

# Absa Purchasing Managers' Index November 2025

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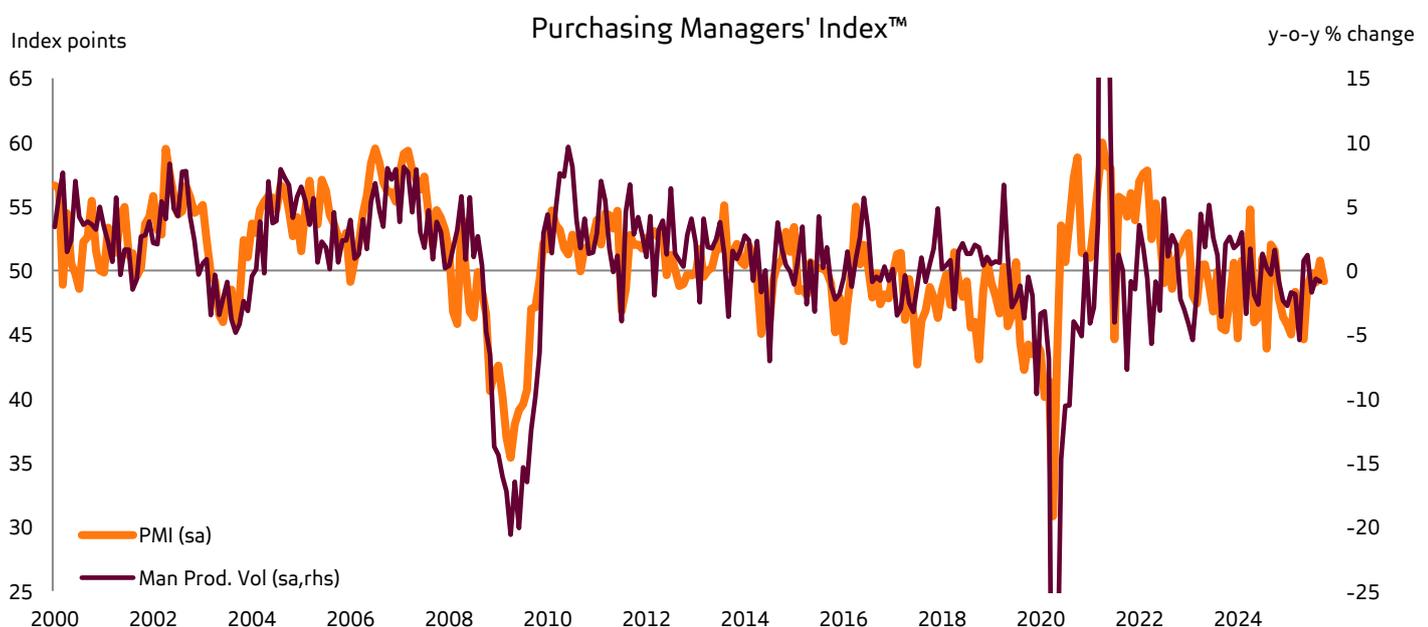
The seasonally adjusted **Absa Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)** dropped by a steep 7.2 index points to 42 in November 2025. The sharp decline was underpinned by deteriorations in four of the five subcomponents of the headline PMI, with only employment looking slightly better – albeit still below 50. It is important to emphasise that the PMI is a direct result of the movements of the indices, which are based on, for example, changes in activity and demand, rather than a sentiment measure.

The **new sales orders index** declined sharply. Export sales remained weak – as they have been since the end of 2024 – suggesting that a renewed drop in demand was largely driven by the domestic economy. As such, following a brief stint above the neutral 50-point mark in the third quarter of 2025, **business activity** declined in October and dropped further in November. While the index has been volatile, the persistent weakness is also reflected in the lack of traction in the official manufacturing data. Despite the drop in the activity index, the **employment index** rose for a second consecutive month. While still below the neutral 50-point mark, the index is above the average recorded in the first 10 months of 2025.

There is some positive news. The **purchasing price index** declined by a notable 7.4 index points in November. A stronger rand exchange rate and lower oil price during the month likely drove this decline, with a sticky diesel price (closely linked to petroleum product prices) likely preventing a bigger drop. If sustained, lower cost pressures on manufacturers should, over time, contribute to lower consumer inflation in the economy.

Furthermore, the **expected business conditions index** nudged higher. Following two months below the 50-point mark, it edged up to 50.8. This suggests that an improvement in business conditions in six months' time is expected. However, it is worth noting that this is well below the long-term average of the index.

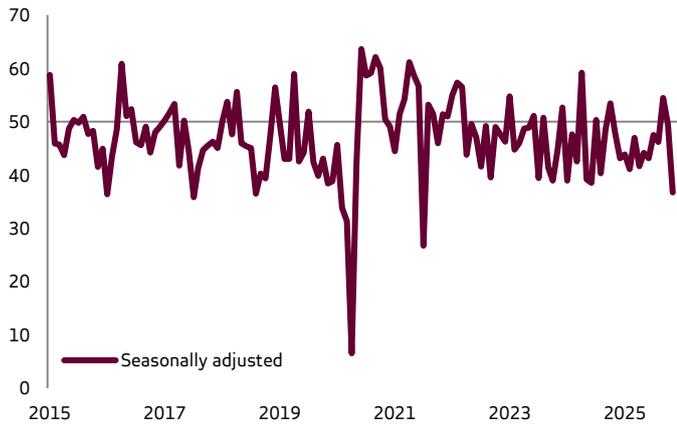
The Absa PMI for December 2025 will be released on 8 January 2026.



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The PMI is an economic activity index based on a survey conducted by the Bureau for Economic Research (BER) and sponsored by Absa. Although reasonable professional skill, care and diligence are exercised to record and interpret all information correctly, Stellenbosch University, its division BER, the author(s) editor and Absa (inclusive of its affiliates and/or subsidiaries) do not accept any liability for any direct or indirect loss whatsoever that might result from unintentional inaccurate data and interpretations provided by the BER, as well as any interpretations by third parties. Stellenbosch University and Absa further accept no liability for the consequences of any decisions or actions taken by any third party on the basis of information provided in this publication. The views, conclusions or opinions contained in this publication are those of the BER and do not necessarily reflect those of Stellenbosch University or Absa. Absa is an authorised financial services provider and registered credit provider: reg no NCRCP7.

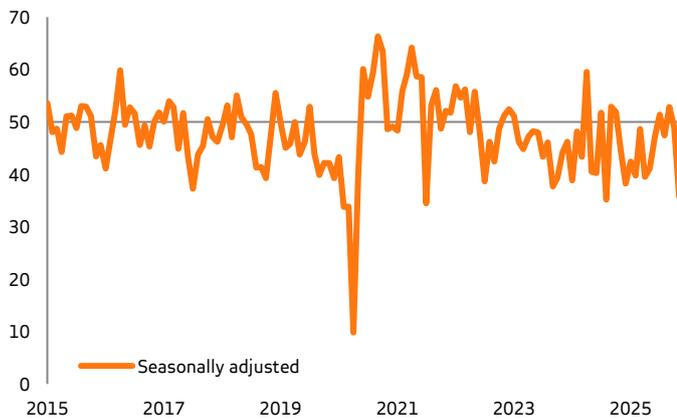
PMI: Business activity



Following a brief stint above the neutral 50-point mark in the third quarter of 2025, **business activity** declined in October and dropped further in November. While the index has been volatile, the persistent weakness is also reflected in a lack of traction in the official manufacturing data. After a 0.4% annual decline in 2024, output is set to be down by another 1.5% year-to-date (with Q4 data still outstanding).

	Sep	Oct	Nov
<b>Business activity</b>	54.4	49.4	<b>36.7</b>

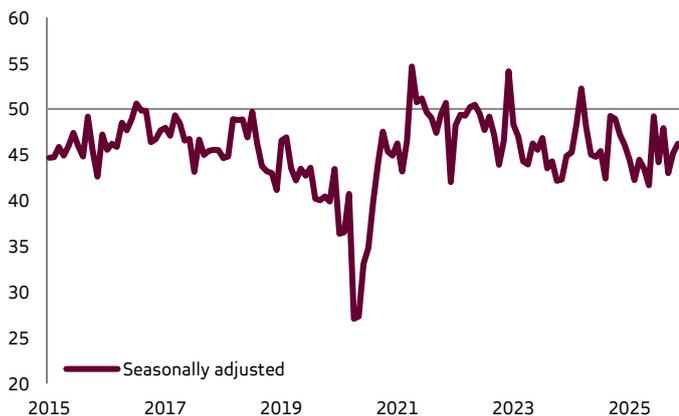
PMI: New sales orders



The **new sales orders index** declined sharply. Export sales remained weak – as they have been since the end of 2024 – suggesting that a renewed drop in demand was largely driven by the domestic economy. Indeed, some comments refer to a slowdown after a short-lived revival.

	Sep	Oct	Nov
<b>New sales orders</b>	52.9	48.9	<b>35.6</b>

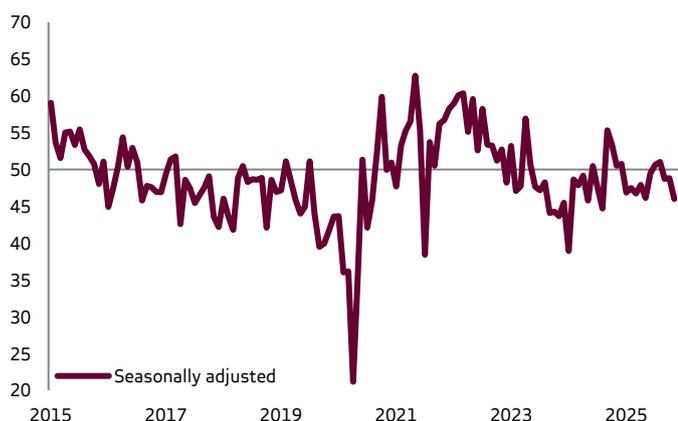
PMI: Employment



Despite the drop in the **activity index**, the employment index rose for a second consecutive month. While still below the neutral 50-point mark, the index is above the average recorded in the first 10 months of 2025.

	Sep	Oct	Nov
<b>Employment</b>	43.0	45.1	<b>46.2</b>

### PMI: Inventories



After remaining unchanged in October, the **inventories index** dipped to the lowest level since May 2025 (46.1). Barring July and August, inventories have been below 50 points through 2025, suggesting that manufacturers are carrying low stocks of raw materials and intermediate products used in the production process.

	Sep	Oct	Nov
<b>Inventories</b>	48.8	48.8	<b>46.0</b>

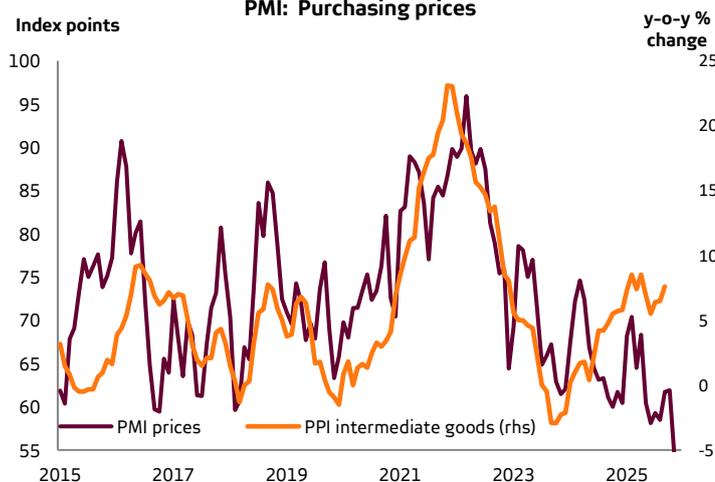
### PMI: Supplier deliveries



While a key drag on the headline PMI, the steep decline in the **supplier deliveries index** could be better news if the improvement in delivery times (the index is inverted) reflects less drag from logistical constraints. While there appears to be some improvement in the functioning of local ports, Cape Town activity was disrupted by strong winds throughout November. As such, given the sharp decline in orders, the drop in the supplier deliveries index likely reflects faster deliveries due to suppliers being less busy – and thus rightly weighs on the headline print.

	Sep	Oct	Nov
<b>Supplier deliveries</b>	54.9	53.5	<b>45.5</b>

### PMI: Purchasing prices



The **purchasing price index** declined by a notable 7.4 index points in November. A stronger rand exchange rate and lower oil price during the month likely drove this decline, with a sticky diesel price (closely linked to petroleum product prices) likely preventing a bigger drop. If sustained, lower cost pressure on manufacturers should, over time, contribute to lower consumer inflation in the economy.

	Sep	Oct	Nov
<b>Purchasing prices</b>	61.7	61.9	<b>54.5</b>

The PMI is an economic activity index based on a survey conducted by the Bureau for Economic Research and sponsored by Absa. The monthly surveys are conducted under a representative group of purchasing managers in the South African manufacturing sector. These purchasing managers have to indicate each month whether a particular activity (e.g. new sales orders) for their company has increased, decreased or remained unchanged. Diffusion indices are then calculated by taking the percentage of respondents that reported an increase and adding it to one-half of the percentage that reported no change. This results in an index for which a value of 50 indicates no change in the activity, a value above 50 indicates increased activity and a value below 50 indicates decreased activity. The indices are then seasonally adjusted, but no further smoothing method is applied. The headline PMI is calculated as the weighted average of the following indices (weights in parentheses): Business Activity (0.20), New Orders (0.20), Employment (0.20), Supplier Deliveries (0.20) and Inventories (0.20). Note that the inverse of the Supplier Deliveries index is used in the PMI calculation. For more information on the South African manufacturing PMI, the historical data series as well as a description of the questions in the PMI survey, please visit the BER's website ([www.ber.ac.za](http://www.ber.ac.za)).