

**ifo Business Climate Germany**  
**Results of the ifo Business Survey for December 2023**

## ifo Business Climate Index Falls

Munich, December 18, 2023 – Sentiment in German business has clouded over. The ifo Business Climate Index fell to 86.4 points in December, down from 87.2 points<sup>1</sup> in November. Companies were less satisfied with their current business. They were also more skeptical about the first half of 2024. As the year draws to a close, the German economy remains weak.

In *manufacturing*, the Business Climate Index fell noticeably. Companies assessed their current business situation as significantly worse. Their expectations also grew more pessimistic. Energy-intensive industries are having a particularly tough time. Order books continue to shrink overall.

In the *service sector*, the business climate improved slightly. Service providers were more satisfied with their current business. They also reported less skepticism in their outlook for the coming six months. In restaurants and catering, the business situation improved but expectations took a nosedive.

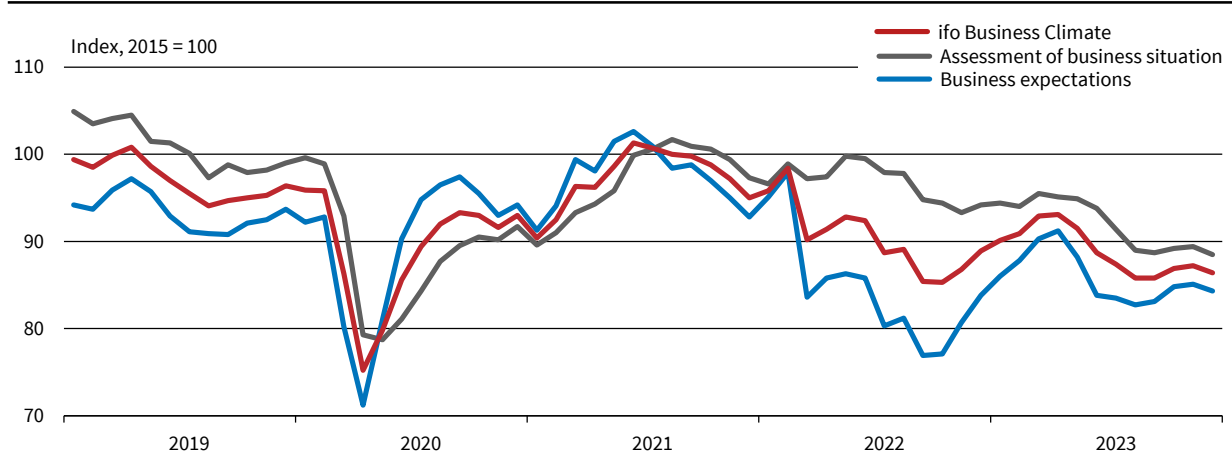
In *trade*, the business climate suffered a setback. Companies assessed their current situation as markedly worse. Their expectations also darkened. For retailers, holiday trade is disappointing this year.

In *construction*, the Business Climate Index fell to its lowest level since September 2005. Companies assessed their current situation as worse. Moreover, roughly one in two companies are expecting business to deteriorate further in the months ahead.

Clemens Fuest  
 President of the ifo Institute

### ifo Business Climate Germany<sup>a</sup>

Seasonally adjusted



<sup>a</sup> Manufacturing, service sector, trade, and construction.  
 Source: ifo Business Survey, December 2023.

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### ifo Business Climate Germany (Index, 2015 = 100, seasonally adjusted)

Month/year	12/22	01/23	02/23	03/23	04/23	05/23	06/23	07/23	08/23	09/23	10/23	11/23	12/23
<b>Climate</b>	88.9	90.1	90.9	92.9	93.1	91.5	88.7	87.4	85.8	85.8	86.9	87.2	86.4
<b>Situation</b>	94.2	94.4	94.0	95.5	95.1	94.9	93.8	91.4	89.0	88.7	89.2	89.4	88.5
<b>Expectations</b>	83.8	86.0	87.8	90.3	91.2	88.2	83.8	83.5	82.7	83.1	84.8	85.1	84.3

Source: ifo Business Survey, December 2023

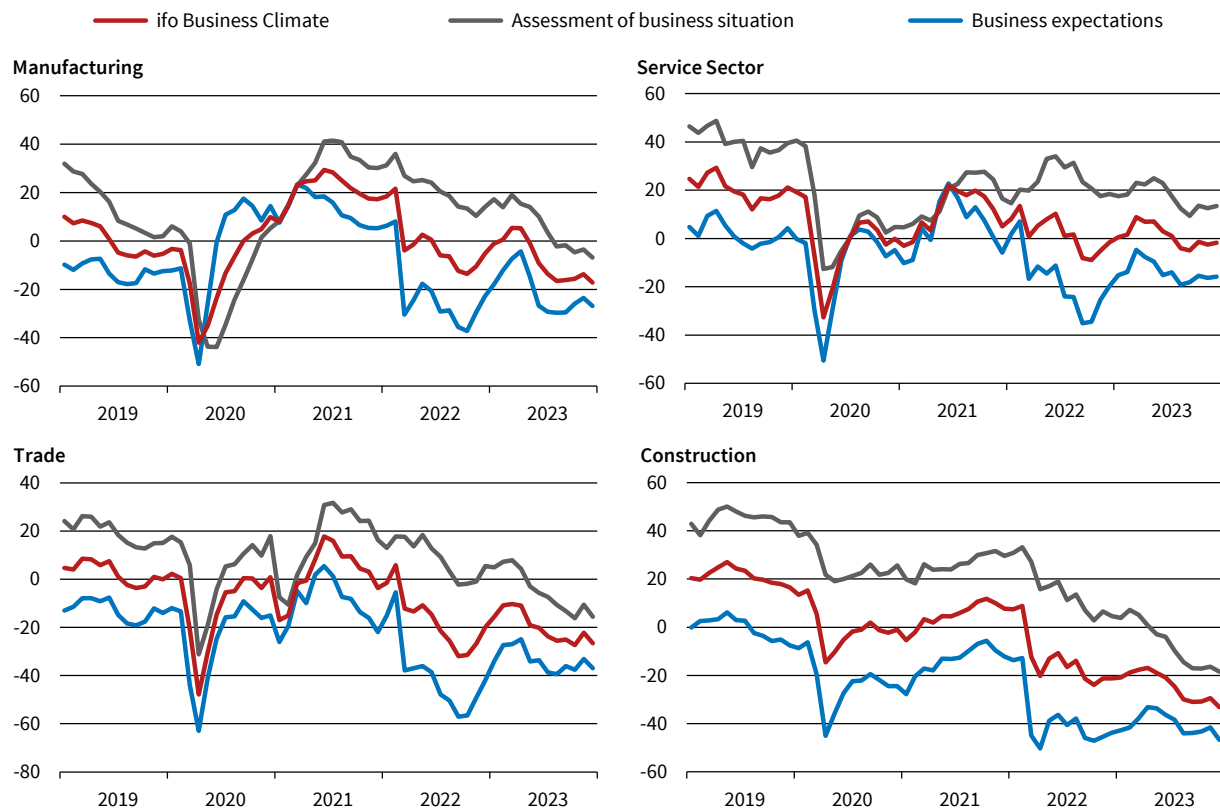
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For long time-series in Excel format, please see <https://www.ifo.de/en/umfragen/time-series>.

<sup>1</sup> Seasonally adjusted

## ifo Business Climate, Business Situation, and Expectations by Sector

Balances, seasonally adjusted



Source: Ifo Business Survey, December 2023.

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### ifo Business Climate Germany by Sector (Balances, seasonally adjusted)

Month/year	12/22	01/23	02/23	03/23	04/23	05/23	06/23	07/23	08/23	09/23	10/23	11/23	12/23
<b>Germany</b>	-5.8	-3.1	-1.4	3.0	3.6	-0.1	-6.2	-9.0	-12.5	-12.4	-10.0	-9.4	-11.2
<b>Manufacturing</b>	-5.2	-1.1	0.5	5.4	5.3	-0.8	-9.2	-13.6	-16.5	-16.2	-15.7	-13.8	-17.2
<b>Service sector</b>	-1.6	0.5	1.5	8.8	6.9	7.0	3.0	1.1	-4.0	-4.9	-1.4	-2.5	-1.7
<b>Trade</b>	-19.9	-15.6	-10.8	-10.3	-10.9	-19.2	-20.2	-23.7	-25.6	-25.1	-27.3	-22.2	-26.6
<b>Construction</b>	-21.3	-20.9	-18.8	-17.6	-16.9	-18.9	-20.9	-24.6	-29.9	-31.0	-30.8	-29.5	-33.1

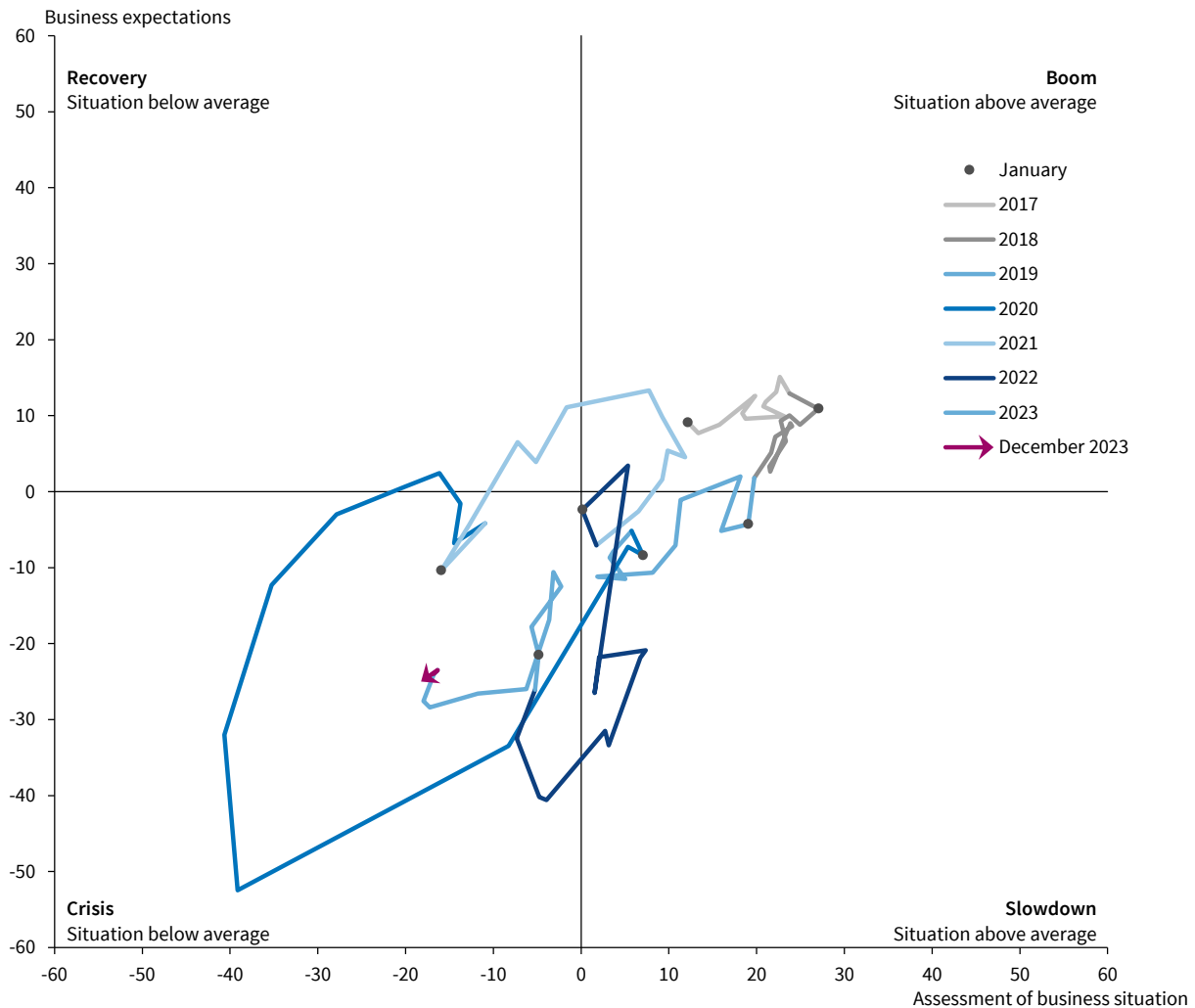
Source: Ifo Business Survey, December 2023.

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The Ifo Business Climate is based on approx. 9,000 monthly responses from businesses in manufacturing, the service sector, trade, and construction. Companies are asked to give their assessments of the **current business situation** and their **expectations** for the next six months. They can describe their situation as “good,” “satisfactory,” or “poor” and their business expectations for the next six months as “more favorable,” “unchanged,” or “less favorable.” The **balance value** of the current business situation is the difference in the percentage shares of the responses “good” and “poor”; the balance value of expectations is the difference in the percentage shares of the responses “more favorable” and “less favorable.” The **business climate** is a transformed mean of the balances of the business situation and the expectations. To calculate the **index values**, the transformed balances are all normalized to the average for the year 2015.

**ifo Business Cycle Clock Germany<sup>a</sup>**

Balances adjusted for mean value, seasonally adjusted

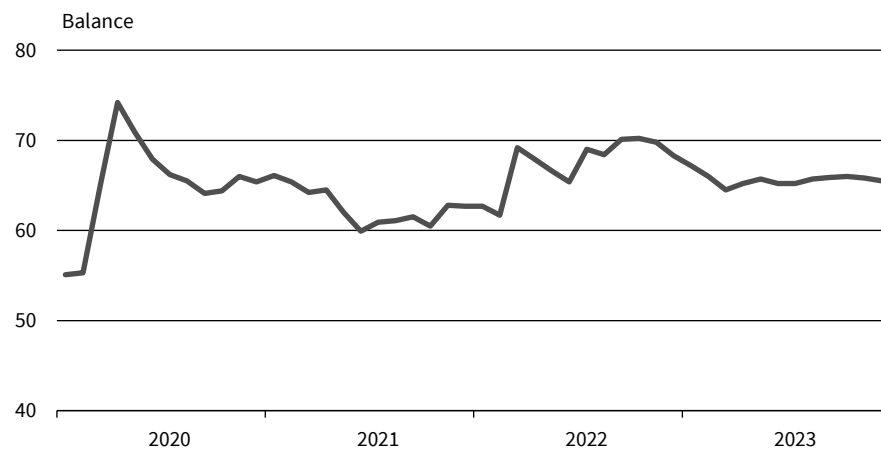


<sup>a</sup> Manufacturing, service sector, trade, and construction.  
 Source: ifo Business Survey, December 2023.

The ifo Business Cycle Clock shows the cyclical relationship between the current business situation and business expectations in a four-quadrant diagram. In this diagram, economic activity – shown on a graph plotting the current situation against expectations – passes through quadrants labeled with the different phases of activity, namely recovery, boom, slowdown, and crisis; provided that the expectations indicator sufficiently precedes the current business situation indicator. If survey participants’ assessments of the current business situation and their business expectations are both below average on balance, economic activity is plotted in the “crisis” quadrant. If the expectations indicator is above average (with an improving but below average business situation on balance), economic activity moves to the “recovery” quadrant. If the business situation and expectations are both above average on balance, economic activity appears in the “boom” quadrant. If, however, the expectations indicator falls below average (with a deteriorating but above average business situation on balance), economic activity slips into the “slowdown” quadrant.

### ifo Business Uncertainty Germany<sup>a</sup>

Original values



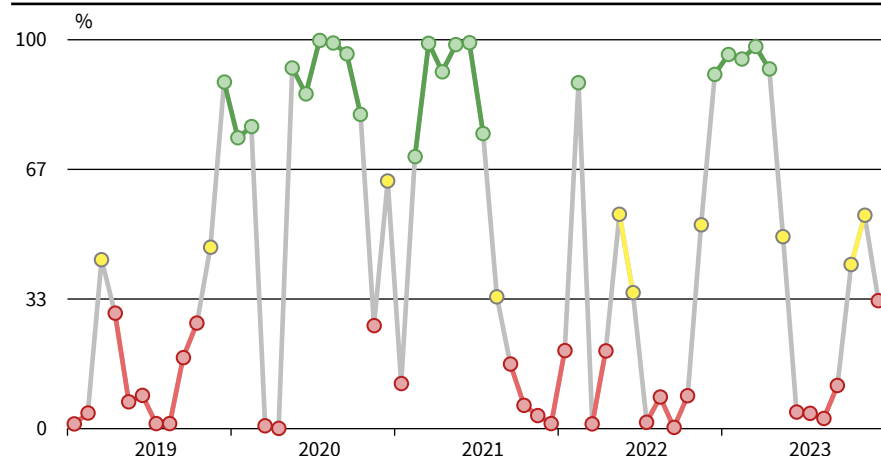
<sup>a</sup> Manufacturing, service sector, trade, and construction.  
 Source: ifo Business Survey, December 2023.

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The ifo Business Uncertainty measures how difficult it is for managers to predict the development of their company's business situation over the next six months. The measure is calculated based on the weighted fractions of companies that fall into the answer options "easy," "fairly easy," "fairly difficult," and "difficult" of a corresponding question in the ifo Business Survey. To this end, the answer categories are mapped onto a numerical scale with equally spaced intervals. Theoretically, the ifo Business Uncertainty can range from 0 to 100. Higher values indicate higher uncertainty: the future business situation is more difficult to predict.

### ifo Business Cycle Traffic Lights Germany

Monthly probability for economic expansion<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Green = high, yellow = medium, red = low. Calculated on the basis of monthly movements in the ifo Business Climate Index Germany.

Source: ifo Business Survey, December 2023.

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Monthly movements in the ifo Business Climate Index Germany can be translated into probabilities for the two cyclical regimes expansion and contraction using a Markov switching model. The ifo Business Cycle Traffic Lights show the monthly regime probabilities for the expansion phase. Probabilities exceeding the 66 percent mark signal an economic expansion (green lights); probabilities under the 33 percent mark signal a contraction (red lights); probabilities in the range in between those two marks signal indifference (yellow lights). This indifference can be interpreted as a buffer zone between the regimes expansion and contraction, in which particularly great uncertainty exists about the state of the economy.