



THE CONFERENCE BOARD

FOR RELEASE: 10:00 A.M. KST, FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2010

The Conference Board®
Korea Business Cycle IndicatorsSM
THE CONFERENCE BOARD LEADING ECONOMIC INDEX®
(LEI) FOR KOREA
AND RELATED COMPOSITE ECONOMIC INDEXES FOR JANUARY 2010

The Conference Board Leading Economic Index® (LEI) for Korea increased 0.3 percent and **The Conference Board Coincident Economic Index® (CEI)** for Korea declined 0.4 percent in January.

- The Conference Board LEI for Korea increased slightly in January, and it has been on an upward trend for a year. This month, gains in letter of credit arrivals and real exports more than offset the large negative contributions from stock prices and the (inverted) index of inventories to shipments. The leading economic index increased by 7.1 percent (about a 14.7 percent annual rate) in the six-month period ending in January 2010, slightly higher than the increase of 5.9 percent (about a 12.2 percent annual rate) for the previous six months ending in July 2009. In addition, the strengths among the leading indicators have remained widespread in recent months.
- The Conference Board CEI for Korea, a measure of current economic activity, declined in January for the first time since December 2008. The wholesale and retail sales component, industrial production, and total employment all made large negative contributions to the index this month. With the decline in January, the six-month growth rate of the coincident economic index continued to slow -- to 1.7 percent (about a 3.5 percent annual rate), down from 3.7 percent (about a 7.6 percent annual rate) for the previous six months. At the same time, real GDP growth also slowed substantially, to 0.7 percent (annual rate) in the fourth quarter of 2009, following the rapid increases of 13.6 percent (annual rate) in the third quarter and the 5.6 percent average annual rate in the first half of the year.
- The Conference Board LEI for Korea has been on an upward trend for a year now, and is back to its July 2008 level. Meanwhile, The Conference Board CEI for Korea declined this month, and its six-month growth rate has continued to slow. Taken together, the current behavior of the composite indexes and their components suggests that economic activity will continue to improve, but perhaps at a modest pace in the near term.

LEADING INDICATORS. Four of the seven components that make up The Conference Board LEI for Korea increased in January. The positive contributors – from the largest positive contributor to the smallest – were letter of credit arrivals, real exports FOB, private construction orders*, and value of machinery orders*. Negative contributors – from the largest negative contributor to the smallest – were stock prices, the (inverted) index of inventories to shipments, and the (inverted) yield of government public bonds.

With the 0.3 percent increase in January, The Conference Board LEI for Korea now stands at 114.7 (2004=100). Based on revised data, this index increased 2.1 percent in December and increased 1.8 percent in November. During the six-month span through January, the leading economic index increased 7.1 percent, with five of the seven components advancing (diffusion index, six-month span equals 85.7 percent).

The next release is scheduled for Friday, April 9, 2010 at 10:00 A.M. (KST)

In the U.S – Thursday, April 8, 2010 at 9:00 P.M (DST)

COINCIDENT INDICATORS. Only one of the four components that make up The Conference Board CEI for Korea increased in January. The positive contributor was monthly cash earnings. The wholesale and retail sales component, industrial production and total employment declined in January.

With the 0.4 percent decrease in January, The Conference Board CEI for Korea now stands at 110.6 (2004=100). Based on revised data, this index increased 0.3 percent in December and increased 0.9 percent in November. During the six-month span through January, the coincident economic index increased 1.7 percent, with three of the four components advancing (diffusion index, six-month span equals 75.0 percent).

FOR TABLES AND CHARTS, SEE BELOW

DATA AVAILABILITY. The data series used to compute **The Conference Board Leading Economic Index[®]** (LEI) and **The Conference Board Coincident Economic Index[®]** (CEI) for Korea reported in this release are those available “as of” 10 A.M. (ET) on March 10, 2010.

* The series in the coincident economic index based on The Conference Board’s estimates is monthly cash earnings. The series in the leading economic index based on The Conference Board’s estimates are private construction orders and value of machinery orders.

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THE CYCLICAL INDICATOR APPROACH. The composite economic indexes are the key elements in an analytic system designed to signal peaks and troughs in the business cycle. The Conference Board LEI and CEI are essentially composite averages of several individual leading or coincident economic indicators. (See page 3 for details.) They are constructed to summarize and reveal common turning point patterns in economic data in a clearer and more convincing manner than any individual component—primarily because they smooth out some of the volatility of individual components.

Historically, the cyclical turning points in The Conference Board LEI have occurred before those in aggregate economic activity, while the cyclical turning points in The Conference Board CEI have occurred at about the same time as those in aggregate economic activity.

Korea Composite Indexes: Components and Standardization Factors

<u>Leading Economic Index</u>	<u>Factor</u>
1. Stock Prices	0.046
2. Value of Machinery Orders	0.031
3. Letter of Credit Arrivals	0.088
4. Index of Shipments to Inventories	0.086
5. Export FOB	0.102
6. Yield of Government Public Bonds	0.621
7. Private Construction Orders	0.026

<u>Coincident Economic Index</u>	
1. Industrial Production	0.127
2. Wholesale and Retail Trade	0.126
3. Employment	0.668
4. Monthly Cash Earnings	0.079

Notes:

The component factors are inversely related to the standard deviation of the month-to-month changes in each component. They are used to equalize the volatility of the contribution from each component and are “normalized” to sum to 1.

These factors were revised effective on the release for January 2010, and all historical values for the two composite economic indexes were revised at this time to reflect the changes. (Under normal circumstances, updates to The Conference Board LEI and CEI only incorporate revisions to data over the past six months.) The factors above for The Conference Board LEI were calculated using 1996-2008 as the sample period for measuring volatility. A separate set of factors for the 1982-1996, 1980 – 1982, 1976-1979, and 1971-1976 periods, are available upon request. The factors above for The Conference Board CEI were calculated using 1970-2008 as the sample period. These multiple sample periods are the result of different starting dates for the component data. When one or more components are missing, the other factors are adjusted proportionately to ensure that the total continues to sum to 1. For additional information on the standardization factors and the index methodology visit our Web site: <http://www.conference-board.org/economics/bci/>.

The trend adjustment factors for The Conference Board LEI are 0.0666 (calculated from June 1980 to December 2008) and -0.7671 (calculated from March 1971 to May 1980).

To address the problem of lags in available data, those leading and coincident economic indicators that are not available at the time of publication are estimated using statistical imputation. An autoregressive model is used to estimate each component. The resulting indexes are constructed using real and estimated data, and will be revised as the data unavailable at the time of publication become available. Such monthly data revisions are now a regular part of the U.S. Business Cycle and Global Indicators program. The main advantage of this procedure is to utilize in The Conference Board LEI the data such as bond yields, stock prices, and change in consumer confidence that are available sooner than other data on real aspects of the economy such as housing starts and new orders. Empirical research by The Conference Board suggests there are real gains in adopting this procedure to make all the indicator series as up-to-date as possible.

NOTICES

The 2010 schedule for **The Conference Board Leading Economic Index**[®] (LEI) for Korea news releases is:

February 2010 Data ... Thursday, April 08, 2010
March 2010 Data ... Tuesday, May 11, 2010
April 2010 Data ... Tuesday, June 15, 2010
May 2010 Data ... Tuesday, July 13, 2010
June 2010 Data ... Tuesday, August 10, 2010
July 2010 Data ... Tuesday, September 14, 2010
August 2010 Data ... Wednesday, October 13, 2010
September 2010 Data ... Thursday, November 11, 2010
October 2010 Data ... Thursday, December 09, 2010

All releases are at 10:00 A.M. KST (following day), 8:00 P.M. (9:00 P.M. DST) ET

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE BOARD

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Korea Business Cycle Indicators Internet Subscription <i>(Includes monthly release, data, charts and commentary)</i>	\$ 635 per year (1 user)
Individual Data Series	\$ 35 per series downloaded
Monthly BCI Report <i>(Sample available at http://www.conference-board.org/publications/describeBCI.cfm)</i>	\$ 275 per year
BCI Handbook (published 2001)	\$ 20
Corporate Site License	contact Indicators Program at (212) 339-0330

Business Cycle Indicators for Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Spain and the U.K. are available at \$635 per country per year (1 user). Discounts are available to Associates of The Conference Board and accredited academic institutions.

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The Conference Board Korea Business Cycle Indicators
Table 1.--Summary of Korea Composite Economic Indexes

	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	2009			2010
				Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.
Leading index	107.1	107.1	109.8 r	110.0 r	112.0 r	114.4 r	114.7
Percent change	1.3	0.0	2.5 r	0.2 r	1.8	2.1	0.3
Diffusion index	64.3	57.1	92.9	50.0	71.4	92.9	64.3
Coincident index	108.7	108.7 r	109.3 r	109.7 r	110.7 r	111.0 p	110.6 p
Percent change	0.1	0.0 r	0.6 r	0.4	0.9 p	0.3 p	-0.4 p
Diffusion index	50.0	50.0	75.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	25.0

	Jan to	Feb to	Mar to	Apr to	May to	Jun to	Jul to
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Leading index							
Percent change	5.9	5.4	7.4 r	5.9 r	7.5 r	8.2 r	7.1
Diffusion index	71.4	71.4	85.7	85.7	85.7	71.4	85.7
Coincident index							
Percent change	3.7	3.3 r	2.8 r	2.7 r	2.9 r	2.2 p	1.7 p
Diffusion index	75.0	100.0	75.0	100.0	100.0	75.0	75.0

p Preliminary. r Revised (noted only for index levels and one-month percent changes).

CALCULATION NOTE: The diffusion indexes measure the proportion of the components that are rising. Components that rise more than 0.05 percent are given a value of 1.0, components that change less than 0.05 percent are given a value of 0.5, and components that fall more than 0.05 percent are given a value of 0.0.

For more information, visit our Web site at www.conference-board.org/economics/bci/

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The Conference Board Korea Business Cycle Indicators

Table 2.--Data and Net Contributions for Components of the S. Korea Leading Economic Index

Components	2009							2010
	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	
Korea Leading Economic Index Component Data								
Stock Price Index, (Jan. 4, 1980=100).....	1557.3	1591.9	1673.1	1580.7	1555.6	1682.8	1602.4	
Value of Machinery Orders, Mfg. (Bill. 2005 Won, SA).....	1499.1	1391.0	1544.9	1540.7	1467.7	1516.4	1524.1 **	
Letter of Credit Arrivals, Mfg. (3 Month Moving avg., Mill. 2000 US\$, SA).....	5618.57 r	5726.67 r	6054.73 r	6218.43 r	6549.63 r	6670.67 r	6972.30 **	
Index of Inventories to Shipments, Mfg.,* (2005=100, S.A.).....	93.30 r	95.90 r	89.60 r	97.40 r	93.80 r	88.90 r	90.90	
Real Exports FOB, Customs Clearance Basis, (3 Month Moving avg., US \$ Million, SA).....	27318.33 r	27788.44 r	28265.65 r	29279.66 r	30897.88 r	32862.72 r	33587.72	
Yield of Government Public Bonds,* Maturity up to 5 Years, (Percent).....	5.13	5.35	5.33	5.35	5.29	5.25	5.27	
Private Construction Orders (Bill. Of Won deflated by PPI, 3MA, SA).....	25430.97	26905.07	33631.97	40277.97	51139.80	57248.30	57812.94	
LEADING INDEX (2004=100).....	107.1	107.1	109.8 r	110.0 r	112.0 r	114.4 r	114.7	
Percent change from preceding month.....	1.3	0.0	2.5 r	0.2 r	1.8	2.1	0.3	
Korea Leading Economic Index Component Contributions								
Stock Price Index, (Jan. 4, 1980=100).....	....	0.10	0.23	-0.26	-0.07	0.36	-0.23
Value of Machinery Orders, Mfg. (Bill. 2005 Won, SA).....	....	-0.24	0.33	-0.01	-0.15	0.10	0.02 **
Letter of Credit Arrivals, Mfg. (3 Month Moving avg., Mill. 2000 US\$, SA).....	....	0.17	0.49	0.23	0.46 r	0.16 r	0.39 **
Index of Inventories to Shipments, Mfg.,* (2005=100, S.A.).....	....	-0.24	0.58 r	-0.71 r	0.32 r	0.46 r	-0.19
Real Exports FOB, Customs Clearance Basis, (3 Month Moving avg., US \$ Million, SA).....	....	0.17 r	0.17 r	0.36 r	0.55 r	0.63 r	0.22
Yield of Government Public Bonds,* Maturity up to 5 Years, (Percent).....	....	-0.14	0.01	-0.01	0.04	0.02	-0.01
Private Construction Orders (Bill. Of Won deflated by PPI, 3MA, SA).....	....	0.14	0.57 r	0.51 r	0.61	0.29	0.03

p Preliminary. r Revised.

* Inverted series; a negative change in this component makes a positive contribution to the index.

** Statistical Imputation (See page 2 for more details)

Q Quarterly series; these series are converted to a monthly series through a linear interpolation.

Data Sources: Korea National Statistics Office, The Bank of Korea, Korean Customs Administration, Thomson Financial

CALCULATION NOTE--The percent change in the index does not always equal the sum of the net contributions

of the individual components (because of rounding effects and base value differences).

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The Conference Board Korea Business Cycle Indicators

Table 3.--Data and Net Contributions for Korea Coincident Economic Index

Components	2009							2010
	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	
Korea Coincident Economic Index Component Data								
Industrial Production, (2005=100, SA).....	122.9 r	121.8 r	126.3 r	123.0	128.1 r	132.4 r	130.9	
Wholesale and Retail Sales, (2005=100, SA).....	114.0 r	112.6 r	116.5 r	118.4 r	117.6 r	119.9 r	117.3	
Total Employment, (Thousands of Persons, SA).....	23523.6 r	23591.8 r	23656.8 r	23580.7 r	23548.2 r	23506.2 r	23467.3	
Monthly Cash Earnings (Hundred of Won, deflated by CPI, SA).....	24128.2 r	24298.1 r	22618.4 r	25017.4 r	26799.3 r	25816.8 **	26452.1 **	
COINCIDENT INDEX (2004=100).....	108.7	108.7 r	109.3 r	109.7 r	110.7 r	111.0 p	110.6 p	
Percent change from preceding month...	0.1	0.0 r	0.6 r	0.4 r	0.9 r	0.3 p	-0.4 p	
Korea Coincident Economic Index Component Contributions								
Industrial Production, (2005=100, SA).....	....	-0.11	0.46 r	-0.34 r	0.52 r	0.42 r	-0.14
Wholesale and Retail Sales, (2005=100, SA).....	....	-0.16 r	0.43 r	0.20 r	-0.09	0.24 r	-0.28
Total Employment, (Thousands of Persons, SA).....	....	0.19	0.18	-0.22	-0.09 r	-0.12 r	-0.11
Monthly Cash Earnings (Hundred of Won, deflated by CPI, SA).....	....	0.06 r	-0.57 r	0.80 r	0.54 r	-0.30 **	0.19 **

p Preliminary. r Revised. n.a. Not available. c Corrected.

** Statistical Imputation (See page 2 for more details)

Q Quarterly series; these series are converted to monthly through a linear interpolation.

Data Sources: Korea National Statistics Office, Thomson Financial, Ministry of Labor

CALCULATION NOTE--The percent change in the index does not always equal the sum of the net contributions of the individual components (because of rounding effects and base value differences).

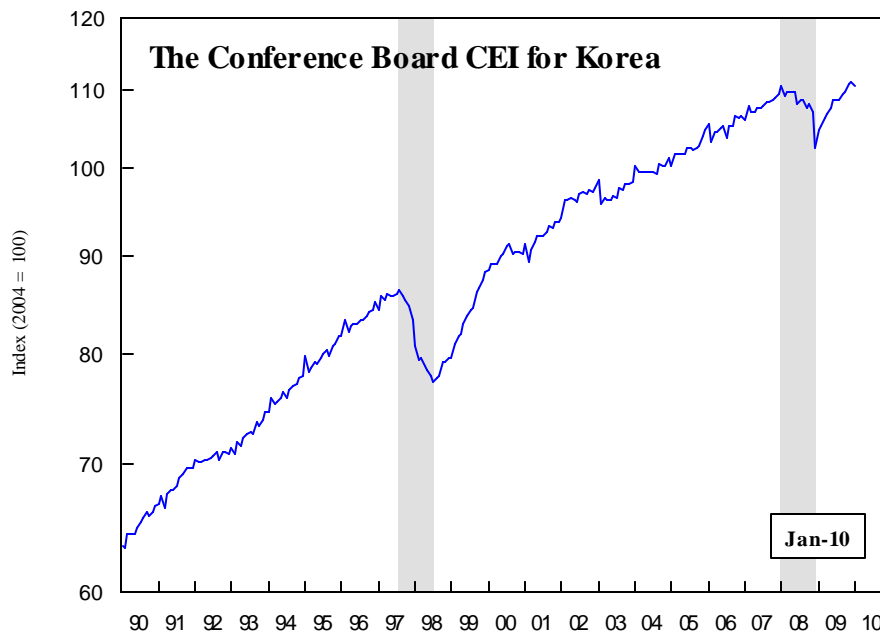
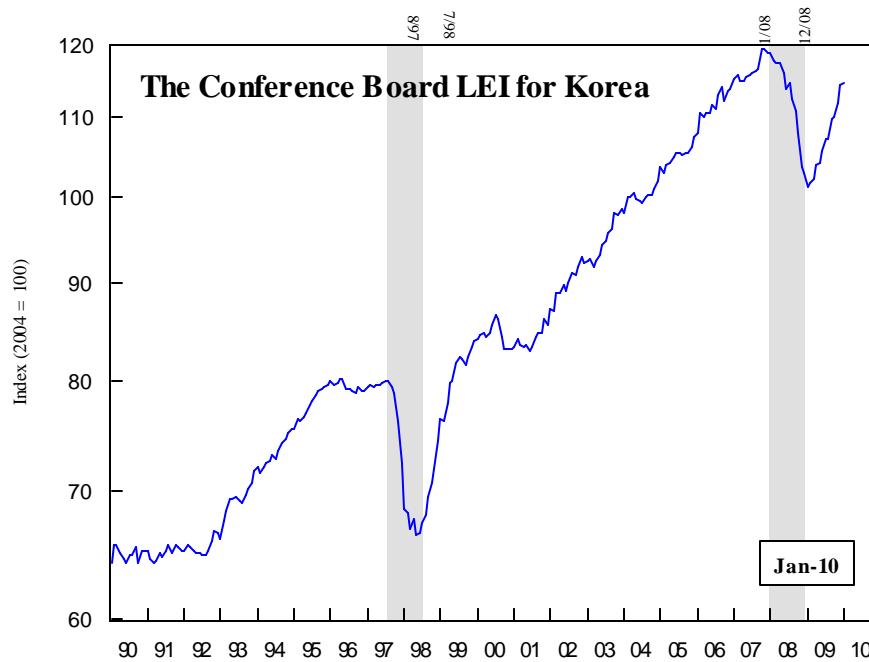
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Korea



Note: The shaded areas represent business cycle recessions. The peaks and troughs are designated by The Conference Board based on the coincident index and real GDP. Source: The Conference Board