

# International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) released today (January 29) the analytical data on the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's foreign currency reserves and foreign currency liquidity as at the end of December 2020 (Annex). These data are published monthly in the Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard.

\*\*\*\*\*

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 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. For the month of January 2021, the scheduled dates for issuing the press releases are as follows:

January 7 (Issued)	SDDS International Reserves (Hong Kong's Latest Foreign Currency Reserve Assets Figures)
January 14 (Issued)	SDDS Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank (Analytical Accounts of the Exchange Fund)
January 29	SDDS Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity
January 29	Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account

---

## Residential Mortgage Survey Results

## for December 2020

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced the results of the residential mortgage survey for December 2020.

The number of mortgage applications in December increased month-on-month by 0.2 per cent to 11 396.

Mortgage loans approved in December increased by 3.4 per cent compared with November to HK\$38.4 billion. Among these, mortgage loans financing primary market transactions increased by 5.4 per cent to HK\$6.4 billion and those financing secondary market transactions increased by 0.7 per cent to HK\$26.6 billion. Mortgage loans for refinancing increased by 15.8 per cent to HK\$5.4 billion.

Mortgage loans drawn down during December increased by 3.7 per cent compared with November to HK\$26.5 billion.

The ratio of new mortgage loans priced with reference to HIBOR increased from 94.6 per cent in November to 95.2 per cent in December. The ratio of new mortgage loans priced with reference to best lending rates increased from 2.5 per cent in November to 2.6 per cent in December.

The outstanding value of mortgage loans increased month-on-month by 0.6 per cent to HK\$1,582.1 billion at end-December.

The mortgage delinquency ratio remained unchanged at 0.04 per cent and the rescheduled loan ratio remained unchanged at nearly 0 per cent.

---

## Residential mortgage loans in negative equity: End of December 2020

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority announced today (January 29) the results of its survey on residential mortgage loans (RMLs) in negative equity at end-December 2020.

The estimated number of RMLs in negative equity decreased to 185 cases at end-December 2020 from 199 cases at end-September 2020. These cases were related to bank staff housing loans or RMLs under mortgage insurance

programme, which generally have a higher loan-to-value ratio.

The aggregate value of RMLs in negative equity decreased to HK\$1,060 million at end-December 2020 compared with HK\$1,155 million at end-September 2020.

The unsecured portion of these loans decreased to HK\$30 million at end-December 2020 from HK\$33 million at end-September 2020.

Since the first quarter of 2011, there have been no RMLs in negative equity with delinquencies of more than three months.

It is important to note that the figures derived from this survey relate only to RMLs provided by authorised institutions on the basis of first mortgages and which the reporting institution knows to be in negative equity (i.e. the outstanding loan amount with the reporting institution exceeds the current market value of the mortgaged property). Not included in these figures are RMLs associated with co-financing schemes which would be in negative equity if the second mortgages were taken into account. The extent to which such RMLs are in negative equity is not known because authorised institutions do not maintain records on the outstanding balances of the second mortgages.

The mortgage portfolios of the surveyed authorised institutions represent about 99 per cent of the industry total. The survey results have been extrapolated to estimate the position of the banking sector as a whole.

---

## **Latest arrangements for HAD services**

To align with the Government's arrangements to resume more public services in a safe and orderly manner, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) announced today (January 29) its service arrangements from February 1. Details are set out below.

The Home Affairs Enquiry Centres (HAECs) in 18 districts will be open between 10am and 5pm from Monday to Friday (except public holidays) to provide services for the public (between 10am and 5pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday only for the HAEC in Mui Wo).

Counter and hotline (2835 1535) services of the Estate Beneficiaries Support Unit of the HAD will be provided from 10am to 1pm and from 2pm to 5pm between Monday and Friday (except public holidays).

The Office of the Licensing Authority will be open between 10am and 5pm from Monday to Friday (except public holidays). All licensing applications in connection with hotels, guesthouses and other premises as well as

entertainment are encouraged to be submitted by post or by using e-submission. Application forms and submission details can be found on the webpage of the Office of the Licensing Authority: [www.hadla.gov.hk](http://www.hadla.gov.hk).

All community halls and community centres will remain closed and not be used by applicant organisations, except for use as community testing centres and temporary cold shelters.

The HAD's hotlines for persons under home quarantine will operate between 9am and 6pm from Monday to Friday. For phone numbers of the hotlines, please visit the webpage of the HAD:

[www.had.gov.hk/file\\_manager/docs/district\\_hotline\\_en.pdf](http://www.had.gov.hk/file_manager/docs/district_hotline_en.pdf). For other enquiries, please call the HAD's enquiry hotline at 2835 2500 between 10am and 5pm from Monday to Friday (except public holidays).

---

## Government finishes exercise on “restriction-testing declaration” in respect of specified “restricted area” in North Point and enforcement operation for breaches of compulsory testing notice (with photos)

The Government yesterday (January 28) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" (declaration) effective from 7pm yesterday, by which people within the specified "restricted area" in North Point (i.e. Blocks A, B, C and D of Tung Fat Building, Kam Ping Street) were required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the arrangement by the Government. Persons subject to compulsory testing were required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area had undergone testing and the test results were mostly ascertained. Moreover, the Government issued a compulsory testing notice earlier, requiring persons who had been present in the building for more than two hours within the period specified in the notice, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, to undergo compulsory testing. The Government announced the completion of the compulsory testing exercise at around 7am today (January 29) and carried out enforcement actions in the "restricted area" afterwards to verify that all people in the "restricted area" had undergone compulsory testing. The Government announced that the enforcement operation ended at about 11.30am this morning.

In this exercise, the Home Affairs Department (HAD), the Hong Kong Police Force, the Eastern District Office and the Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS) mobilised around 360 staff to arrange for implementation of the declaration and enforcement actions for breaches of the compulsory testing notice issued earlier.

The Government provided simple food for persons subject to compulsory testing, including food packs (with instant noodles, pasta, canned food, etc), cup noodles, soup packs, soy milk, bread and bottled water, etc, so as to facilitate the dinner arrangement of some persons subject to compulsory testing. The HAD also set up a hotline for people restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance. The hotline handled around 13 enquiries on the testing arrangement.

The Government thanks persons subject to compulsory testing for their support and understanding. With everyone's co-operation and efforts, coupled with the tireless efforts of the testing contractors, residents have been informed about their testing results by SMS notification. After finishing the compulsory testing exercise at about 7am today, the Government took enforcement actions in the "restricted area" immediately to verify that all people in the "restricted area" have undergone testing. Persons who could present an SMS notification containing a negative testing result or wore a wristband as proof of having undergone the compulsory testing could leave the "restricted area" through the designated exit after providing personal information to a prescribed officer. The enforcement operation completed at about 11.30am. Fifteen persons were found not having undergone compulsory testing. A fixed penalty of \$5,000 and a compulsory testing order were issued to them. Taking into account of the above situation, the Secretary for Food and Health revoked the "restriction-testing declaration" in accordance with Cap. 599J (see attachment).

ã€€

The Government understands that quite some residents already underwent testing at the testing station set up at the road section between Pak Fuk Building's main entrance and Metropole Building's rear entrance from January 26 to 28. A total of 1 300 persons already undertook the test (including residents of Blocks A, B, C and D of Tung Fat Building; visitors and working staff.)

The Government understands that residents in the district are worried and anxious because of the increase in confirmed cases in recent days. Under the epidemic, businesses in the area have been hit hard and brought to a standstill. Residents' livelihoods are also affected. The Government hopes this temporary inconvenience will completely cut the local transmission chains in the district and ease residents' worries and fear, so that they will regain confidence in resuming social and business activities in the area, and return to a normal life.

The Government thanks all participating Government staff and the testing agencies for their hard work. The Government also thanks the persons subject to compulsory testing again for their support and understanding, and their full co-operation during this period in undergoing testing and waiting for the result at home.

The Government as a whole is united in fighting against the virus despite all the difficulties, and provided testing for all the residents in the district within a short period of time in the hope of achieving zero cases in the district.

The Government will seriously follow up on the compliance situation of the compulsory testing notices and the "restriction-testing declaration" by persons subject to compulsory testing. Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person will also be issued with a compulsory testing order, requiring him/her to undergo testing within a specified timeframe. Failure to comply with the order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

