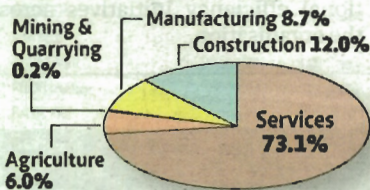


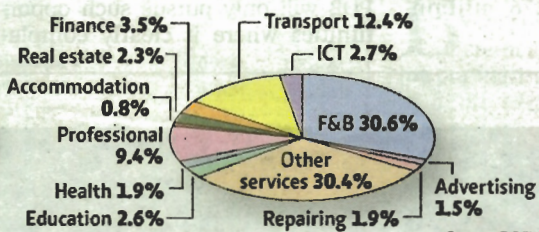
18pc firms yet to response to census

DUE FOR COMPLETION: Department of Statistics
Malaysia urges companies to submit replies soon

Economics Census (Coverage)



TOTAL COMPANIES: 943,000



Source: DOSM

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SLIGHTLY less than 170,000, or 18 per cent, of companies have yet to respond to Malaysia's third economic census, which is conducted every five years and is due for completion by the end of this year.

The Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), which is doing the census, has begun processing the responses given by the other 82 per cent of companies, with the data targeted to be published by June next year.

DOSM chief statistician Dr Abdul Rahman Hasan said the companies that have yet to reply to the economic census are in the following sectors: agriculture (17 per cent), manufacturing (20 per cent), mining and quarrying (38 per cent), services (15 per cent) and construction (18 per cent).

"For these firms, we urge them to submit as soon as possible before the year ends," he said in an interview here recently.

About 943,000 companies are covered in this census with 73.1 per cent in the services sector, 12 per cent in construction, 8.7 per cent in manufacturing, 6 per cent in agriculture and 0.2 per cent in mining and quarrying sector. A third of them operate in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur.

He also said half of the companies in Terengganu have not submitted their responses, followed by those in Pahang (42 per cent), Sarawak (41 per cent), Perak (40 per cent) and Melaka (39 per cent).

Within the services sector, only the food and beverage (F&B) sub-sector, comprising 140,000 companies, has fully cooperated.

"Preliminary results from the F&B sector are very encouraging, with a double-digit growth," said Abdul Rahman, adding that compared to the last census in 2003, there were only 69,000 F&B firms in operation.

An economic census is the official count of all business and company units located in the country and it provides a detailed picture of the structure of Malaysia's economy from the national to the district level.

It also serves as an input to the formulation

of national development plans and economic policies and as the benchmark for the re-basing of gross domestic product and other economic indicators.

This will help the business community to gauge competition, calculate their market share, assess store locations and seek new financing.

The census this time around will also include data on the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) which, before 2004, had their data computed separately.

"Thus, it is important for SMEs to participate in this census so we can have updated information on the profile, structure and performance of SMEs ... and the data will be used to update the SME Master Plan 2011-2020," he said.

He also said that the 200-question census questionnaire also included a specific question on women-owned companies to increase women entrepreneur participation in the economy.

What's new will also be statistics on the presence of foreign affiliates (a company in which foreign investors hold more than 50 per cent equity interest).

"Currently, their presence is mostly felt in the manufacturing sector and the main partner countries are the US, Japan and Singapore," he said.

Asked of the challenges faced by DOSM in conducting the census, Abdul Rahman said these would include obtaining cooperation of the companies to respond within the stipulated time and that information given is accurate and complete.

"Usually the big companies are quick to respond, but the smaller ones, we need to visit them many times to remind them," he said, adding that there are concerns among the small companies that their responses will not be kept confidential.

The census, he said, is under the Statistics Act 1965 which stipulated that the contents of the questionnaires are confidential and only aggregated data will be published.

The government has allocated RM44.2 million to conduct the census and about 80 per cent of this is to recruit 1,807 temporary staff and field operations.



"It is important for SMEs to participate"

Dr Abdul Rahman Hasan
Chief statistician
Department of
Statistics Malaysia