



# **Survey of Businesses' Inflation Expectations**

**December 2018**

**RESEARCH SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
RESEARCH AND ECONOMIC PROGRAMMING DIVISION**

# Inflation Expectations Survey

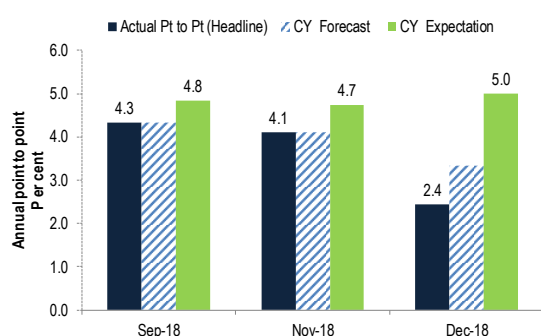


The Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) undertakes surveys of businesses on behalf of the Bank of Jamaica to ascertain the expectations of these economic agents about variables which are likely to have an impact on inflation in the near-term. In this regard, the survey captures the perception of Chief Executive Officers, Managing Directors and Financial Controllers about the future movement of prices, current and future business conditions and the expected rate of increase in wages/salaries. These responses assist the Central Bank in charting future policy decisions. The

most recent survey was conducted between 03 December 2018 and 04 January 2019 and had 293 respondents. Below are highlights from that survey.

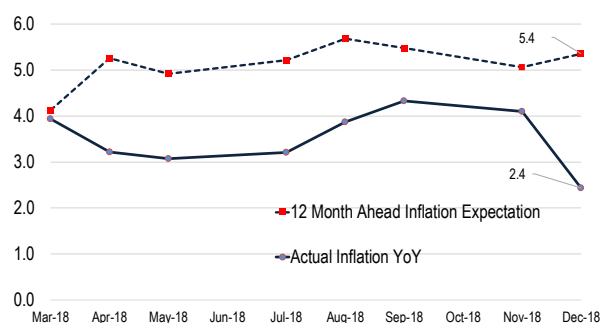
**Figure 1: Inflation Expectations**

For the calendar year 2017, the inflation rate was 5.2 per cent. What do you think the inflation rate will be for 2018?



**Figure 2: Expected Annual Inflation**

What do you expect the rate of inflation to be over the next 12 months?



## Overview

- The December 2018 survey indicated an expected inflation of 5.0 per cent for calendar year (CY) 2018, which was higher than the November 2018 survey outturn of 4.7 per cent. The expected inflation 12 months ahead increased to 5.4 per cent relative to the previous survey outturn of 5.1 per cent.
- The perception of inflation control remained unchanged in the December 2018 survey relative to the November 2018 survey.
- Respondents anticipate that the currency will appreciate over all three surveyed time horizons (3-month, 6-month, and 12-month horizons).
- The majority of respondents continued to believe that the Bank’s Policy rate will remain the same over the next three months.
- The Present Business Conditions and Future Business Conditions both reflected a lower level of optimism relative to the previous survey.

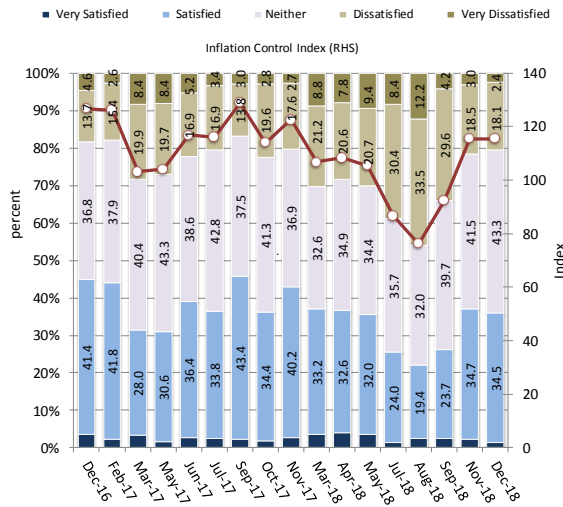
## Inflation Expectations

In the December 2018 survey, respondents increased their expectation for inflation for (CY) 2018 to **5.0 per cent** from **4.7 per cent** in the November 2018 survey. This expectation was above the annual point-to-point inflation of **2.4 per cent** for December 2018 (see **Figure 1**).

# Inflation Expectations Survey

**Figure 3: Perception of Inflation Control**

How satisfied are you with the way inflation is being controlled by the Government?<sup>1</sup>



\*December 2005 = 100

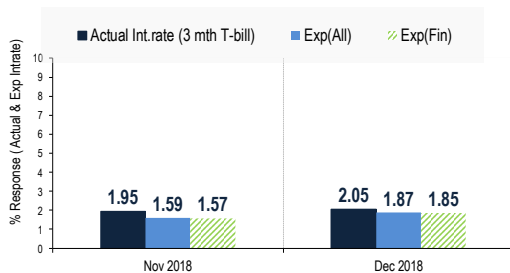
**Table 1: Exchange Rate Expectations**

In October 2018 the exchange rate was J\$131.75=US\$1.00. What do you think the rate will be for the following time periods ahead, 3 months, 6 months and 12 months?

Periods Ahead	Expected Depreciation			
	Aug-18	Sep-18	Nov-18	Dec-18
3 Months	4.1	0.0	-6.1	-2.3
6 Months	5.2	0.7	-5.6	-1.7
12 Months	5.8	1.5	-5.2	-0.8

**Figure 4: 90-day T-bill**

In October 2018 the 90-day T-bill rate was 1.8 per cent. What do you think the rate will be for the next 3 months?



Respondents' expectation of inflation 12 months ahead also accelerated to **5.4 per cent**, from the previous survey's estimate of **5.1 per cent** (see **Figure 2**).

Businesses' perception of the authorities' control of inflation remained unchanged in the December 2018 survey (see **Figure 3**). This was largely due to a decrease in the proportion of respondents who were "dissatisfied", offset by a decrease in those who were "satisfied" with how inflation is being controlled.

## Exchange Rate Expectations

Relative to the previous survey, respondents anticipate a slower pace of appreciation over all three surveyed time horizons. In the December 2018 survey, the exchange rate was anticipated to appreciate by **2.3 per cent**, **1.7 per cent**, and **0.8 per cent** for the 3-month, 6-month horizons, and 12-month horizons, respectively. This compares with the respective expected appreciation of **6.1 per cent**, **5.6 per cent**, and **5.2 per cent** that were recorded in the November 2018 survey (see **Table 1**).

## Interest Rate Expectations: 90-day T-bill

Survey respondents expected the 90-day Treasury bill rate, three months hence, to be **1.9 per cent**. This expected rate is lower than the actual December 2018 outcome of **2.1 per cent** (see **Figure 4**). Financial sector respondents expected the 90-day Treasury bill rate, three months hence, to be **1.9 per cent**.

<sup>1</sup> Index of inflation control calculated as the number of satisfied respondents minus the number of dissatisfied respondents plus 100

# Inflation Expectations Survey

**Table 2: Interest Rate Expectations: Policy Rate**

In November 2018, the Bank of Jamaica’s overnight rate (policy rate) was 2.0 per cent. What do you think this rate will be for the next 3 months?

SURVEY DATES	OVERALL			FINANCIAL SECTOR		
	Sep-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Sep-18	Nov-18	Dec-18
Survey responses (percentage of total)						
Significantly Lower	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Marginally Lower	9.4	10.9	10.2	16.4	20.0	13.0
Remain the Same	44.3	56.2	50.5	41.8	52.0	55.6
Marginally Higher	33.8	26.0	27.6	36.4	18.0	27.8
Significantly Higher	1.0	1.5	4.1	1.8	2.0	1.9
Don't Know	11.5	5.3	7.5	3.6	8.0	1.9

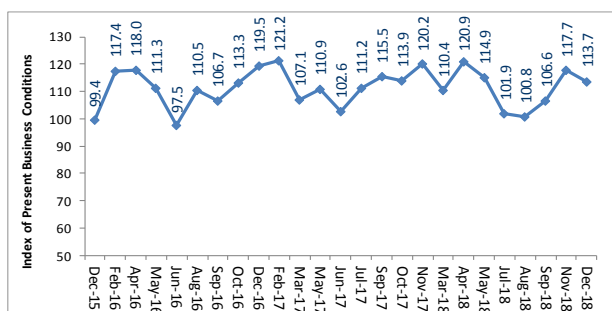
## Interest Rate Expectations: Policy Rate

In the December 2018 survey, the majority of respondents expected that the Bank’s policy rate would remain the same over the next three months. This proportion decreased relative to the previous survey.

With regard to the financial sector, the majority of respondents expected that the Bank’s policy rate would be unchanged. Furthermore, responses from the financial sector revealed that **27.8 per cent** of respondents expected the rate to be marginally higher, up from a proportion of **18.0 per cent** in the November 2018 survey.

**Figure 4: Present Business Conditions**

In general, do you think business conditions are better or worse than they were a year ago in Jamaica?



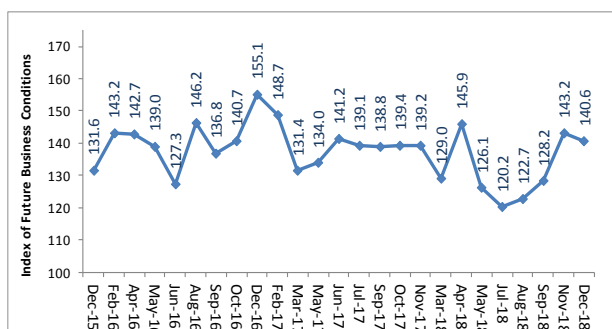
\*Balanced score method: (better-worse) +100

## Perception of Present and Future Business Conditions

In the December 2018 survey, the Present Business Conditions Index decreased to **113.7** relative to **117.7** recorded in the previous survey. The Future Business Conditions Index decreased to **140.6** relative to **143.2** in the previous survey (see **Figures 5 and 6**).

**Figure 5: Future Business Conditions**

Do you think that in a year from now business conditions will get better or get worse than they are at present?



\*Balanced score method: (better-worse) +100

The decrease in the Present Business Conditions Index reflected a reduction in the number of respondents of the view that conditions are “better”. The outturn for the Future Business Conditions Index mainly reflected an increase in the proportion of respondents who believe that conditions will be “worse”.

# Inflation Expectations Survey

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Table 3: Operating Expenses

Which input do you think will have the highest price increase in the next 12 months?

	Aug-18	Sep-18	Nov-18	Dec-18
Utilities	36.3	31.7	43.0	30.7
Wages/Salaries	9.7	10.8	7.9	7.2
Fuel/Transport	20.5	22.0	14.7	18.1
Stock Replacement	18.7	22.6	21.1	30.0
Raw Materials	8.3	8.0	9.8	8.9
Other	6.5	4.9	3.4	5.1
Not Stated	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

## Expected Increase in Operating Expenses

Respondents indicated that they expected the largest increase in production costs over the next 12 months to emanate from utilities, fuel/transport, and stock replacement. The cost of wages/salaries are anticipated to be the least likely to increase (see **Table 3**).