

Tentative issuance schedule for Exchange Fund Bills and Notes

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) issued today (February 15) a tentative issuance schedule for Exchange Fund Bills and Notes (EFBNs) for the coming quarter of April to June 2024. The schedule contains information on the tentative tender dates, issue sizes and issue dates of individual issues, representing rollover of maturing issues and taking into account planned adjustments to the maturity spectrum of the EFBN portfolio.

The quarterly schedule is issued in the second month of each quarter (i.e. February, May, August and November), covering the EFBN tenders in the following quarter.

It should be noted that the tender dates, issue sizes and issue dates projected in the advance issuance schedule are tentative. The details of new issues of Exchange Fund Bills are to be confirmed and announced at least four business days prior to the respective tender dates. The details of new issues of Exchange Fund Notes are to be confirmed and announced seven business days prior to their respective tender dates. The HKMA may make changes in the light of prevailing market conditions.

Analytical Accounts of the Exchange Fund

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) released today (February 15) the key analytical accounts of the Exchange Fund at the end of January 2024.

Foreign assets, representing the external assets of the Exchange Fund, decreased during the month by HK\$16.3 billion to HK\$3,511.9 billion.

The Monetary Base, comprising Certificates of Indebtedness, Government-issued currency notes and coins in circulation, the balance of the banking system and Exchange Fund Bills and Notes issued, amounted to HK\$1,910.6 billion.

Claims on the private sector in Hong Kong amounted to HK\$306.1 billion.

Foreign liabilities amounted to HK\$22.3 billion.

The analytical accounts of the Exchange Fund are released in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) and are referred to as the Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank under SDDS (Annex).

At present, four press releases relating to the Exchange Fund's data are issued by the HKMA each month. Three of these releases are issued to disseminate monetary data in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's SDDS. The fourth press release, on the Exchange Fund's Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account, is made in accordance with the HKMA's policy of maintaining a high level of transparency. For the month of February 2024, the scheduled dates for issuing the press releases are as follows:

February 7 (Issued)	SDDS International Reserves (Hong Kong's Latest Foreign Currency Reserve Assets Figures)
February 15	SDDS Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank (Analytical Accounts of the Exchange Fund)
February 29	SDDS Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity
February 29	Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account

[Credit card lending survey results for fourth quarter 2023](#)

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority published today (February 15) the credit card lending survey results for the fourth quarter of 2023.

Total card receivables increased by 8.5 per cent in the fourth quarter to HK\$160.1 billion at end-December 2023, mainly driven by festive spending and salaries tax payment.

The combined delinquent and rescheduled ratio edged up to 0.34 per cent at end-December 2023 from 0.33 per cent at the previous quarter-end. The quarterly charge-off ratio increased slightly to 0.49 per cent from 0.47 per cent in the previous quarter.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Thursday, February 15, 2024 is 105.4 (same as yesterday's index).

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on February 14 to noon today (February 15), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 123 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan"

(www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 50 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website

(www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.htm)

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The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 30 672 samples of food imported from Japan (including 20 544 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 8 622 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.