

Survey on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises' Credit Conditions for Third Quarter 2022

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) published today (November 30) the results of Survey on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)' Credit Conditions for the third quarter of 2022.

Regarding SMEs' perception of banks' credit approval stance relative to 6 months ago, excluding respondents who answered "no idea/don't know", 84 per cent perceived similar or easier credit approval stance in the third quarter of 2022, similar to 85 per cent in the previous quarter (Chart 1 in the Annex). 15 per cent perceived more difficult credit approval stance, same as that in the previous quarter. The perception of more difficult credit approval stance may not necessarily reflect actual difficulties faced by SMEs in obtaining bank credit as the perception could be affected by a number of factors, such as media/news reports, business conditions and opinions of relatives and friends.

Of respondents with existing credit lines, 88 per cent reported that banks' stance on existing credit lines was easier or unchanged in the third quarter of 2022, compared with 93 per cent in the previous quarter (Chart 2 in the Annex). 12 per cent of the respondents reported tighter banks' stance on existing credit lines, compared with 7 per cent in the previous quarter. In this survey, tighter stance on existing credit lines denotes a range of possible measures or arrangements, such as reducing unused and used credit lines, raising the interest rate, imposing additional collateral requirements, or shortening loan tenor. Therefore, respondents' indication of banks' stance on existing credit lines may not directly reflect banks' supply of credit to SMEs.

The survey also gauged the results of new credit applications from SMEs. 4 per cent of the respondents reported that they had applied for new bank credit during the third quarter of 2022. Among the respondents who had already known their application outcomes, 88 per cent reported fully or partially successful applications, compared with 86 per cent in the previous quarter (Chart 3 in the Annex). 12 per cent reported unsuccessful applications, compared with 14 per cent in the previous quarter.

Owing to small sample sizes of SMEs with existing credit lines (18 per cent of surveyed SMEs) and with new credit applications (4 per cent of surveyed SMEs) during the quarter, the results could be prone to large fluctuations, and hence should be interpreted with care.

About Survey on SMEs' Credit Conditions

In light of the importance of SMEs to the Hong Kong economy and concerns about potential funding difficulties facing SMEs over the past few years, the HKMA has appointed the Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC) to carry out this survey, starting from the third quarter of 2016. This survey is conducted on a quarterly basis, covering about 2 500 SMEs from different economic sectors each time. The results of this survey can help monitor the development of SMEs' access to bank credit from a demand-side perspective.

The results of this survey should be interpreted with caution. Similar to other opinion surveys, views collected in this survey may be affected by changes in sentiment due to idiosyncratic events that occurred over the survey period, which can make the results prone to fluctuations. Readers are advised to interpret the results together with other economic and financial information. In addition, views collected are limited to the expected direction of inter-quarter changes (e.g. "tighter", "no change" or "easier") without providing information about the magnitude of these changes.

Detailed tables and technical information of this survey are published on the website of the HKPC (smecc.hkpc.org).

HKSAR Government to hold seminar on promotion of spirit of 20th National Congress of CPC

The Central Government is showing its staunch support of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) by sending a publicity delegation to Hong Kong to speak on the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), upon the invitation of the HKSAR Government. The HKSAR Government will hold a seminar to promote the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the CPC at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Wan Chai, on December 3. The keynote speakers of the delegation include the Chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, Mr Shen Chunyao, and the Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Economic Affairs of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Mr Xie Fuzhan.

"The 20th National Congress is vital to the development of our country and Hong Kong, the great rejuvenation of our nation, the steadfast and successful implementation of the 'one country, two systems' principle, and the long-term stability and safety of Hong Kong, therefore all the people of Hong Kong should learn to embrace the spirit of the 20th National Congress," a Government spokesman said.

The seminar will be broadcast from 3pm to 5.30pm on December 3 (Saturday) on a government website (webcast.info.gov.hk) and the Facebook page of the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (www.facebook.com/cmab.gov.hk). Major local television and radio stations will also broadcast the seminar. The full version of the seminar will also be uploaded to the website of the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (www.cmab.gov.hk/en/home/index.htm).

"It is an invaluable opportunity to have the delegation to speak on the spirit of the 20th National Congress in Hong Kong. Members of the public should grasp the opportunity to watch the seminar to fully understand the content and significance of the spirit," the spokesman urged.

Black-faced spoonbill carcass tests positive for H5N1 virus

A carcass of a black-faced spoonbill found in Mai Po Nature Reserve was confirmed to be positive for the H5N1 avian influenza (AI) virus after laboratory testing, a spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said today (November 30).

The bird carcass was found and collected earlier at a gei wai in the Reserve and preliminarily tested positive for the H5 AI virus on November 24. The black-faced spoonbill is a winter visitor mainly found in the Deep Bay area.

The spokesman said cleaning and disinfection of visitor facilities including bird hides and a floating boardwalk has been stepped up. A disinfectant carpet has been placed at the entrance of the Reserve for visitors to disinfect the soles of their shoes. In addition, the AFCD is closely monitoring the situation of the birds there and has put up notices to remind visitors to pay attention to personal hygiene.

There are no chicken farms within 3 kilometres of where the dead bird was found. The AFCD has recently strengthened AI surveillance and closely monitored the situation of local poultry farms and the wholesale market. Poultry farmers, pet bird shop owners and licence holders of pet poultry and bird exhibitions are reminded from time to time to implement proper precautions against AI.

The spokesman said that the department will closely monitor poultry farms and the wholesale market to ensure that proper precautions against AI have been taken. The department will continue its wild bird monitoring and surveillance.

"People should avoid personal contact with wild birds and live poultry

and their droppings. They should clean their hands thoroughly after coming into contact with them. The public can call 1823 for AFCD's follow-up if they come across birds suspected to be sick or dead, including the carcasses of wild birds and poultry," the spokesman said.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) will continue to be vigilant over live poultry stalls. It will also remind stall operators to maintain good hygiene.

The Department of Health will keep up its health education to remind the public to maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene to prevent AI.

The AFCD, the FEHD, the Customs and Excise Department and the Police will strive to deter the illegal importation of poultry and birds into Hong Kong to minimise the risk of AI outbreaks caused by imported poultry and birds that have not gone through inspection and quarantine.

All relevant government departments will continue to be highly vigilant and strictly enforce preventive measures against AI. Health advice about preventing AI is available on the "Avian Influenza Health Advice" page at www.afcd.gov.hk.

Result of Scriptwriting Incubation Programme (Phase Three) under Film Development Fund announced

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Film Development Council:

Assessment of Phase Three of the Scriptwriting Incubation Programme (SIP) introduced under the Film Development Fund has been completed, and 10 screenplays have been selected as winning screenplays in this final phase of the SIP. Details of the selected works are in the Annex.

The SIP aims at identifying and nurturing local screenwriting talents and helping incubate quality screenplays, thereby enhancing the quality of Hong Kong film productions. With total funding of \$8 million, the SIP is being held in the form of a competition with multiple rounds. Funding support will be provided to the respective winners of the different phases. A maximum of 10 final winning screenplays will eventually be selected. Each of the final winning screenplays will be awarded a total of \$410,000.

The Chairman of the Hong Kong Film Development Council, Dr Wilfred Wong, said, "It was encouraging that the Programme received keen participation of people from inside and outside the film industry who are interested in screenwriting. Under the training and mentoring from veteran screenwriters

provided at different stages of the competition, the participants gradually incubated high quality screenplays. Eventually, 10 screenplays stood out after multiple rounds of selection. I look forward to seeing the winning screenplays be converted into movies in the near future."

The assessment criteria included theme, story structure, rhythm of storytelling, character design, character development and marketability. For each winning screenplay in Phase Three, the winning parties will be awarded a cash prize of \$300,000, which is included in the \$410,000 funding.

CHP closely monitors human case of avian influenza A(H5N1) in Mainland

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (November 30) closely monitoring a human case of avian influenza A(H5N1) in the Mainland, and again urged the public to maintain strict personal, food and environmental hygiene both locally and during travel.

The case involves a 38-year-old woman living in Qinzhou, Guangxi, who had exposure to live domestic poultry before onset. She developed symptoms on September 22 and was admitted for treatment on September 25. She passed away on October 18.

From 2005 to date, 54 human cases of avian influenza A(H5N1) have been reported by Mainland health authorities.

"All novel influenza A infections, including H5N1, are notifiable infectious diseases in Hong Kong," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Travellers to the Mainland or other affected areas must avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms. They should be alert to the presence of backyard poultry when visiting relatives and friends. They should also avoid purchasing live or freshly slaughtered poultry, and avoid touching poultry/birds or their droppings. They should strictly observe personal and hand hygiene when visiting any place with live poultry.

Travellers returning from affected areas should consult a doctor promptly if symptoms develop, and inform the doctor of their travel history for prompt diagnosis and treatment of potential diseases. It is essential to tell the doctor if they have seen any live poultry during travel, which may imply possible exposure to contaminated environments. This will enable the doctor to assess the possibility of avian influenza and arrange necessary investigations and appropriate treatment in a timely manner.

While local surveillance, prevention and control measures are in place, the CHP will remain vigilant and work closely with the World Health

Organization and relevant health authorities to monitor the latest developments.

The public should maintain strict personal, hand, food and environmental hygiene and take heed of the advice below when handling poultry:

- Avoid touching poultry, birds, animals or their droppings;
- When buying live chickens, do not touch them and their droppings. Do not blow at their bottoms. Wash eggs with detergent if soiled with faecal matter and cook and consume the eggs immediately. Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling chickens and eggs;
- Eggs should be cooked well until the white and yolk become firm. Do not eat raw eggs or dip cooked food into any sauce with raw eggs. Poultry should be cooked thoroughly. If there is pinkish juice running from the cooked poultry or the middle part of its bone is still red, the poultry should be cooked again until fully done;
- Wash hands frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, before handling food or eating, and after going to the toilet, touching public installations or equipment such as escalator handrails, elevator control panels or door knobs, or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing; and
- Wear a mask if fever or respiratory symptoms develop, when going to a hospital or clinic, or while taking care of patients with fever or respiratory symptoms.

The public may visit the CHP's pages for more information: the [avian influenza](#) page, the weekly [Avian Influenza Report](#), [global statistics and affected areas](#) of avian influenza, the [Facebook Page](#) and the [YouTube Channel](#).