

Results of Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica Standards (Phase IX) announced

The Department of Health (DH) today (December 31) published reference standards on safety and quality for 24 commonly used Chinese Materia Medica (CMM) in Phase IX of the Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica Standards (HKCMMS).

"The HKCMMS Project was launched in 2002. Throughout the past years, with the concerted efforts of our collaboration partners, the HKCMMS have become well-recognised reference standards in the field of Chinese medicine testing and certification. The findings of the HKCMMS have also contributed to promoting the use of evidence-based, safe and quality Chinese medicines," a DH spokesman said.

"This volume is the ninth of the series setting out reference standards for CMM commonly used in Hong Kong. Up to now, the number of CMM with reference standards totals 299. To ensure the safety and quality of CMM, we have introduced the limits and testing method of sulphur dioxide residues in this volume, moving a step forward to safeguard public health. In addition, the DH will release a DVD compiling all nine volumes together with this printed version, so as to provide users with a compact and handy means to access the whole series of HKCMMS monographs," the spokesman added.

The criteria for selection of CMM for the research include the following:

- * common usage in the local community;
- * international concern in respect of their safety and quality;
- * high economic value in the local market; and
- * priority being accorded to the CMM listed in the two schedules of the Chinese Medicine Ordinance.

Research work was conducted by research teams from six local universities, namely the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the City University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Baptist University, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and the University of Hong Kong. The National Institutes for Food and Drug Control of the People's Republic of China and Taiwan's China Medical University also took part in the research.

An International Advisory Board comprising local, Mainland and overseas experts advised on the research principles, methodologies, parameters and analytical methods of the HKCMMS. The Government Laboratory developed analytical methods for determination of heavy metals, pesticide residues and mycotoxins, and participated in inter-laboratory verification. The National Medical Products Administration and the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine also provided valuable advice and support for the HKCMMS project.

The HKCMMS Volume IX sets out the names, sources and descriptions of the 24 CMM, as well as methods of identification (including microscopic identification, thin-layer chromatographic identification and high-performance liquid chromatographic fingerprinting identification), tests and assays.

The 24 CMM are Amomi Fructus, Asparagi Radix, Bletillae Rhizoma, Corydalis Bungeanae Herba, Elephantopi Herba, Ganoderma, Garcinia Resina (unprocessed), Ginseng Radix et Rhizoma Rubra, Glechomae Herba, Hedyotidis Diffusae Herba, Homalomenae Rhizoma, Hoveniae Semen, Ilicis Pubescentis Radix et Caulis, Lini Semen, Lobeliae Chinensis Herba, Polygalae Japonicae Herba, Potentillae Discoloris Herba, Psidii Guajavae Folium, Semiaquilegiae Radix, Sinapis Semen, Sparganii Rhizoma, Trichosanthis Radix, Wenyujin Rhizoma Concisum and Wikstroemiae Radix.

The DH will arrange briefing sessions for Chinese medicine trade associations, wholesalers and manufacturers of Chinese medicines as well as representatives of laboratories to update them on the latest research developments of the HKCMMS Project.

The HKCMMS Volume IX is available for public access at www.cmd.gov.hk/hkcmms/vol9/main.html. Limited copies of the DVD compiling all nine volumes can be obtained from the following locations:

- * Chinese Medicine Division of the DH on 16/F, AIA Kowloon Tower, Landmark East, 100 How Ming Street, Kwun Tong;
- * Government Chinese Medicines Testing Institute of the DH on 7/F, Biotech Centre 2, 11 Science Park West Avenue, Phase 2, Science Park, Sha Tin;
- * HKCMMS Office of the Chinese Medicine Division of the DH on 2/F, Public Health Laboratory Centre, 382 Nam Cheong Street, Kowloon; and
- * Secretariat of the Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong on 22/F, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai.

For enquiries about HKCMMS issues, please call the HKCMMS Office at 2319 8562. The HKCMMS Volume IX is available for sale at the Publications Sales Unit of the Information Services Department. An electronic book ordering service can be made via the online Government Bookstore (www.bookstore.gov.hk). For enquiries about the sale of the publication, please call 2537 1910.

Missing man in Sham Shui Po located

A man who went missing in Sham Shui Po has been located.

Chen Xicun, aged 47, went missing after he was last seen on Nam Cheong

Street on December 28 afternoon. His family made a report to Police on December 29.

The man was located on Prince Edward Road East, Wong Tai Sin last night (December 30). He sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

Latest test results of opening-up investigation in second stage of holistic assessment strategy for Hung Hom Station Extension under Shatin to Central Link project

The latest test results of an opening-up investigation in the second stage of the holistic assessment strategy for the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) project (as at December 31) are now available at the Highways Department's website for the SCL project (www.hyd.gov.hk/en/road_and_railway/railway_projects/scl/index.html) for reference by the public.

Eight per cent increase in Hong Kong's gross expenditure on research and development in 2017

According to the report "Hong Kong Innovation Activities Statistics 2017" released today (December 31) by the Census and Statistics Department, the gross domestic expenditure on research and development (GERD) of Hong Kong in 2017 amounted to \$21.28 billion, representing an increase of 8 per cent compared with 2016. The GERD as a ratio to the Gross Domestic Product in 2017 was 0.8 per cent.

A government spokesman said, "Innovation and technology (I&T) is a priority policy area of the current-term Government. Since the establishment of the Innovation and Technology Bureau in 2015, significant resources have been devoted to strengthening Hong Kong's I&T ecosystem and stimulating

research and development (R&D) activities."

The spokesman said that a number of new initiatives were introduced last year to promote I&T development, such as providing enhanced tax deduction of up to 300 per cent for R&D expenditure incurred by enterprises, and injecting \$10 billion into the Innovation and Technology Fund to support more R&D work by universities, public research institutes and private enterprises. In addition, \$10 billion has been allocated for setting up two research clusters at the Hong Kong Science Park to attract top local, Mainland and overseas R&D institutions to conduct more collaborative research in Hong Kong. A total of \$10.3 billion has also been allocated to the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation and the Hong Kong Cyberport Development Holdings Limited to enhance their incubation programmes and support for technology enterprises. These measures will induce further investment in R&D.

"The Steering Committee on Innovation and Technology, chaired by the Chief Executive, will continue to closely monitor the progress of the above measures. We expect the effect of these measures to increasingly come through in subsequent years, contributing to further increase in the level of GERD," the spokesman said.

Financial results for the eight months ended November 30, 2018

The Government announced today (December 31) its financial results for the eight months ended November 30, 2018.

There was a surplus of HK\$18.2 billion in the month of November, thereby bringing the cumulative year-to-date deficit down to HK\$27.8 billion. Expenditure for the eight-month period amounted to HK\$336 billion and revenue HK\$308.2 billion.

A government spokesperson said that the improved financial results in November were mainly due to the collection of profits tax. The revised estimates for the current financial year will be published along with the 2019-20 Budget on February 27, 2019.

The fiscal reserves stood at HK\$1,075.1 billion as at November 30, 2018.

Detailed figures are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

TABLE 1. CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT (Note 1)

	Month ended November 30, 2018 HK\$ million	Eight months ended November 30, 2018 HK\$ million
Revenue	59,655.5	308,206.8
Expenditure	(41,482.1)	(336,047.7)
Surplus/(Deficit)	18,173.4	(27,840.9)
Financing		
Domestic		
Banking Sector (Note 2)	(18,546.1)	25,217.2
Non-Banking Sector	372.7	2,623.7
External	–	–
Total	(18,173.4)	27,840.9

Government Debts as at November 30, 2018 (Note 3)

HK\$1,500 million

Debts Guaranteed by Government as at November 30, 2018 (Note 4)

HK\$23,847.1 million

TABLE 2. FISCAL RESERVES

	Month ended November 30, 2018 HK\$ million	Eight months ended November 30, 2018 HK\$ million
Fiscal Reserves at start of period	1,056,919.4	1,102,933.7
Consolidated Surplus/ (Deficit)	18,173.4	(27,840.9)
Fiscal Reserves at end of period (Note 5)	1,075,092.8	1,075,092.8

Notes:

1. This Account consolidates the General Revenue Account and the following eight Funds: Capital Works Reserve Fund, Capital Investment Fund, Civil Service Pension Reserve Fund, Disaster Relief Fund, Innovation and Technology Fund, Land Fund, Loan Fund and Lotteries Fund. It excludes the Bond Fund, the

balance of which is not part of the fiscal reserves. The Bond Fund balance as at November 30, 2018, was HK\$141,118 million.

2. Includes transactions with the Exchange Fund and resident banks.

3. These were the outstanding institutional notes as at November 30, 2018, which were denominated in Hong Kong dollars with maturity in July 2019. They do not include the outstanding bonds with nominal value of HK\$102,881 million and alternative bonds with nominal value of US\$3,000 million (equivalent to HK\$23,466 million as at November 30, 2018) issued under the Government Bond Programme (with proceeds credited to the Bond Fund). Of these bonds under the Government Bond Programme (including Silver Bonds with nominal value of HK\$5,781 million, which may be redeemed before maturity upon request from bond holders), bonds with nominal value of HK\$26,071 million and alternative bonds with nominal value of US\$1,000 million (equivalent to HK\$7,822 million as at November 30, 2018) will mature within the period from December 2018 to November 2019 and the rest within the period from December 2019 to March 2032.

4. Includes guarantees provided under the SME Loan Guarantee Scheme launched in 2001, the Special Loan Guarantee Scheme launched in 2008, the Special Concessionary Measures under the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme launched in 2012, and a commercial loan of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation.

5. Includes HK\$219,730 million being the balance of the Land Fund held in the name of "Future Fund" as from January 1, 2016, for long-term investments initially up to December 31, 2025. As from July 1, 2016, the Future Fund also includes HK\$4,800 million, being one-third of the actual surplus in 2015-16 as top-up.