

## Press Release

Friday 29th November 2013

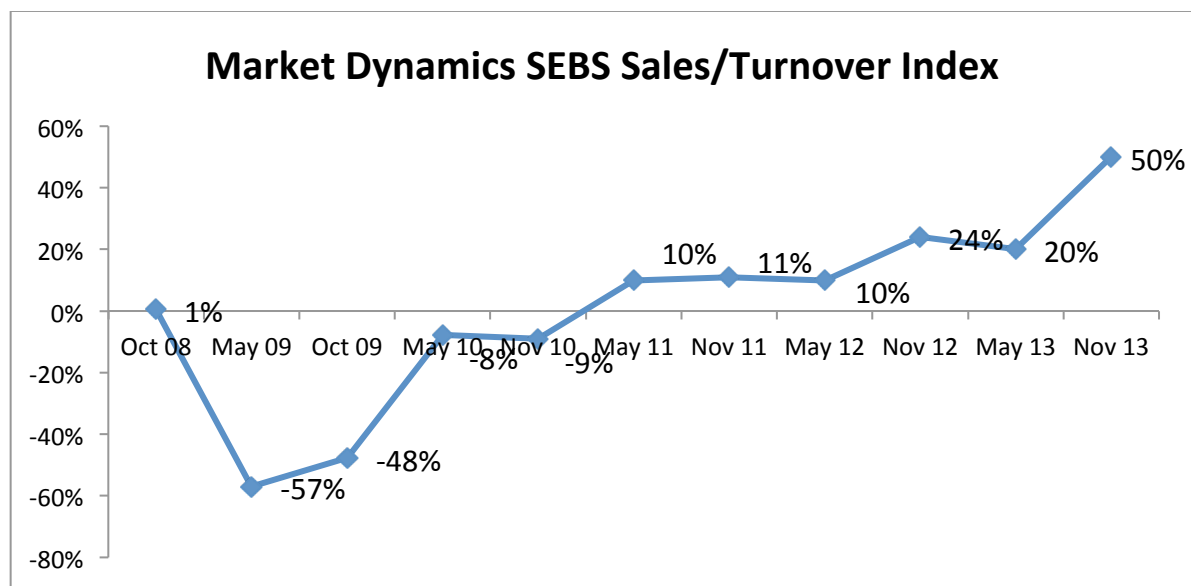
### *South East Business Confidence Study – November 2013*

#### ***South East economy well on the mend as majority of businesses record improved customer activity***

South East businesses are looking forward positively to the new calendar year with 80% having seen sales this year meeting or exceeding the previous year's figures. In every sector of the economy a majority of businesses expect to see further sales improvement in 2014 and nearly a quarter are employing more people than they did a year ago. This is the result of increased customer activity in the past year reported by 60% of respondents according to the findings of the latest South East Business Confidence Study. Even in the construction sector two-thirds of firms have seen higher sales this year.

The sector that continues to be under greatest pressure is retail / wholesale but even here a small majority recorded better sales in 2013. Businesses in agriculture, financial services and manufacturing continue to be positive about the trading environment as they were six months ago but they are now joined by construction and business services firms. This is the 12th in a series of twice-yearly surveys conducted in the South-East region by Kilkenny-based market research firm, Market Dynamics. A total of 273 businesses in the region participated.

Commenting on the results, John Gilsean, Managing Director of Market Dynamics, stated: ***“we are now moving from the “green shoots” phase to the beginning of what will hopefully be a process of steady growth in the coming years. The increase in employment is certainly welcome. The improvement in the fortunes of the construction industry is surely proof that all boats have risen in the water. Though credit availability doesn't appear to have improved despite measures taken by government, nonetheless, the survey shows that the South Eastern regional economy is well on the mend”.***



Source: Market Dynamics, Nov 2013  
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### **Other Major Findings**

- All sectors have seen a net sales increase in 2013 with even two-thirds of construction firms seeing higher sales
- Outlook for 2013 is positive with 55% expecting a sales increase and just 21% a decrease – more positive than previous survey
- Most positive sectors are Agriculture, Financial Services and Manufacturing as in the previous survey but they are now joined by Construction and Business Services – Retail continues to be hardest pressed
- While the profitability outlook has improved it is not keeping pace with sales growth
- Nearly a quarter of businesses say they will be employing more people at the end of 2013 than a year ago while just 12% are employing fewer
- Expectations for sales in the coming year are higher than ever before in the SEBS survey – 59% expect a rise (9% a fall)
- The retail / wholesale sector expects a significant improvement in the business environment in 2014 with well over half expecting higher sales
- 60% of businesses are seeing more customer activity than 12 months ago while just 19% are seeing less
- A similar proportion of respondents (59%) are more positive about their businesses compared to 6 months ago
- A majority think the government got the budget adjustment of €2.5 bn about right
- Quite a few respondents (29%) consider the government could have done a lot more to help businesses like theirs
- A fifth of business consider that credit is even less available than a year ago while just 4% claim it is easier to access

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### **Note to Editor**

More detailed findings and further county by county analysis is available please contact John Gilsonan (details below) for further information.

Market Dynamics is an independent market research company based in Inistioge, Co. Kilkenny. The South East Business Confidence Study Series is funded by Market Dynamics and is not sponsored. For further information on the South East Business Confidence Study and its findings please contact John Gilsonan on 056 775 8888 / 086 384 0062 or email [john@marketdynamics.ie](mailto:john@marketdynamics.ie).

*[www.marketdynamics.ie](http://www.marketdynamics.ie)*

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