

Composite Interest Rate: End of February 2019

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (March 19) the composite interest rate at the end of February 2019. $1\frac{1}{4}\%$

The composite interest rate, which is a measure of the average cost of funds of banks, decreased by 3 basis points to 0.80 per cent at the end of February 2019, from 0.83 per cent at the end of January 2019 (see Chart 1 in the Annex). The decrease in composite interest rate reflected declines in the weighted funding cost for deposits during the month (see Chart 2 in the Annex).

The historical data of the composite interest rate from the end of the fourth quarter of 2003 to the end of February 2019 are available in the Monthly Statistical Bulletin on the HKMA website (www.hkma.gov.hk). The next data release is scheduled for April 18, 2019 and will provide the composite interest rate at the end of March 2019.

$1\frac{1}{4}\%$ The composite interest rate is a weighted average interest rate of all Hong Kong dollar interest bearing liabilities, which include deposits from customers, amounts due to banks, negotiable certificates of deposit and other debt instruments, and Hong Kong dollar non-interest bearing demand deposits on the books of banks. Data from retail banks, which account for about 90 per cent of the total customers' deposits in the banking sector, are used in the calculation. It should be noted that the composite interest rate represents only average interest expenses. There are various other costs involved in the making of a loan, such as operating costs (e.g. staff and rental expenses), credit cost and hedging cost, which are not covered by the composite interest rate.