

KEY ANNOUNCEMENTS

(March to May 2005)

3 March 2005	The HKMA announces that the Chief Executive in Council has approved the Banking (Amendment) Bill 2005 for introduction into the Legislative Council on 6 April 2005. The main purpose of the Bill is to amend the Banking Ordinance to provide for the implementation of Basel II in Hong Kong.
29 March 2005	The monthly survey of residential mortgage lending shows that the number of new mortgage loans drawn down during February decreased by 7.1% although the value of these loans increased by 2.9% to HK\$12.8 billion. New loans approved during the month fell by 11.2% to HK\$13.1 billion.
19 April 2005	The HKMA publishes its Annual Report for 2004. The Report reviews trends and events in monetary and banking affairs and reports on the HKMA's work during the year. It also sets out plans for the coming year.
25 April 2005	The monthly survey of residential mortgage lending shows that new mortgage loans drawn down during March increased by 6.5% to HK\$13.6 billion. New loans approved recorded a growth of 44.8%, the largest increase since March 2003, to HK\$19.0 billion.
25 April 2005	The HKMA announces that it has re-appointed The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited as Settlement Institution for the US dollar clearing system in Hong Kong for a second five-year period.
26 April 2005	The HKMA announces that the Financial Secretary, following the advice of the Governance Sub-Committee of the Exchange Fund Advisory Committee, has approved the appointment of Mr Y K Choi as Deputy Chief Executive, and of Mr Edmond Lau as Executive Director (Strategy and Risk) and Mr Christopher Munn as Executive Director (Corporate Services). These appointments take effect on 1 June 2005. Mr Choi succeeds Mr Norman Chan, who leaves the HKMA in May.
3 May 2005	The HKMA announces the issue of up to HK\$300 million of two-year Exchange Fund Notes for retail investors, the first under a refined Exchange Fund Notes Programme. A total of HK\$361 million of subscription money was subsequently received.
6 May 2005	The survey on residential mortgage loans in negative equity shows that the number of loans in negative equity reduced by 27% from the end of 2004 to some 14,000 cases with an aggregate value of HK\$24 billion at the end of March 2005.
18 May 2005	The results of the survey on credit card lending for the first quarter of 2005 shows that the charge-off ratio continued to decline, down to HK\$0.46 billion or 0.80% of average receivables, compared with HK\$0.53 billion or 0.94% in the previous quarter.
18 May 2005	The HKMA introduces three refinements to the operation of the Linked Exchange Rate system. The refinements are aimed at removing uncertainty about the extent to which the exchange rate may strengthen under the Linked Exchange Rate system and promoting the smooth functioning of the money and foreign exchange markets in accordance with Currency Board arrangements.

KEY ANNOUNCEMENTS

25 May 2005	The monthly survey of residential mortgage lending shows that new mortgage loans drawn down during April increased by 30.6% to HK\$17.8 billion. New loans approved also increase, by 17.6% to HK\$22.4 billion.
30 May 2005	The HKMA, the Hong Kong Association of Banks and the Hong Kong Police Force jointly announce the launch of two-factor authentication for Internet banking by the banking industry.

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 Special Data Dissemination Standard (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. The order of issue of the press releases each month is as follows:

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

The above press releases on the Exchange Fund data may be found on the HKMA's website at www.info.gov.hk/hkma/eng/press/category/exchange_index.htm

Other latest press releases may also be found at www.info.gov.hk/hkma/eng/press/index.htm