest rates to remain stable.

The peso is expected to strengthen against the US dollar in Q4 2009 given the seasonal surge in remittances from overseas Filipinos (OFs) during the holiday season and expectations of increase in foreign investments.

For Q1 2010, business firms anticipate inflation and interest rates to rise and the exchange rate to remain stable.

### About the Survey

*The survey response rate is 75.8 percent.*

The Q4 2009 BES was conducted during the period 1 October - 6 November 2009. There were 1,380 firms surveyed nationwide. Respondents were drawn from the Securities and Exchange Commission 2008 Top 7,000 Corporations as follows: 509 companies in NCR (37.0 percent) and 871 firms in AONCR (63.0 percent), covering all 17 regions nationwide. The survey response rate for this quarter was 75.8 percent, slightly lower than last quarter's 76.2 percent. For NCR, the response rate was 74.7 percent (from 73.2 percent last quarter); and for AONCR, the response rate was 76.5 percent (from 78.1 percent). The slight decline in the response rate was partly due to operational and technical problems faced by respondents in regions hit by typhoon Pepeng which affected the mode of communications (e.g., telephone, fax and email) with the said firms.

A breakdown of responses received by type of business showed that 10.0 percent were importers, 7.7 percent were exporters, and 15.2 percent were both importers and exporters. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents were neither importers nor exporters or did not specify their firm type.

<sup>5</sup> The expectations on Key Economic Indicators are confidence indices (CIs) computed as the percentage of firms that answered "up" less the percentage of firms that answered "down" with respect to their views on a given economic key indicator. A positive CI indicates a favorable view, except for the inflation rate and the peso-borrowing rate, where a positive CI indicates the opposite.





**BUSINESS EXPECTATIONS SURVEY  
2001 - 2009**

	2001			2002				2003				2004				2005				2006				2007				2008				2009				
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4					
<b>7. Companies with Expansion Plans (in percent): Next Quarter</b>																																				
<b>All Industry Sector</b>	5.9	20.7	20.6	13.0	20.3	10.7	18.7	24.3	22.6	19.9	20.0	21.5	15.9	24.3	27.5	27.0	22.0	16.0	20.8	25.9	25.8	23.0	23.0	27.2	31.1	28.7	33.7	37.8	23.1	25.0	30.4	17.8	16.0	17.4	23.7	
Mining Quarrying	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	25.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	100.0	39.1	39.1	78.3	78.3	50.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	33.3	41.7	25.0	83.3	66.7	42.9	42.9	52.4	41.9	26.2	45.1	27.0	31.6	9.2	13.0	38.5	
Manufacturing	19.4	21.0	7.3	0.0	0.0	8.5	21.2	23.5	23.0	19.0	17.5	31.7	15.2	22.9	25.7	28.9	21.3	16.9	20.3	25.3	24.0	22.7	20.8	23.7	28.1	27.1	32.0	37.8	22.3	23.7	29.5	15.7	14.6	15.3	20.3	
Electricity, Gas and Water	0.0	25.0	25.0	13.3	20.4	33.3	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.0	6.0	11.6	11.6	11.6	35.9	25.4	47.2	44.3	48.5	54.0	42.8	33.5	39.0	45.4	37.0	59.2	34.6	30.5	36.6	44.3		
Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	50.0	25.0	33.3	52.6	19.6	25.0	32.5	37.5	13.1	39.1	8.2	40.4	28.3	32.4	23.2	35.4	62.2	64.0	42.4	59.6	35.0	21.3	30.6	28.0	32.5	30.0	37.4	54.6	
<b>8. Business Constraints: Current Quarter</b>																																				
High Interest Rate	49.6	46.9	38.0	46.0	35.9	28.2	24.2	31.5	32.9	28.6	34.2	33.0	33.1	38.4	39.8	37.0	34.7	35.9	36.2	32.4	30.0	29.1	27.6	23.0	23.6	23.7	21.3	22.1	23.7	29.8	29.5	26.9	24.1	24.4	20.5	
Unclear Economic Laws	36.5	37.9	29.9	37.8	31.1	30.3	31.0	34.0	33.5	35.9	41.2	34.7	35.2	37.0	38.2	37.6	38.0	45.9	48.7	40.3	41.4	34.3	33.1	27.6	27.2	24.5	27.1	25.9	27.1	27.1	25.7	25.1	23.3	21.7	14.2	
Lack of Equipment	27.8	17.5	15.8	21.8	20.6	19.6	19.4	18.8	20.0	22.0	24.2	19.8	21.5	22.0	20.8	24.4	22.6	23.8	24.6	21.2	19.5	19.4	17.9	17.1	17.9	16.0	19.4	16.3	16.0	15.6	17.7	16.6	15.5	17.3	15.5	
Insufficient Demand	67.8	65.0	75.5	76.3	72.4	77.2	67.5	67.2	70.9	69.7	63.7	56.4	57.2	58.7	61.1	61.3	60.9	64.3	65.4	58.7	60.6	58.7	55.3	51.6	49.8	46.8	46.3	44.1	46.7	49.6	51.9	54.8	59.0	54.2	53.4	
Access to Credit	40.0	32.8	31.0	42.1	35.5	34.5	30.0	24.5	25.2	26.8	29.0	30.7	25.4	27.9	27.3	31.1	30.3	30.4	31.8	29.2	30.8	24.8	23.4	19.1	19.6	18.9	20.1	16.9	17.0	17.5	20.5	20.9	19.3	19.3	19.2	
Financial Problems	34.8	33.3	32.1	39.4	30.8	33.4	30.8	31.4	30.2	30.8	34.2	31.9	31.1	33.5	33.6	36.2	36.1	37.6	37.6	31.1	30.5	29.4	27.5	27.2	26.0	24.7	23.6	26.4	23.4	25.3	27.9	30.1	29.9	26.4	26.8	
Competition	73.9	71.8	77.7	77.9	76.8	78.4	73.8	70.7	73.3	77.3	73.0	62.5	68.8	70.3	73.1	74.0	73.4	74.2	74.4	74.1	75.3	37.1	38.7	62.6	66.0	62.2	63.0	57.9	60.4	58.6	61.1	59.4	62.0	61.8	63.4	
Labor Problems	22.6	23.2	22.3	24.1	20.0	28.6	32.3	25.9	23.0	21.3	23.5	18.5	20.8	22.8	23.5	27.7	26.8	26.5	25.3	23.0	22.9	20.9	21.7	20.3	18.6	19.7	20.1	19.4	19.3	20.8	20.2	20.6	18.8	19.0	17.6	
Lack of Materials Input	22.6	18.1	17.4	21.7	18.3	18.3	18.6	23.4	23.2	22.9	24.6	19.4	24.2	23.6	28.3	26.8	24.7	24.4	25.7	21.8	21.6	22.1	21.2	22.3	20.1	19.0	20.6	19.7	19.4	19.8	19.6	18.5	16.5	18.5	18.1	
Others	26.1	27.7	22.8	25.0	19.6	19.4	20.7	20.9	18.3	17.3	16.2	16.4	19.0	13.2	15.8	16.7	17.1	21.0	20.0	16.5	15.9	19.4	18.7	17.4	16.8	17.5	20.7	20.8	20.4	19.9	23.5	20.4	18.6	18.8	24.2	
None	3.5	3.4	7.6	2.1	2.5	6.4	1.7	3.5	5.0	5.0	6.3	6.5	6.2	6.3	5.7	5.1	4.6	3.0	3.4	5.5	4.2	4.7	3.6	5.4	6.9	7.9	6.5	7.4	5.8	5.4	4.9	4.5	5.7	5.4	6.5	6.7
<b>9. Business Expectations Index on Selected Economic Indicators: Current Quarter</b>																																				
P/\$ Exchange Rate	19.1	36.7	20.1	-0.1	7.5	-8.0	4.3	11.2	6.9	7.5	0.5	-15.9	-1.5	-2.5	-8.3	10.8	7.2	-11.9	10.1	7.5	11.8	7.5	39.5	31.1	34.3	35.0	44.8	39.9	0.9	-19.0	-21.5	-12.0	-10.2	-4.2	18.7	
Inflation Rate	37.4	65.0	46.2	-8.4	1.4	3.9	32.4	36.8	25.8	27.9	42.1	45.8	52.0	51.0	61.9	30.3	51.0	61.4	53.6	22.9	32.8	31.6	-3.1	-13.9	-5.1	-2.3	6.3	14.4	47.9	61.5	43.0	14.0	14.1	4.4	28.2	
Peso Borrowing Rate	6.1	22.6	23.4	-37.2	-32.9	-6.7	11.4	16.0	26.5	9.5	27.2	33.7	38.7	39.8	43.2	21.7	28.3	41.9	37.1	6.8	10.8	17.3	-5.8	-23.5	-15.4	-3.2	-9.6	-15.9	13.5	37.8	29.7	6.9	1.9	-2.7	2.6	
<b>10. Business Expectations Index on Selected Economic Indicators: Next Quarter</b>																																				
P/\$ Exchange Rate	11.3	10.7	22.3	11.7	4.9	-8.9	6.3	9.4	11.3	5.5	-11.5	-15.6	0.2	4.6	-7.3	3.4	0.9	-5.0	-0.9	-3.6	5.7	18.0	23.3	11.2	21.9	37.9	34.8	29.0	-0.3	-3.4	-19.5	-13.2	-11.6	4.1	4.2	
Inflation Rate	23.5	46.9	44.0	-0.4	15.7	16.6	26.0	43.2	28.6	31.6	33.4	52.9	42.2	41.6	53.3	29.7	44.4	55.1	45.7	27.8	30.3	31.0	-0.6	4.1	5.5	9.5	3.0	17.3	42.3	48.8	25.2	12.2	15.0	15.7	25.1	
Peso Borrowing Rate	4.4	19.8	20.7	-21.8	1.8	4.8	10.0	29.3	25.3	15.1	22.0	32.6	31.8	32.0	42.5	25.5	29.8	39.4	31.4	16.5	17.6	18.3	-2.6	-4.9	-2.3	3.2	-3.2	-8.3	15.9	32.3	23.0	7.3	4.6	5.8	12.8	
<b>11. Percentage Distribution of Respondent Firms by Employment Size</b>																																				
Small (<100)	41.7	44.6	42.4	41.9	38.1	41.4	43.5	41.8	38.4	36.3	35.5	33.7	31.8	36.1	36.2	35.0	34.4	31.8	33.6	32.1	31.5	34.2	33.2	33.9	34.2	33.7	32.9	35.6	36.4	35.9	36.2	41.6	41.6	39.9	39.9	
Medium (100-500)	36.5	31.1	31.0	32.1	35.6	34.3	32.1	27.6	31.7	30.8	29.6	35.1	36.1	33.8	31.4	36.2	36.9	37.6	33.7	35.8	32.8	33.8	35.7	37.1	33.2	35.0	34.6	35.8	34.9	32.7	32.0	33.5	33.3	32.9	34.5	
Large (500 & up)	14.8	13.0	12.0	13.2	14.4	14.3	16.6	13.3	14.0	17.3	14.9	15.3	15.6	15.0	17.0	16.1	14.8	14.6	16.0	17.2	15.8	18.1	16.2	17.0	18.0	20.1	19.6	18.1	14.6	16.8	17.7	13.6	13.7	13.9	14.1	
No Response	7.0	11.3	14.7	12.8	11.9	10.0	7.8	17.3	15.9	15.6	20.0	15.9	16.5	15.1	15.4	12.7	13.9	16.0	16.7	14.9	19.9	13.9	14.9	12.0	14.7	11.2	13.0	12.5	14.1	14.7	13.1	11.3	11.4	13.3	11.6	
<b>12. Distribution of Respondent Firms by Sector</b>																																				
<b>All Sectors</b>	115	177	184	234	236	251	271	294	315	289	348	377	429	574	500	510	614	614	627	673	652	748	786	765	757	732	772	864	891	928	936	1062	1094	1059	1046	
Industry	34	48	50	54	59	56	75	109	119	104	141	135	137	208	174	169	223	219	218	270	262	284	311	287	279	292	281	327	321	344	327	323	338	321	325	
Construction	9	11	14	15	11	15	15	16	17	14	20	11	15	21	19	17	20	18	20	25	22	28	32	22	20	20	22	33	40	37	50	53	58	51	53	
Wholesale and Retail Trade	30	45	47	80	81	87	81	86	83	79	96	93	118	153	132	165	184	187	196	195	187	237	238	265	262	237	270	279	297	317	323	374	377	377	358	
Services	42	73	73	85	85	93	100	83	96	92	91	138	159	192	175	159	184	190	193	183	181	199	205	191	196	183	199	225	233	230	236	312	321	310	310	
Financial Intermediation	17	29	27	34	34	40	42	26	31	30	28	45	50	57	53	45	52	50	48	45	43	49	50	48	48	46	50	51	50	52	54	64	62	59	62	
Hotels and Restaurants	4	9	11	9	9	10	7	10	13	12	15	20	20	23	21	16	23	19	23	20	20	16	18	17	16	13	15	18	19	21	19	32	32	35	30	
Renting and Business Activities	5	12	12	13	13	15	20	16	18	18	16	24	26	33	27	29	35	40	41	41	42	42	44	45	38	34	41	52	55	54	55	65	69	76	69	
Community and Social Services	7	8	5	10	10	10	13	14	14	14	13	17	22	29	26	26	23	27	27	26	33	31	29	28	30	29	28	35	37	33	34	43	45	35	42	



