

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 (December 13) the key analytical accounts of the Exchange Fund at the end of November 2024.

Foreign assets, representing the external assets of the Exchange Fund, increased during the month by HK\$30.8 billion to HK\$3,506.4 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\$1,950.1 billion.

Claims on the private sector in Hong Kong amounted to HK\$287.8 billion.

Foreign liabilities amounted to HK\$28.0 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 December 2024, the scheduled dates for issuing the press releases are as follows:

December 6 (Issued)	SDDS International Reserves (Hong Kong's Latest Foreign Currency Reserve Assets Figures)
December 13	SDDS Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank (Analytical Accounts of the Exchange Fund)
December 31	SDDS Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity
December 31	Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account

SIE Fund launches "Smart Silver" Digital Inclusion Programme for Elders (with photos)

The Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund (SIE Fund) officially launched its "Smart Silver" Digital Inclusion Programme for Elders today (December 13) at Lok Fu Place, starting a new chapter in the pursuit of digital inclusion for the elderly. Among the guests were 75 elderly volunteers who joined others to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government announced in the 2024-25 Budget that the SIE Fund would allocate \$100 million to provide elderly people aged 60 or above with digital training courses and technical support in the coming three years. Following an open invitation for proposals and evaluation, the SIE Fund has appointed 12 non-governmental organisations and is providing them with funding support to take forward the "Smart Silver" Digital Inclusion Programme for Elders (the Programme) across all 18 districts. Under the Programme, the appointed organisations will set up community-based help desks at suitable locations to provide regular and fixed-point training on digital technologies and technical support for elderly people aged 60 or above, particularly singleton or doubleton elders living in old districts and public housing. It covers topics such as smartphone operation know-how, the use of digital government services (e.g. "iAM Smart" and other common government mobile applications) and cybersecurity. The Programme is expected to benefit more than 100 000 elders. For details about the Programme and service hours of the help desks, please visit www.it2.gov.hk/smart_silver/.

Officiating at the launching ceremony, the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, said "The Government has been working vigorously to promote digital inclusion. The Digital Policy Office (DPO) has introduced a series of initiatives to encourage elderly people to learn and use technologies." He stated that all initiatives have been well received and that the Government will continue to press ahead with its work to help more elders.

The Chairperson of the SIE Fund Task Force, Mr Kevin Orr, invited all parties to pitch in. He said, "Digital technology has become an integral part of everyday lives while the SIE Fund has been actively promoting digital inclusion. Through cross-sector collaboration, a caring society with digital inclusion can be built where elderly people can explore the digital world on their own and enjoy active ageing."

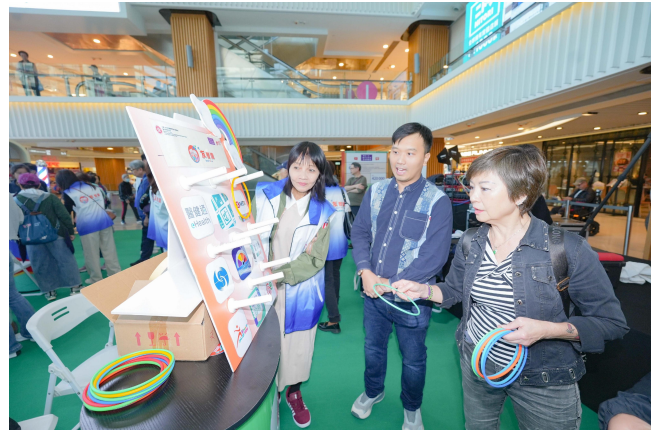
The prize presentation ceremony of the Elderly IT Stars Recognition

Scheme was also held today. Thirteen "Elderly IT Stars" were presented with awards from the Commissioner for Digital Policy, Mr Tony Wong. All awardees were outstanding participants of either the ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly or the Enriched ICT Training Programme for the Elderly organised by the DPO. The Recognition Scheme aims at recognising elderly persons who have made use of digital technologies to demonstrate their commitment to improve their quality of life, bringing a positive impact to their friends and the community, and promoting a sense of worthiness among elders.

The organiser is promoting the Government's digital inclusion initiatives for elders with game booths set up at Lok Fu Place for two consecutive days (December 13 and 14), and introducing related services through information booths. The "iAM Smart" mobile registration team will also help members of the public register for "iAM Smart+" to enjoy the convenience of one-stop e-government services.

The SIE Fund was inaugurated in 2013 and is overseen by the SIE Fund Task Force under the Commission on Poverty. The Task Force Secretariat is established in the DPO under the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau. The SIE Fund acts as a catalyst for social innovation in Hong Kong. By facilitating social innovation and cultivating social entrepreneurship, the Fund aims to make an impact in alleviating poverty and social exclusion, promoting social integration, and enhancing the well-being and cohesion of society.





Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (December 13) released the latest grading of water quality for six gazetted beaches that are open all year round for swimming.

Three beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), and three as Fair (Grade 2).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Clear Water Bay Second Beach Golden Beach
Deep Water Bay Beach

Grade 2 beaches are:

Casam Beach Silverstrand Beach
Lido Beach

Compared with the grading released last week, Lido Beach has been changed from Grade 1 to Grade 2.

"The changes are generally within the normal range of fluctuation of the bacteriological water quality of the beaches," an EPD spokesman said.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades, namely Good (Grade 1), Fair (Grade 2), Poor (Grade 3) and Very Poor (Grade 4), according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, the EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a tropical cyclone or heavy rainfall.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the EPD's website on Beach Water Quality (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666. Members of the public can also obtain the latest daily water quality forecast information for all beaches that are open for swimming through the EPD's dedicated webpage on the beach water quality forecast (www.epd.gov.hk/en/BWQForecast).

Approved Man Kam To Outline Zoning Plan amended

The Town Planning Board today (December 13) announced amendments to the approved Man Kam To Outline Zoning Plan (OZP).

The amendments mainly involve rezoning a site in Sandy Ridge from "Other Specified Uses" ("OU") annotated "Cemetery, Columbarium, Crematorium and Funeral Related Uses" to "OU" annotated "Innovation and Technology" ("OU(I&T)") for data centres and related purposes.

The Notes and Explanatory Statement of the OZP are amended to take into account the above amendments. Opportunity is also taken to update the general information of various land use zones and the planning scheme area, where appropriate.

The draft Man Kam To OZP No. S/NE-MKT/5, incorporating the amendments, is available for public inspection during office hours at (i) the Secretariat of the Town Planning Board, (ii) the Planning Enquiry Counters, (iii) the Sha Tin, Tai Po and North District Planning Office, (iv) the North District Office, and (v) the Ta Kwu Ling District Rural Committee.

Any person may make written representations in respect of the amendments to the Secretary of the Town Planning Board on or before February 13, 2025. Any person who intends to make a representation is advised to read the Town Planning Board Guidelines No. 29C on "Submission and Processing of Representations and Further Representations" (TPB PG-No. 29C).

Submission of a representation should comply with the requirements set out in TPB PG-No. 29C. In particular, the representer should take note of the

following:

* If the representer fails to provide his or her full name and the first four alphanumeric characters of his or her Hong Kong identity card or passport number as required under TPB PG-No. 29C, the representation submitted shall be treated as not having been made; and

* The Secretariat of the Town Planning Board reserves the right to require the representer to provide identity proof for verification.

The Guidelines and the submission form are available at the above locations (i) and (ii) as well as the Town Planning Board's website (www.tpb.gov.hk).

Copies of the draft Man Kam To OZP are available for sale at the Map Publications Centres in North Point and Yau Ma Tei. The electronic version of the OZP can be viewed on the Town Planning Board's website (www.tpb.gov.hk).

Government announces Technology Voucher Programme will cease accepting applications

The Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC) announced today (December 13) that the Technology Voucher Programme (TVP) will cease accepting applications after December 31, 2024.

"The Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF) administered by the ITC has been set up for over 20 years. It has made significant contributions to the local innovation and technology development by nurturing numerous research and development (R&D) talent and start-ups, delivering commercialised R&D results, as well as attracting many private investments," an ITC spokesperson said. "To ensure the proper use of public resources and the overall sustainability of the ITF so that it can continue to drive high-quality development of Hong Kong's economy, besides introducing new schemes, the Government must keep pace with the times and continue to refine and consolidate existing schemes under the ITF."

The TVP was launched under the ITF in November 2016 to subsidise local enterprises/organisations in using technological services and solutions on a matching basis. The TVP accepts applications from enterprises/organisations of all industries and does not have pre-defined types of eligible technological services. As of November 30 this year, 37 059 TVP applications involving a total funding amount of about \$6.6 billion have been approved, which helped enterprises improve productivity, and upgrade or transform their

business processes.

The Government considers that the TVP has achieved its original intent. In recent years, the Government has continued to strengthen support measures for different industries, and many bureaux and departments have introduced more targeted funding schemes dedicated to the specific conditions or operational needs of individual industries. In view of this, the Government has decided to cease accepting new TVP applications after December 31 this year.

For enquiries concerning TVP application arrangements, please contact the TVP Secretariat (Tel: 2789 7000; email: tvpc-enquiry@hkpc.org).