

PRESS RELEASE



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Mechanical engineering firms report improved performance in first quarter Despite many reported uncertainties enquiry and order levels were up

Mechanical engineering firms say positive March enquiry and order levels contributed to a better first quarter than the final quarter 2012 in the Engineering and Machinery Alliance's (EAMA) Business Monitor.

According to the three-month running average balances, companies' enquiry levels are up +17 for UK and +14% for export business compared with February averages of +14 and +11 respectively.

The three-month running averages for orders were significantly better than February's results UK +13 (-2) and exports +10 (+7).

Martin Walder, EAMA chairman: "These are promising results and reflect how many companies are working hard to compete internationally in all markets, not just in Europe and the USA.

"Of course we mustn't go too far, but given the general mood in the media, the disappointing manufacturing numbers ONS announced today and the erratic weather we've had over the last few months, here are at least a few signs that something more sustainable could be building in the UK's zigzag recovery.

"Companies remain generally cautious. You can see that in two areas in the Monitor on jobs and on investment."

According to the March Monitor only one in seven companies plan to increase their employment numbers, while four in five say they'll keep staffing levels as they are for the time being.

On investment, over half (53%) of firms say they're not spending, although they may have deferred plans or be developing projects.

Martin Walder again: "On the more positive side, a third of all respondents do say they're investing in all areas. That's a big increase on February's numbers (up from 23%) and may reflect the fact that firms are now increasingly aware of the tax break the Chancellor has given companies to invest under the enhanced Annual Investment Allowance. If so, that would be very good news.

"Unfortunately the news on access to finance is little changed. This isn't altogether a surprise I suppose given the findings in the recent report to Government produced by the National Institute for Economic and Social Research (NIESR). The main conclusions in that report underline how even low risk SMEs have suffered higher costs and increased rejection rates at the hands of the banks.

"It's really important these problems of access to finance are resolved, otherwise as the report notes, output, investment and employment will be lower than they otherwise would have been."

(ends)
(data attached)

Notes to editors:

1. EAMA's 11 trade associations represent 1,400 firms: Agricultural Engineers Association, -- British Automation and Robot Association -- British Paper Machinery Suppliers Association -- British Plastics Federation -- British Turned Part Manufacturers Association -- Gauge and Toolmakers Association -- Manufacturing Technologies Association -- Polymer Machinery Manufacturers and Distributors Association -- Printing Industry Confederation -- Processing and Packaging Machinery Association -- UK Industrial Vision Association
2. There's no December Monitor as the business period for many firms is only a three-week span.
3. The Monitor records the proportion of firms in each category, not the number of enquiries, orders etc

The Monitor

1 Prospects/enquiries

Month	UP		SAME		DOWN		UP/DOWN Difference	
	UK	Export	UK	Export	UK	Export	UK	Export
January 2009	15	13	24	47	61	40	-46	-27
February	22	23	38	54	40	23	-- 18	0
March	28	22	33	50	39	28	-- 11	-- 6
April	31	28	26	28	43	44	-- 12	-- 16
May	24	12	47	50	29	38	-- 1	-- 26
June	33	19	44	54	23	27	+10	-8
July	33	14	48	55	19	31	+14	-- 17
August	28	13	36	51	36	36	-- 8	-- 23
September	46	33	38	55	16	12	+30	+21
October	41	37	42	42	17	21	+24	+16
November	52	33	37	50	11	17	+41	+16
January 2010	58	42	33	49	9	9	+49	+33
February	50	52	41	37	9	11	+41	+41
March	58	38	38	55	4	7	+54	+31
April	44	36	46	52	10	12	+34	+24
May	43	26	44	66	13	8	+30	+18
June	49	33	37	55	14	12	+35	+21
July	36	30	47	57	17	13	+15	+13
August	31	31	42	53	27	16	+4	+15
September	43	41	40	40	17	19	+26	+22
October	40	31	47	60	13	9	+27	+22
November	44	41	46	52	10	7	+34	+34
January 2011	49	43	38	50	13	7	+36	+36
February	50	42	39	49	11	9	+39	+33
March	38	40	47	48	15	12	+23	+28
April	44	35	43	52	13	13	+31	+22
May	31	36	56	46	14	18	+17	+18
June	43	34	41	56	15	10	+28	+24
July	34	28	43	51	23	21	+11	+7
August	22	20	37	36	41	44	-19	-24
September	31	19	43	54	26	27	+5	-8
October	34	21	49	59	17	20	+17	+1
November	29	22	55	64	16	14	+13	+8
January 2012	33	26	49	55	18	19	+15	+7
February	43	33	48	56	9	11	+34	+26
March	42	22	50	68	8	10	+34	+12
April	33	25	46	51	21	24	+12	+1
May	33	24	47	43	20	33	+13	-9
June	25	20	45	54	30	26	-5	-6
July	24	17	52	52	24	31	0	-14
August	29	17	41	43	30	40	-1	-23
September	31	26	45	50	24	24	+7	+2
October	39	23	45	56	16	21	+23	+2
November	31	28	42	48	27	24	+4	+4
January 2013	39	25	43	60	18	15	+21	+10
February	39	38	41	44	20	18	+19	+20
March	27	26	56	61	17	13	+10	+13

2 Order intake

Month	UP		SAME		DOWN		UP/DOWN Difference	
	UK	Export	UK	Export	UK	Export	UK	Export
January 2009	18	20	20	32	62	48	-44	-28
February	18	21	31	29	51	50	-- 33	-- 29
March	11	18	28	42	61	40	-- 50	-- 22
April	21	30	23	33	56	37	-- 37	-- 7
May	20	5	35	46	45	49	-- 25	-- 44
June	39	19	28	49	33	32	+6	-13
July	37	22	26	42	37	36	0	-- 14
August	33	22	23	41	44	37	-- 11	-- 15
September	51	34	26	43	23	23	+28	+11
October	40	23	43	56	17	21	+23	+2
November	34	22	39	44	27	34	+7	-12
January 2010	47	47	30	39	23	14	+24	+33
February	45	42	35	44	20	14	+25	+28
March	54	41	29	41	17	18	+37	+23
April	49	31	30	49	21	20	+28	+11
May	39	23	32	55	29	22	+10	+1
June	46	29	33	48	21	23	+25	+6
July	34	40	39	40	27	20	+7	+20
August	22	25	44	48	34	27	-12	-2
September	38	35	38	39	24	26	+14	+9
October	38	28	34	54	28	18	+10	+10
November	43	34	31	46	26	20	+17	+14
January 2011	57	45	22	42	21	13	+36	+32
February	46	47	29	32	25	21	+21	+26
March	41	38	43	43	16	19	+25	+19
April	39	36	35	45	26	19	+13	+17
May	40	35	46	46	14	19	+26	+16
June	38	39	38	46	23	16	+16	+22
July	45	29	26	44	29	27	+16	+2
August	26	24	29	32	45	44	-19	-20
September	49	31	24	40	27	29	+22	+2
October	36	29	32	43	32	28	+4	+1
November	45	30	23	36	32	34	+13	-4
January 2012	42	40	34	44	24	16	+18	+24
February	40	35	35	39	25	26	+15	+9
March	44	35	35	42	21	23	+23	+12
April	24	21	43	43	33	36	-9	-15
May	42	26	37	34	21	40	+21	-14
June	24	24	24	43	52	33	-28	-9
July	30	31	39	38	31	31	-1	0
August	23	10	33	43	44	47	-21	-37
September	31	29	32	29	38	42	-7	-13
October	34	15	47	50	19	35	+15	-20
November	28	35	26	37	47	28	-19	+7
January 2013	44	30	29	38	27	32	+17	-2
February	37	35	23	47	40	18	-3	+17
March	44	37	36	40	20	23	+24	+14

3 Jobs in the UK

Month	UP	SAME	DOWN	UP – DOWN
January 2009	9	59	32	-23
February	0	67	33	-33
March	0	74	26	-26
April	2	65	33	-31
May	8	66	26	-18
June	8	71	21	-13
July	12	61	27	-15
August	8	70	22	-14
September	11	75	14	-3
October	19	56	25	-6
November	9	80	11	-2
January 2010	15	75	10	+5
February	18	65	17	+1
March	18	75	7	+11
April	19	73	8	+11
May	20	73	6	+14
June	20	72	8	+12
July	25	67	8	+17
August	28	65	7	+21
September	21	68	11	+10
October	21	71	8	+13
November	21	69	10	+11
January 2011	27	64	8	+19
February	32	64	4	+28
March	31	61	8	+23
April	50	48	2	+48
May	28	69	3	+25
June	37	60	3	+34
July	28	66	6	+22
August	29	57	14	+15
September	32	58	10	+22
October	24	68	8	+16
November	24	56	20	+4
January 2012	29	63	8	+21
February	18	68	14	+4
March	34	62	4	+30
April	35	61	4	+31
May	20	69	11	+9
June	23	64	13	+10
July	34	61	5	+29
August	31	60	9	+22
September	19	71	10	+9
October	22	62	16	+6
November	25	56	19	+6
January 2013	6	81	13	-7
February	24	66	10	+14
March	14	82	4	+10

4 Investment Activity

Month	Investment stopped	Plans deferred	Developing projects	Investing in all areas	Investing in staff	Other
January 2009	10	28	40	6	8	8
February	27	31	17	4	17	4
March	31	22	25	10	6	6
April	28	28	32	5	2	5
May	22	28	35	6	4	6
June	25	34	22	9	9	1
July	22	30	35	6	4	3
August	30	19	26	11	5	9
September	12	22	30	20	12	4
October	25	17	29	8	17	4
November	10	27	30	3	25	5
January 2010	11	13	32	17	22	5
February	13	19	26	13	19	10
March	3	18	32	13	22	12
April	9	14	31	7	25	14
May	12	12	31	17	14	14
June	11	6	35	22	20	6
July	2	14	21	51	4	8
August	8	6	36	34	10	6
September	7	9	39	26	15	4
October	9	2	37	27	17	8
November	4	11	31	34	13	7
January 2011	8	6	29	43	12	2
February	2	5	41	32	9	11
March	7	8	26	33	15	11
April	2	8	26	46	12	6
May	6	8	23	36	19	8
June	7	9	26	48	6	4
July	4	11	26	39	16	4
August	2	12	25	40	19	2
September	5	12	27	36	14	6
October	10	8	31	29	12	10
November	5	14	29	36	2	14
January 2012	3	14	26	42	9	6
February	4	4	32	45	11	4
March	2	14	39	32	7	6
April	8	12	37	31	8	4
May	4	15	36	30	13	2
June	13	14	29	27	14	3
July	9	13	27	39	5	7
August	3	15	41	23	12	6
September	13	4	46	25	4	8
October	5	13	40	24	13	5
November	17	8	31	29	9	6
January 2013	14	17	41	14	10	4
February	6	6	34	23	25	6
March	2	9	42	33	7	7

Notes:

- choice of statements in full:
 1. All investment activity stopped
 2. Investment plans deferred
 3. Developing projects but not committing to them
 4. Investing in all areas of the business
 5. Investing in staff development and training but not capital investment
 6. Other

5 Capital Availability

Month	More Difficult		About the same		Easier		Difficult / easier Balance	
	Working	Investment	Working	Investment	Working	Investment	Working	Investment
January 2009	48	58	52	42	0	0	-48	-58
February	39	40	61	60	0	0	-39	-40
March	37	41	61	59	2	0	-35	-41
April	41	36	59	64	0	0	-41	-36
May	22	24	76	76	2	0	-20	-24
June	25	33	75	66	0	1	-25	-32
July	22	23	78	77	0	0	-22	-23
August	33	30	63	68	4	2	-29	-28
September	14	21	79	76	7	3	-7	-18
October	25	21	69	75	6	4	-19	-17
November	18	25	80	73	2	2	-16	-23
January 2010	14	23	80	74	6	3	-8	-20
February	9	8	88	89	3	3	-6	-5
March	12	10	82	90	6	0	-6	-10
April	9	10	83	88	8	2	-1	-8
May	18	16	73	73	9	11	-9	-6
June	15	17	81	74	4	9	-11	-8
July	8	12	76	72	16	16	+8	+4
August	11	11	87	89	2	0	-9	-11
September	11	13	84	84	5	3	-6	-10
October	17	13	75	84	8	3	-9	-10
November	17	16	76	80	7	4	-10	-12
January 2011	18	18	74	70	8	12	-10	-8
February	9	12	78	76	13	12	+4	0
March	8	6	84	82	8	12	0	+6
April	9	6	79	80	12	14	+3	+8
May	16	14	81	84	3	2	-13	-12
June	11	14	81	83	8	3	-3	-11
July	6	12	86	83	8	5	+2	-5
August	9	9	87	87	4	4	-5	-5
September	7	14	80	79	13	7	+6	-7
October	10	12	80	83	10	5	0	-7
November	2	5	88	88	10	7	+8	+2
January 2012	21	27	68	70	11	3	-10	-24
February	10	9	90	91	0	0	-10	-9
March	11	10	83	86	6	4	-5	-6
April	17	13	75	85	8	2	-9	-11
May	17	18	78	78	5	4	-12	-14
June	16	16	80	79	4	5	-12	-11
July	11	7	87	87	2	6	-9	-1
August	9	13	87	87	4	0	-5	-13
September	13	9	81	89	6	2	-7	-7
October	13	8	82	92	5	0	-8	-8
November	14	10	82	84	4	6	-10	-4
January 2013	21	18	75	75	4	7	-17	-11
February	11	11	78	81	11	8	0	-3
March	11	16	84	84	5	0	-6	-16