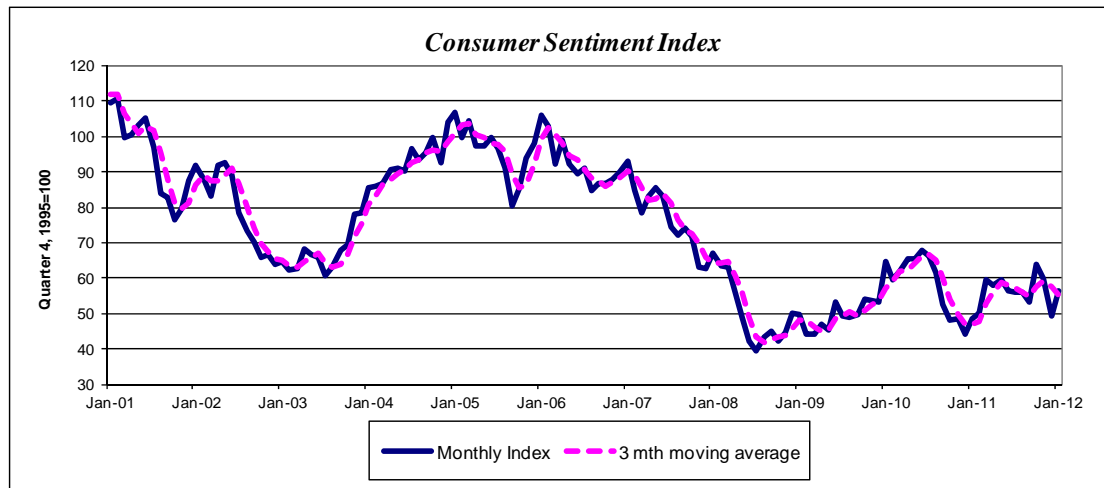




CONSUMER SENTIMENT INDEX, JANUARY 2012

Consumer Sentiment higher in January

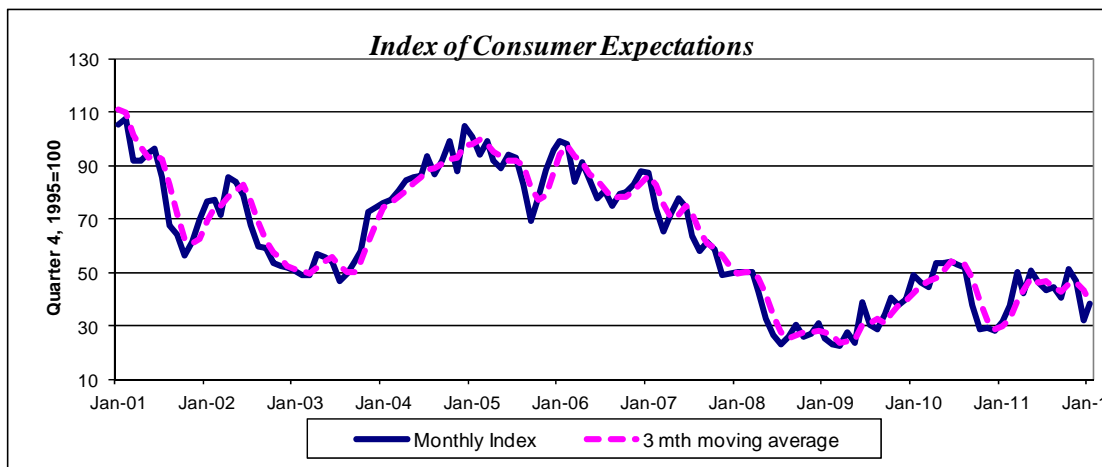
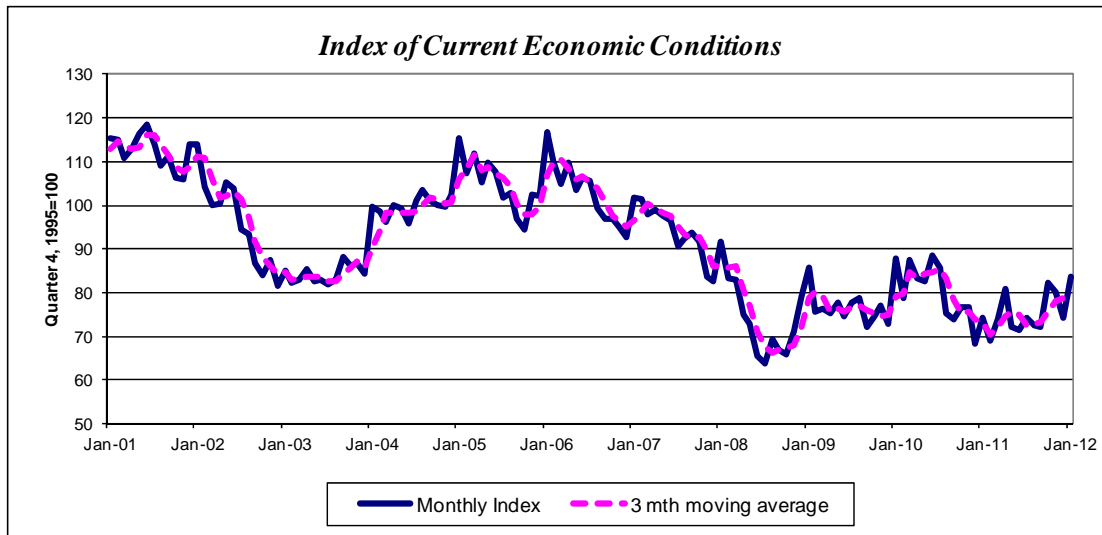
Consumer sentiment increased to 56.6 in January from 49.2 in December. The corresponding figure for January 2011 was 48.7. The 3-month moving average weakened to 55.3.



The Consumer Sentiment Index comprises two sub-indices; an index of consumer expectation that focuses on how consumers view prospects over the next 12 months and an index of current economic conditions, focusing on consumers' present situation.

The Index of Consumers Expectations is based on consumers' perceptions of their future financial situation, their economic outlook for the country as a whole and employment expectations. This sub-Index increased from 32.4 in December to 38.4 in January. The average for 2011 was 43.1.

The Index of Current Economic Conditions is based on how consumers feel about their current financial circumstance compared to 12 months ago, as well as their perception of the current buying environment for large household purchases. The Index of Current Economic Conditions rose to 83.6 in January from 74.2 in December, and is higher than the 2011 average of 74.8.



Note:- Since May 2008 the KBC Bank Ireland/ESRI Irish consumer sentiment survey was prepared using a slightly different methodology. While this may have a minor impact on the precise numerical estimates of various survey components, it should not have any significant effect on the broad trends reported.

The data was obtained from telephone interviews during the first two weeks of the month with around 800 completed questionnaires. The data were re-weighted in line with gender, age and level of educational attainment to ensure the data is fully representative of the national population of adults. Each index is calculated by computing the relative scores (the percent giving favorable replies minus the percent giving unfavorable replies (the balance), plus 100) for each question used in the different indices. Those who reply “Don’t Know”, “Remain the same” are excluded from the index calculations. Each relative score is rounded to the nearest whole number. The sum of the relative scores is then divided by the base period total for each index.

For further information contact

Austin Hughes – Chief Economist, KBC Bank Ireland– (01) 664 6889

or

Cormac O’Sullivan – Economist – ESRI – (01) 863 2000

Historic data from February 1996 are available on the ESRI website, www.esri.ie and on the KBC Bank Ireland website, www.kbc.ie. A detailed methodology note outlining how the indices are constructed and the most recent release are also available on the websites.