



China Logistics Prosperity Index

September 2014

China Federation of Logistics & Purchasing

China Federation of Logistics & Purchasing (CFLP) is the logistics and purchasing industry association approved by the State Council. CFLP's mission is to push forward the development of the logistics industry and the procurement businesses of both government and enterprises, as well as the circulation of factors of production in China. The government authorizes the CFLP to produce industry statistics and set industry standards. CFLP is also China's representative in the Asian-Pacific Logistics Federation (APLF) and the International Federation of Purchasing and Supply Management (IFPSM).

The Fung Business Intelligence Centre

The Fung Business Intelligence Centre, through its unique relationships, collects and analyses market data on China's economy, with special reference to sourcing, supply chains, distribution and retail. It also produces reports on sourcing and trading in other Asian countries and has recently expanded its research services on the global retail industry, where unprecedented change is being driven by technological innovation, the advent of multi-sales channels and greater supply chain efficiency.

Serving as a knowledge bank for the Fung Group, the Centre also makes its market data and analysis available to businesses, scholars and governments around the world. It is an impartial thought leader on issues shaping the future of manufacturing, distribution, logistics and retailing in China, and retailing globally. It regularly provides advice and consultancy services to internal and external clients.

The Fung Business Intelligence Centre

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The business volume index of China Logistics Prosperity Index (LPI) came in at 54.1 in August, down from 56.8 in July.¹ 10 of the 12 sub-indices stayed in the expansionary zone in August.

1. Decelerating growth in logistics activities

The business volume index fell to 54.1 in August from 56.8 in July, suggesting a deceleration in the growth of logistics activities. Besides, the new orders index went down from 56.0 in July to 54.2 in August, indicating a moderation in demand for logistics services.

The employment index dropped from 52.2 in July to 50.6 in August, showing a slower increase in employment. Meanwhile, the capacity utilization index fell by 2.4 pts from the previous month to 55.0 in August, but was still well above the neutral 50 mark. Logistics enterprises have continued to see enhanced utilization of their facilities.

2. Inventories in warehouses shrank at a faster pace

The growth in warehousing activities has remained rapid. The inventory turnover index stayed high at 56.4 in August, pointing to faster inventory turnover. The average inventory index fell by 0.8 pts from the previous month to 48.2 in August, below the neutral level of 50. Inventories in warehouses shrank at a faster pace.

3. Faster turnover of cash

The cash flow index rebounded strongly from 45.9 in July to 52.8 in August, reflecting faster turnover of cash for the logistics enterprises surveyed.

4. Rise in service charges for logistics services

The operating cost index went up from 52.5 in July to 54.6 in August, indicating that cost pressures on logistics enterprises have continued to increase. On the other hand, the logistics service charges index rose above the neutral level of 50, registering 50.7 in August. Logistics enterprises started to raise their service charges in August. Against this backdrop, logistics enterprises saw a smaller decrease in profits. The operating profit index picked up to 49.2 in August from 46.2 in July.

5. Logistics enterprises remained optimistic about the business outlook

The investment in fixed asset index came in at 52.2 in August, staying in the expansionary zone. The reading shows that fixed asset investment by logistics enterprises increased in the month. Meanwhile, the business expectations index edged up to 54.8 in August from 54.7 in July. Enterprises in the logistics industry remained optimistic about the business outlook in the next three months.

¹ From May 2014 onwards, the 'composite index' of the LPI is no longer used as an indicator for the overall performance of the logistics sector. Instead, the business volume index is now used as the overall indicator. The business volume index indicates the direction and rate of change in business volume of the logistics sector.

About China Logistics Prosperity Index, LPI:

China Logistics Prosperity Index (LPI) provides an early indication each month of logistics activities in the Chinese logistics sector. The LPI is useful as a fore-indicator of economic and business conditions in China. It is published by China Federation of Logistics & Purchasing (CFLP). And the Fung Business Intelligence Centre is responsible for drafting and disseminating the English LPI report. The first LPI was launched in March 2013.

Every month questionnaires are sent to over 300 logistics enterprises all over China. The data presented herein is compiled from the enterprises' responses about their logistics activities and inventory situations. No data of individual enterprises should be disclosed. The LPI should be compared to other economic data sources when used in decision-making.

Over 300 logistics enterprises in China are surveyed. The sampling of the enterprises involves the use of Probability Proportional to Size Sampling (PPS), which means the selection of enterprises surveyed is largely based on each sub-sector's contribution to the operating revenue of logistics sector, and the representation of each geographical region.

Survey responses reflect the change of each indicator, if any, in the current month compared to the previous month. There are 12 indicators in the survey: Business Volume, New Orders, Average Inventory, Inventory Turnover, Cash Flow, Capacity Utilization, Logistics Service Charges, Operating Profit, Operating Cost, Investment in Fixed Asset, Employment and Business Expectations. For each of the indicators, this report shows the percentage of enterprises reporting each response, the difference between the percentage of responses in the positive economic direction and the negative economic direction, and the diffusion index.

The diffusion index is the sum of the positive responses plus a half of those responding 'the same'. Diffusion indices have the properties of leading indicators and are convenient summary measures showing the prevailing direction of change and the scope of change. An index reading above 50 indicates an overall positive change in that variable; below 50, an overall negative change.