



SURVEY OF BUSINESSES' INFLATION EXPECTATIONS

JUNE 2016

**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 over the 06 June to 27 June 2016 and had 319 respondents. Below are highlights from that survey.

Figure 1: Inflation Expectations

For the calendar year 2015, the inflation rate was 3.7 per cent. What do you think the inflation rate will be for 2016?

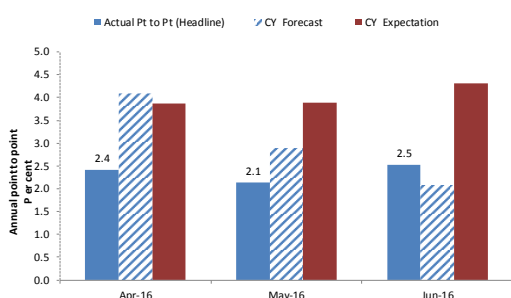
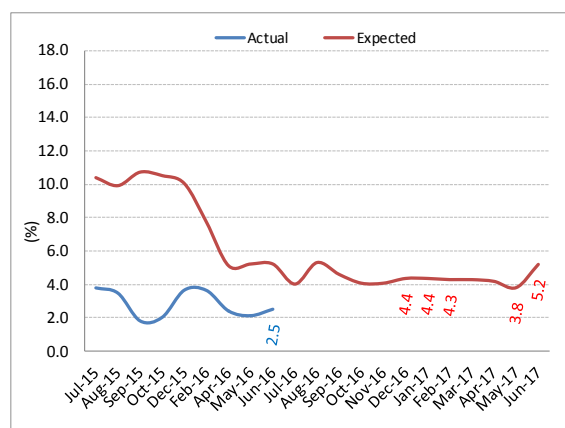


Figure 2: Expected Annual Inflation

Based on the last 12 months (June 2015 to May 2016) the average monthly inflation rate was approximately 0.30 per cent. What do you think the average monthly rate will be for the next 12 months?



*Note: (i) The responses have been annualized (ii) the expected inflation for June 2017 reflects responses as at June 2016 (iii) periods where no survey was conducted assume the previous month's expectation.

Overview

- The June 2016 survey indicated an expected inflation of 4.3 per cent for calendar year (CY) 2016, higher than the 3.9 per cent recorded in the previous survey. The expected inflation 12 months ahead was also higher relative to the previous survey.
- The perception of inflation control declined in the June 2016 survey relative to the previous survey.
- Respondents moderated their view about the pace of depreciation over all three time horizons, albeit marginally.
- The majority of respondents believe that the Bank's OMO rate will remain the same over the next three months.
- Perceptions about current and future business conditions moderated relative to the previous survey's record levels.

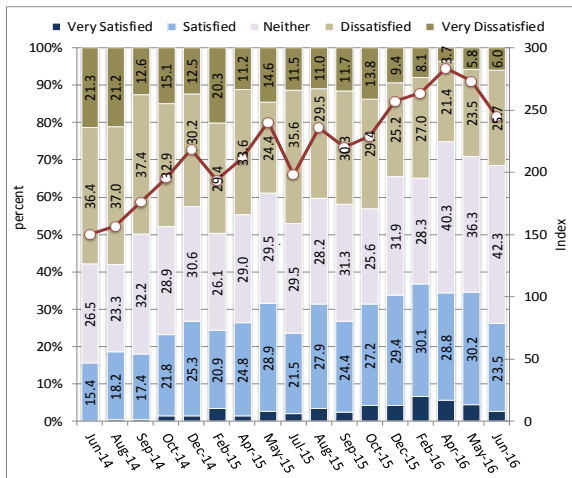
Inflation Expectations

In the June 2016 survey, the expected inflation for CY2016 was **4.3 per cent**, an increase relative to the May 2016 survey. The expectation for the calendar year was above the annual inflation of **2.5 per cent** at June 2016 (see Figure 1). Notably, respondents' expectation of inflation 12 months ahead rose to **5.2 per cent** relative to **3.8 per cent** in the May 2016 survey (see Figure 2).

Inflation Expectations Survey

Figure 3: Perception of Inflation Control

How satisfied are you with the way inflation is being controlled by the Government?¹



*December 2005 = 100

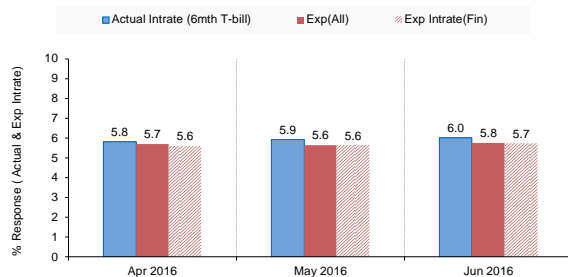
Table 1: Exchange Rate Expectations

In May 2016 the exchange rate was J\$125.41=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			
	Feb-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16
3 Months	0.7	1.1	1.9	1.7
6 Months	1.7	1.6	3.0	2.9
12 Months	3.2	2.8	4.3	4.2

Figure 4: 180-day T-bill

In May 2016 the 180-day T-bill rate was 5.9 per cent. What do you think the rate will be for the next 3 months?



Businesses' perception of the Government's control of inflation declined in the June 2016 survey. Specifically, the index of inflation control dipped to **244.9** from **273.2** in the previous survey (see Figure 3). This outturn reflected increases in both the number of respondents who were 'very dissatisfied' and 'dissatisfied' with the authorities' control of inflation. Notably there was an increase in the number of respondents who were 'neither satisfied' nor 'dissatisfied.'

Exchange Rate Expectations

Relative to the previous survey, respondents moderated their view of the pace of currency depreciation over the 3-month, 6-month and 12-month time horizons. Specifically, in the June 2016 survey, the exchange rate was expected to depreciate by **1.7 per cent** for the 3-month horizon which was marginally lower than the **1.9 per cent** expected in the May 2016 survey. For the 6-month and 12-month horizons there were expectations of depreciation of **2.9 per cent** and **4.2 per cent**, respectively, compared to depreciations of **3.0 per cent** and **4.3 per cent** in the May 2016 survey (see Table 1).

Interest Rate Expectations: 180-day T-bill

The expected 180-day Treasury bill rate, three months hence, increased to **5.9 per cent**, above the **5.6 per cent** reported in the previous survey. This expected rate was below the actual outturn of **6.0 per cent** for June 2016 (see Figure 4).

¹ Index of inflation control calculated as the number of satisfied respondents minus the number of dissatisfied respondents plus 100

Inflation Expectations Survey

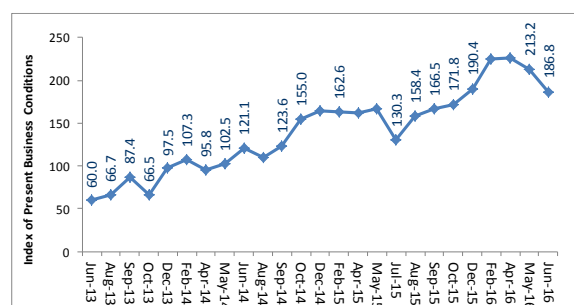
Table 2: Interest rate Expectations: OMO Rate

In May 2016, the Bank of Jamaica’s 30-day rate was 5.0 per cent. What do you think this rate will be for the next 3 months?

SURVEY DATES	OVERALL			FIN SECTOR		
	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16
<i>Survey responses (percentage of total)</i>						
Significantly Lower	0.7	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	1.4
Marginally Lower	18.3	18.3	18.2	25.0	17.1	19.2
Remain the Same	52.2	50.3	46.1	51.6	54.3	46.6
Marginally Higher	27.1	29.3	32.3	23.4	27.1	31.5
Significantly Higher	0.7	1.2	1.3	0.0	0.0	1.4
Don't Know	1.0	0.9	1.3	0.0	1.4	0.0

Figure 5: Present Business Conditions

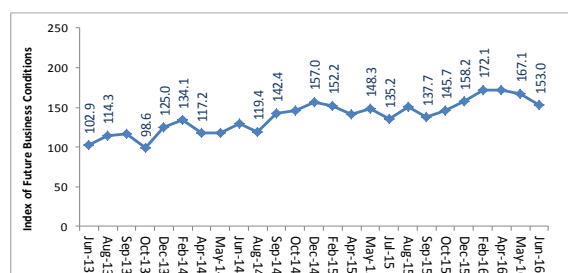
In general do you think business conditions are better or worse than they were a year ago in Jamaica?



* December 2005 = 100

Figure 6: 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?



* December 2005 = 100

Interest Rate Expectations: OMO Rate

In the June 2016 survey, the majority of respondents expected that the Bank’s OMO rate will remain the same over the next three months. The results for the financial sector were in line with the overall view that the BOJ would maintain the 30-day OMO rate at the current level. Similar to the May 2016 survey, there was an increase in the proportion of respondents who expected a rise in the policy rate, particularly in the financial sector.

Perception of Present and Future Business Conditions

In the June 2016 survey, the perceptions of both present and future business conditions worsened relative to the previous three surveys (see Figures 5 and 6). Notably, the index of present business conditions fell to **186.8** from the **213.2** attained in the previous survey. The index of future business conditions moderated to **153.0** from **167.1** in the previous survey. Both indices reflected declines in the proportion of respondents of the view that conditions were or will be “better.” In addition, there were increases in the proportion of respondents indicating that conditions were or will be “worse.” There was, however, an increase in the proportion of respondents that indicated that conditions were ‘about the same’ for present business conditions while there was a decline in the number of respondents that indicated that conditions would be ‘about the same’ for future business conditions.

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Table 3: Operating Expenses

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

	Feb-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16
Utilities	21.7	23.7	24.4	31.0
Wages/Salaries	12.1	18.0	13.7	9.6
Fuel/Transport	10.2	10.8	11.3	14.1
Stock Replacement	37.6	32.2	33.5	27.2
Raw Materials	17.1	12.9	16.8	17.9
Other	1.2	2.4	0.3	0.3
Not Stated	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Expected Increase in Operating Expenses

For the first time since the September 2015 survey, respondents indicated that they expect the largest increase in production costs over the next 12 months to emanate from utilities (see Table 3). Higher costs for stock replacement, which was the dominant factor for the previous five surveys, was expected to be the second largest contributor to production costs over the next 12 months. The cost of wages/salaries was the input cost least expected to increase over the next 12 months.