

# CKGSB BCI

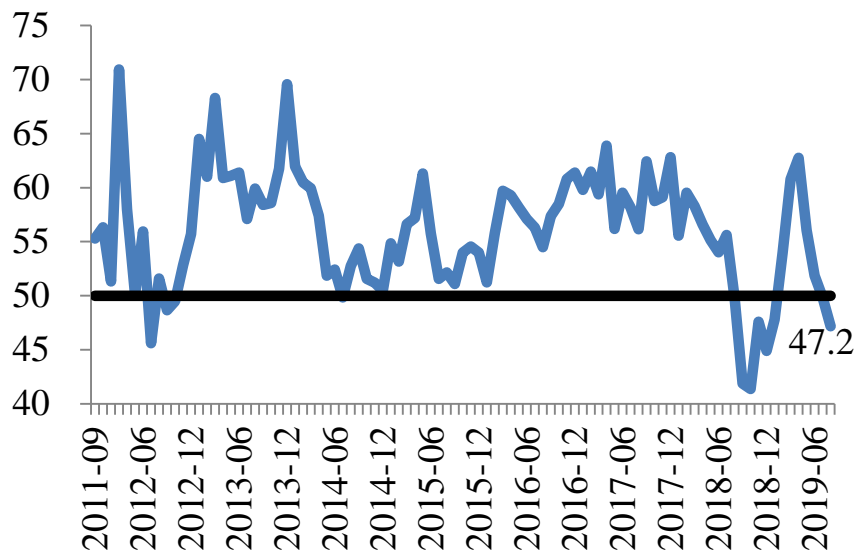
August 2019

28 August 2019

CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

In August, the CKGSB Business Conditions Index (BCI) registered 47.2, a small deterioration on last month's 49.8, and below the confidence marker of 50.0 (Figure 1).

**Figure 1 Business Conditions Index (BCI)**



Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

The CKGSB BCI comprises four sub-indices: corporate sales, corporate profits, corporate financing environment and inventory levels. Three measure future prospects and one, the corporate financing index, measures the current climate. In August, these sub-indices performed as follows:

**Figure 2 Corporate Sales Index**



Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

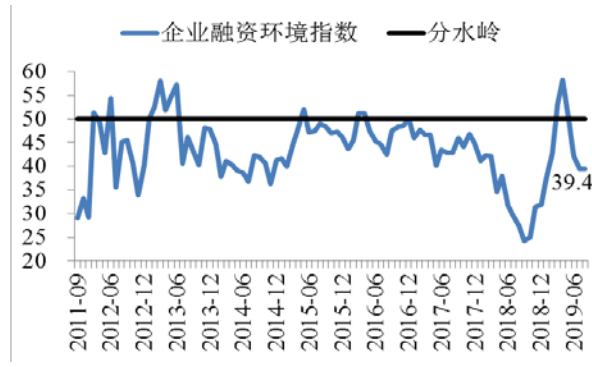
**Figure 3 Corporate Profit Index**



Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

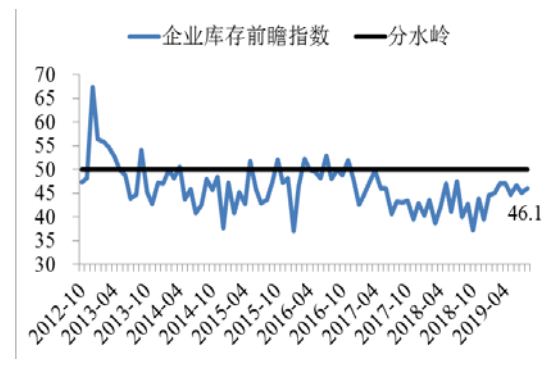
This month, three fell and one rose. The corporate sales index fell from 64.6 to 59.0 (Figure 2), and the corporate profit index fell from 51.1 to 46.6 (Figure 3).

Figure 4 Corporate Financing Index



Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

Figure 5 Inventory Index



Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

This month's corporate financing index continued to fall, but very slightly, from 39.5 to 39.4 (See Figure 4).

The inventory index rose marginally from 45.0 to 46.1 (Figure 5).

Aside from the main BCI, we also forecast costs, prices, investment and recruitment demand over the next six months. To begin with costs:

Figure 6 Labor Costs Index



Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

Figure 7 Overall Costs Index



Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

This month's forecast for labor costs was 82.0 and the overall forecast for costs was 80.7. This means a slight fall for labor costs and somewhat of a rebound for overall costs. No matter how the economy is performing, these two indices have remained stubbornly high (See Figures 6 and 7 for specifics).

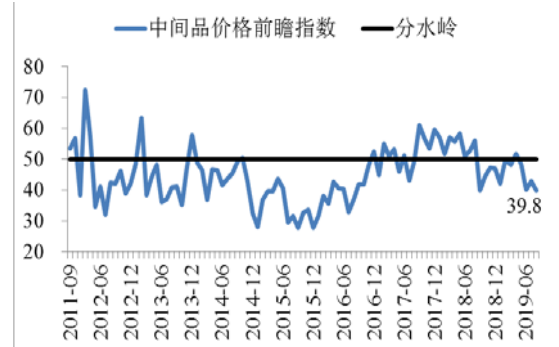
Turning to prices, the consumer prices forecast fell from 50.4 to 47.6 (Figure 8), while the producer prices index dropped this month from 43.0 to 39.8 (Figure 9).

Figure 8 Consumer Prices Index



Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

Figure 9 Producer Prices Index



Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

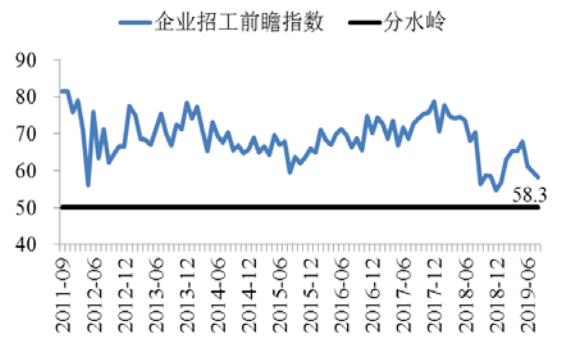
We now turn to the important issues of investment and recruitment. These two indices have been consistently at the more confident end of the scale since the BCI began. This year however, both have weakened, especially the recruitment index. This month, the investment index has fallen from July's 60.6 to 58.7 (Figure 10), while the recruitment index has fallen slightly from 59.7 to 58.3 (Figure 11).

Figure 10 Investment Index



Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

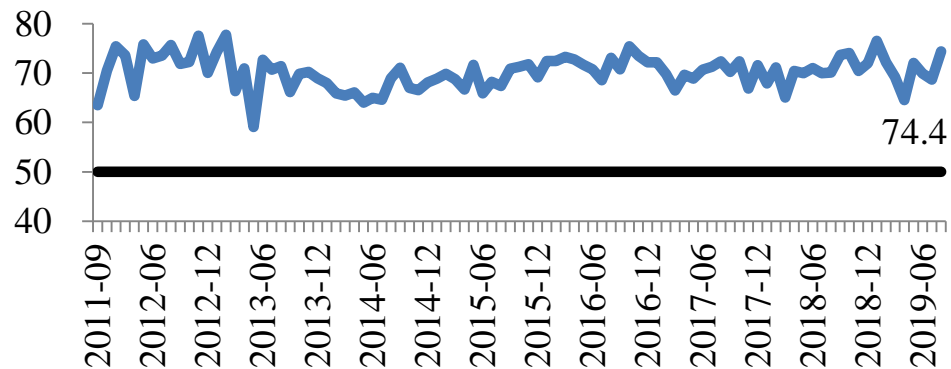
Figure 11 Recruitment Index



Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

Finally, we include an index recording our sample's relative strength in the marketplace. Figure 12 shows surveyed companies' level of competitiveness over time. As our sample mostly comprises of CKGSB alumni firms, we can be assured that their competitiveness is higher than average (50 points) for their respective industries. This means that Chinese industry as a whole will be experiencing tougher conditions than our sample.

Figure 12 Industry Competitiveness



Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

### CKGSB BCI Introduction

In June 2011, the CKGSB Case Center and the Center for Economic Research initiated a project to gauge the business sentiment of executives about the macro-economic environment in China – calling it a business conditions index.

Under the direction of Professor Li Wei, the two research centers designed and tested the BCI survey in July 2011. In September 2011, the first survey was carried out. 93 surveys have been completed in total and 88 monthly reports have been published between May 2012 and August 2019 (There were three months at the beginning for which no report was issued).

### Explanation of the Index

The CKGSB Business Conditions Index (CKBCI) is a set of forward-looking diffusion indicators. The index takes 50 as its threshold, so a value above 50 means that the variable that the index measures is expected to increase, while a value below 50 means that the variable is expected to fall. The CKGSB BCI uses the same methodology as the PMI index.

The survey asks senior executives of companies whether their main products are for consumers or non-consumers, and then asks how they think product prices will change in the next six months. Based on survey responses, we have been able to report expectant changes in consumer and producer prices.

We ask companies for information pertaining to their relative competitive positions in their respective industries. Based on survey responses, we compute a competitiveness index for our sample. The higher the competitiveness index, the more competitive our sample firms are in their respective industries.

### Method of Calculation

During each survey, respondents are asked to indicate whether certain aspects of their business (e.g., sales) are expected to increase, remain unchanged, or decrease over the forthcoming six months as compared to the same time period last year. The diffusion index is calculated by summing the percentage of "increase" responses and half of the "remain unchanged" responses.

Of all the indices measured for the CKGSB BCI, the overall business conditions index is an aggregate index, which has been calculated, since December 2012, by averaging its four constituent indices of sales, profit, financing environment and inventory. The aggregate BCI index before December 2012 used a different composition of constituent indices, and is therefore not directly comparable to the current BCI index.

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Established in Beijing in November 2002 with generous support from the Li Ka Shing Foundation, CKGSB is China's leading non-profit, independent educational institution. The school offers innovative English MBA, Chinese MBA, Executive MBA and Executive Education programs. In addition to its campus in the center of Beijing, it has teaching sites in Shanghai and Shenzhen and representative offices in Hong Kong, London and New York.

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