

# CKGSB BCI

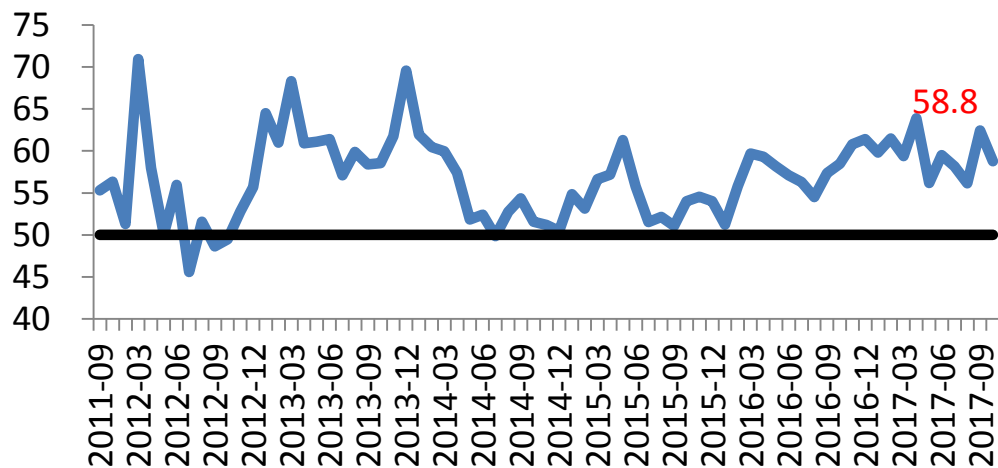
October 2017

25 Oct 2017

CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

The Business Conditions Index (BCI) registered 58.8 in October, lower than last month's index of 62.4 (Figure 1). Above the confidence threshold, this shows most sampled firms are optimistic about business prospects for the upcoming six month period.

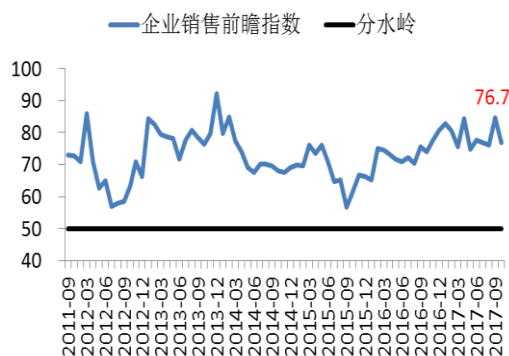
**Figure 1 Business Conditions Index (BCI)**



Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

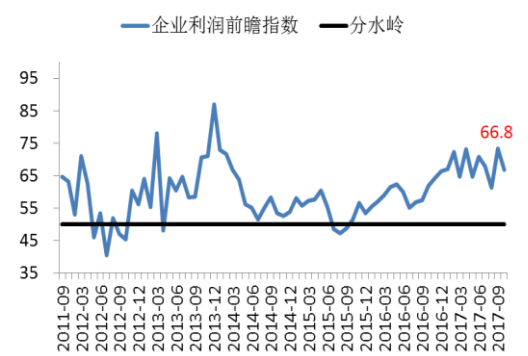
The CKGSB BCI comprises four sub-indices for corporate sales, corporate profits, corporate financing environment and inventory levels, three of which measure future prospects and one, the financing environment index, measures the current situation.

**Figure 2 Corporate Sales Index**



Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

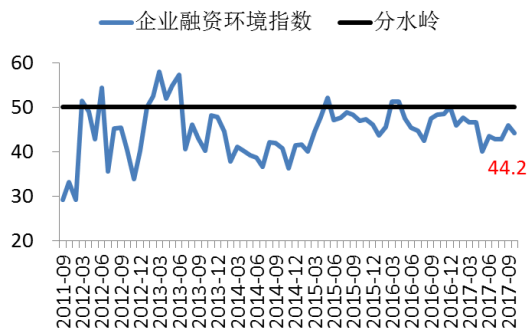
**Figure 3 Corporate Profit Index**



Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

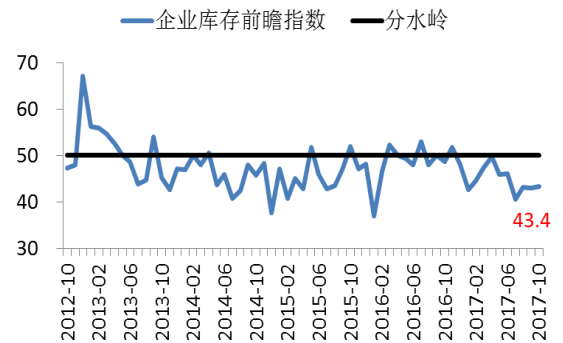
This month, three of these sub-indices fell, and one rose. The corporate sales index dropped from 84.7 to 76.7 (Figure 2), and the corporate profits index fell from 73.3 to 66.8 (Figure 3).

Figure 4 Corporate Financing Index



Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

Figure 5 Inventory Index



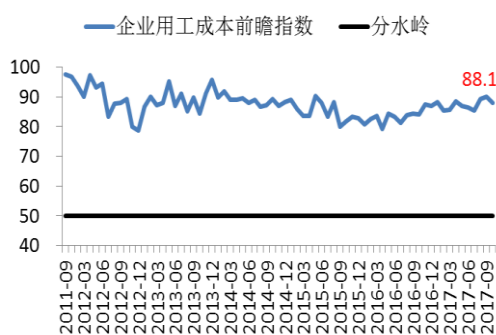
Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

The financing environment index fell from 46.0 in September to 44.2 in October. We can see from Figure 4 that the financing environment index has been consistently low for our sample of CKGSB alumni, and, given that this consists mainly of China's most efficient companies, the SMEs, this is a critical issue for reformers to address.

Moving slightly from 43.1 to 43.4 this month (Figure 5), the inventory index reflects a longterm issue for the Chinese economy. This index has mainly dwelt under the confidence threshold since the BCI survey began.

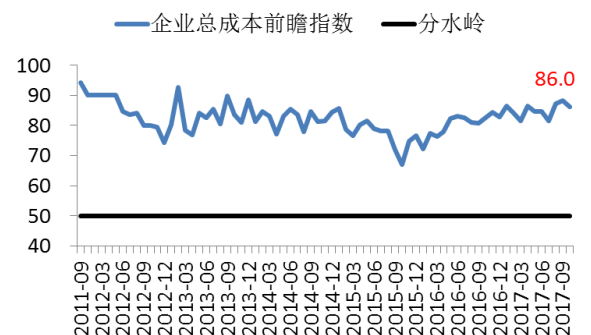
Aside from the main BCI, we also forecast costs, prices, investment and recruitment demand over the next six months:

Figure 6 Labor Costs Index



Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

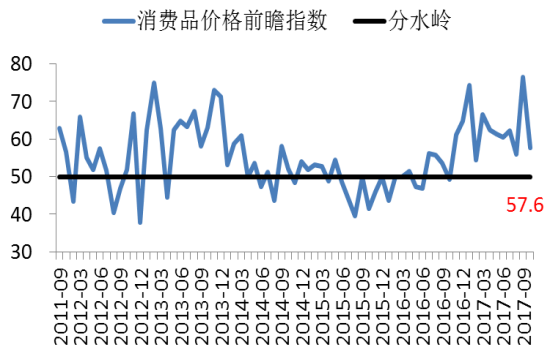
Figure 7 Overall Costs Index



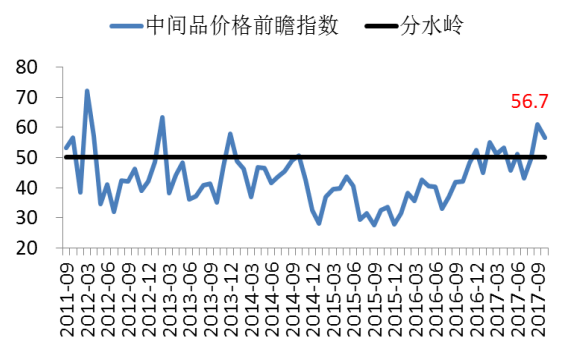
Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

The labor costs and overall costs indices remained high, with the former at 88.1 and the latter at 86.0. Neither index has ever been low, and in the upcoming period we do not anticipate any major fall. Explaining this phenomenon remains an challenge. For specifics, see Figures 6 and 7.

Turning to prices, the consumer prices index fell significantly from 76.4 last month to 57.6 in October (Figure 8). The producer prices index fell from 61.1 to 56.7, but stayed above the threshold of 50 (Figure 9).

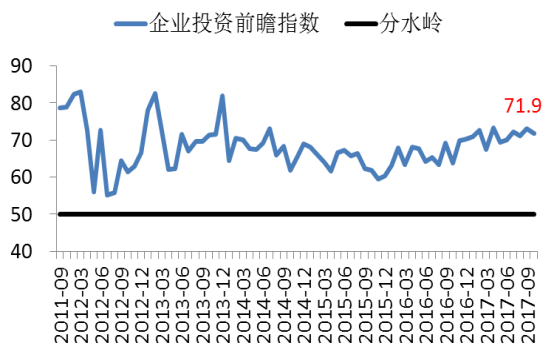
**Figure 8 Consumer Prices Index**


Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

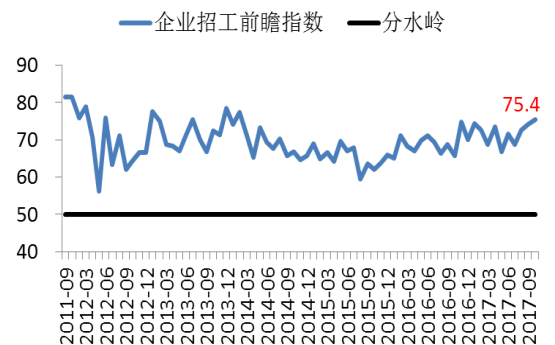
**Figure 9 Producer Prices Index**


Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

We turn now to the important topics of investment and recruitment. Although investment and recruitment confidence levels have never reached the peaks of the costs indices, they have stayed at the higher end of the scale. This month's investment index was 71.9 (Figure 10), and the recruitment index was 75.4 (Figure 11). These indices are interesting because no matter how macroeconomic conditions have changed since the BCI began in September 2011, while indices such as profits and inventories have fluctuated dramatically, as has the overall BCI, three indices have been stable throughout: costs, investment and recruitment.

**Figure 10 Investment Index**


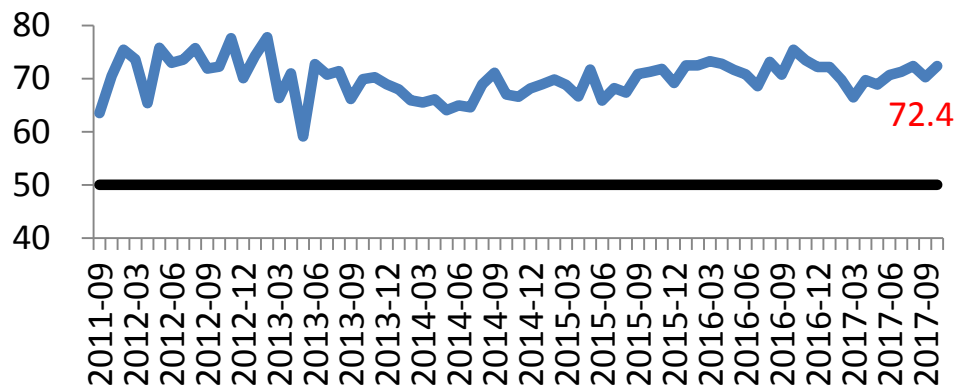
Source: CKGSB Case Center and Center for Economic Research

**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 market. Figure 12 shows our sample's level of competitiveness over time. As our sample mostly comprises the companies of CKGSB alumni, their competitiveness is consistently higher than the average (50 points) in their respective industries. This means that lower performing firms will experience worse prospects.

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 – called an index of business conditions.

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 surveys were distributed and first results computed. Since then, from May 2012 to October 2017, 66 monthly BCI reports have been published.

### Explanation of the Index

The CKGSB Business Conditions Index (CKBCI) is a set of forward-looking, diffusion indices. The index takes 50 as its threshold, so an index value above 50 means that the variable that the index measures is expected to increase, while an index value below 50 means that the variable is expected to fall. The CKGSB BCI thus 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 uses a different composition of constituent indices, and is therefore not directly comparable to the current BCI index.

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#### **The Research Team**

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