

## **Calendar of Events of Significance for the Hong Kong Economy in 2021**

- 8 Jan The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB), the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council (SASAC) and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) jointly organised an online high-level roundtable on “Fostering Hong Kong as Belt and Road Functional Platform together with State-owned Enterprises”. More than 200 representatives from enterprises and professional services sectors participated in the roundtable.
- 18-19 Jan The 14th Asian Financial Forum, co-organised by the Government and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), was held virtually for the first time with the theme “Reshaping World Economic Landscape”. It attracted over 7 000 participants from more than 80 jurisdictions.
- 20 Jan The Securities and Futures Commission (SFC) and the Securities and Exchange Commission of Thailand entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Mutual Recognition of Funds (MRF) to allow eligible Hong Kong and Thai public funds to be distributed in each other’s market through a streamlined process. The MoU became effective in June 2021.
- 26 Jan The Government made a successful offering of US\$2.5 billion of green bonds under the Government Green Bond Programme.
- 29 Jan The HKMA together with the Banking Sector Small- and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) Lending Coordination Mechanism announced a 90-day repayment deferment for trade facilities under the Pre-approved Principal Payment Holiday Scheme for eligible corporate customers.
- The Government released the advance estimates on GDP figures for the fourth quarter of 2020 and the whole year of 2020. The Hong Kong economy recovered further in the fourth quarter of 2020, albeit at a slow pace due to the fourth wave of the local epidemic. In the fourth quarter of 2020, real GDP posted a narrowed year-on-year decrease of 3.0%. For 2020 as a whole, real GDP decreased by 6.1%.
- 1 Feb The inclusion of eligible A-shares listed on the Shanghai Stock Exchange’s (SSE) Sci-Tech Innovation Board (STAR Market) into Stock Connect became effective, as agreed by the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (HKEX), SSE and Shenzhen Stock Exchange (SZSE), enhancing the Stock Connect programme to benefit the Mainland, Hong Kong, and international investors.
- 2 Feb The Chief Executive in Council adopted the recommendation of the Minimum Wage Commission to maintain the Statutory Minimum Wage rate at \$37.5 per hour.
- 5 Feb The HKMA, SFC and the People’s Bank of China (PBoC), China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission, China Securities Regulatory Commission, State Administration of Foreign Exchange and Monetary Authority of Macao (AMCM) agreed on the principles of supervisory cooperation under the Cross-boundary Wealth Management Connect (Cross-boundary WMC), and signed the “Memorandum of Understanding on the Launch of the Cross-Boundary Wealth Management Connect Pilot Scheme in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area”.

- 12 Feb The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the related Investment Agreement between Hong Kong and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) came into force for Cambodia, signifying the full entry into force of the two Agreements signed between Hong Kong and the 10 member states of ASEAN.
- 19 Feb The PBoC issued in Hong Kong a total of RMB25 billion RMB Bills with tenors of three months and one year.
- 24 Feb The Financial Secretary (FS) presented the 2021-22 Budget and announced counter-cyclical measures costing over \$120 billion to stabilise the economy and relieve people's burden. In particular, the Government would issue electronic consumption vouchers to each eligible person to boost local consumption. FS also announced enhancements to the Special 100% Loan Guarantee of the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme as well as an extension to its application period in order to further alleviate the cash flow pressure faced by SMEs.
- The 2020 Economic Background and 2021 Prospects was published along with the 2021-22 Budget. Hong Kong's real GDP growth in 2021 was forecast to range from 3.5 to 5.5%. The underlying and headline consumer price inflation rates for 2021 were forecast to be 1% and 1.6% respectively.
- 25 Feb The Government announced the 2021-22 Land Sale Programme (LSP). The LSP included 15 residential sites (capable of providing about 6 000 flats) and three commercial/hotel sites.
- 26 Feb The Government launched the electronic vaccination records to support the anti-epidemic work under the "vaccine bubble" initiative.
- 4 Mar The HKMA together with the Banking Sector SME Lending Coordination Mechanism announced that the Pre-approved Principal Payment Holiday Scheme was extended for another six months to October 2021, except for repayment of trade loans which was deferred by 90 days.
- 5 Mar In line with Government's relief measures announced on 24 February, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) approved the extension of rent concession for its eligible non-domestic tenants with total rent foregone estimated at around \$2,287 million for the 24-month rent concession period up to end September 2021.
- 11 Mar The fourth session of the 13th National People's Congress approved the "Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035" (the 14th Five-Year Plan), which establishes a clear positioning for Hong Kong's future development as well as demonstrates the Central Government's unwavering support for Hong Kong. The 14th Five-Year Plan emphasises the need to uphold the "One country, Two systems" principle as well as safeguard national security in order to maintain the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong; the support for Hong Kong in reinforcing and enhancing its competitive advantages, including strengthening its status or establishing itself as a hub or centre in eight aspects; and the support for Hong Kong in better integrating into the overall development of the country.
- 19 Mar Legislative amendments on profits tax concessions for selected insurance and insurance brokerage business became effective, promoting the development of marine and specialty insurance businesses in Hong Kong.

- 20 Mar The Chief Executive (CE) attended and delivered a speech at the Hong Kong Session of China Development Forum 2021 under the theme “The development of Hong Kong in the Next Five Years” through video conferencing.
- 23 Mar Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) extended the relief package for the airport community throughout the year in view of the prolonged impact brought by the pandemic. The measures included rental concessions, reduction or waiver of fees for airport retail and catering outlets, airlines, ground handling agents, ramp handling companies and aviation support companies, etc.
- 25 Mar The PBoC issued in Hong Kong RMB5 billion RMB Bills with tenor of six months.
- 29 Mar The Hong Kong Mortgage Corporation Limited (HKMC) Insurance Limited introduced enhancement measures to the Special 100% Guarantee Product under the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme, whereby the application period was extended to 31 December 2021, with the maximum loan amount per enterprise increased from the total amount of employee wages and rents for 12 months to that for 18 months, and the loan amount ceiling increased from \$5 million to \$6 million. In addition, the maximum repayment period was extended from five years to eight years, and the maximum duration of principal moratorium was extended from 12 months to 18 months.
- 18-21 Apr CE visited Hainan to attend the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2021, and held bilateral meetings with the leaders of some ministries, provinces and cities attending the forum.
- 21-22 Apr CE visited Guangzhou to attend the thematic meeting of the Leading Group for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area hosted and convened by the Vice Premier of the State Council, Mr Han Zheng, to further promote the development of the Shenzhen/Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Cooperation Zone and the Qianhai Shenzhen-Hong Kong Modern Service Industry Cooperation Zone, both of which would bring more new opportunities to Hong Kong people and enterprises.
- 27 Apr The Alliance for Green Commercial Banks, co-launched by the HKMA and International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, hosted the first virtual roundtable on “CEO Talk: Opportunities for Green Bank Transformation”. The roundtable attracted over 1 100 participants globally from Asia Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and the Americas.
- AAHK signed an agreement with Hong Kong Business Aviation Centre for its \$400 million expansion of business aircraft facilities at the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) to enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong as an international aviation hub and in support of Hong Kong’s continuous development as the region’s premier centre for international businesses.
- 28 Apr The Legislative Council passed the Inland Revenue (Amendment) (Tax Concessions for Carried Interest) Bill 2021 to provide tax concessions for carried interest distributed by eligible private equity funds operating in Hong Kong.
- The 100% Personal Loan Guarantee Scheme started receiving applications. The Personal Loan Guarantee Scheme aimed at providing a source of financing to unemployed individuals who are suffering from cessation of main recurrent incomes from employment in Hong Kong during the pandemic.

- 30 Apr To support enterprises in conducting market promotion activities amid the pandemic, the Government enhanced the SME Export Marketing Fund, including expanding its scope to cover large-scale exhibitions targeting the local market as well as online exhibitions, and relaxing the eligibility criteria to cover all enterprises on top of just SMEs, for a period of two years.
- 3 May The Government released the advance estimates on GDP figures for the first quarter of 2021. Real GDP grew appreciably by 7.8% over a year earlier, mainly reflecting the very strong growth of exports of goods amid the global economic recovery led by the Mainland and the US.
- 10 May The SFC announced the implementation of the Government's three-year grant scheme to subsidise the setting up of open-ended fund companies and real estate investment trusts in Hong Kong.
- The Government launched the Green and Sustainable Finance Grant Scheme, providing subsidy for eligible bond issuers and loan borrowers to cover their expenses on bond issuance and external review services. The Scheme will last for three years.
- 14 May CE led the HKSAR delegation to convene the 22nd Plenary of the Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation Joint Conference together with the Guangdong delegation through video conferencing. The meeting held discussions on different areas of cooperation between the two sides. Five co-operation agreements were signed after the meeting.
- CEDB, together with SASAC, launched the Mainland Enterprises Partnership Exchange and Interface Programme and organised the first sharing session thereunder to promote ties between Mainland enterprises and Hong Kong's professional services bodies. About 100 representatives from over 40 enterprises and professional services bodies attended the sharing session, and around 50 one-on-one business matching sessions were arranged.
- The Government released the revised GDP figures for the first quarter of 2021. The Hong Kong economy recovered visibly in the first quarter of 2021, with real GDP resuming appreciable year-on-year growth of 7.9%. Total exports of goods surged thanks to the global economic recovery. Consumption demand revived somewhat but stayed relatively subdued as the fourth wave of the local epidemic disrupted consumption activities especially in the early part of the quarter.
- In the May review of the economic forecast for 2021, the forecast real GDP growth was maintained at 3.5% to 5.5%. The forecast rates of underlying and headline consumer price inflation for 2021 were maintained at 1% and 1.6% respectively.
- 21 May The PBoC issued in Hong Kong a total of RMB25 billion RMB Bills with tenors of three months and one year.
- 24-28 May The StartmeupHK Festival, a leading annual startup event in Asia, was held under the theme of "A Future Unlimited". It hosted 806 speakers from 103 countries and regions, attracting close to 39 000 attendees and featuring 527 exhibitors.
- 1 Jun The first Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) were listed in Hong Kong and Shanghai concurrently under the new Hong Kong-Mainland ETF Cross-listing Scheme.

- 8 Jun The HKMA unveiled “Fintech 2025”, its new strategy for driving fintech development of Hong Kong. The five focus areas put forward by the strategy were: (1) All banks go fintech; (2) Future-proofing Hong Kong for Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs); (3) Creating the next-generation data infrastructure; (4) Expanding the fintech-savvy workforce; and, (5) Nurturing the ecosystem with funding and policies.
- 11 Jun The Revenue (Stamp Duty) Ordinance 2021 was gazetted. The Ordinance was enacted to increase the rate of stamp duty payable on contract notes for sale or purchase of Hong Kong stock from 0.1% to 0.13% of the consideration or value of each transaction payable by buyers and sellers respectively, and correspondingly on certain transfers of such stock with effect from 1 August 2021.
- 15 Jun The Belt and Road Office (BRO) of CEDB and the Commercial Office of the Economic Affairs Department of the Liaison Office of the Central People’s Government in the HKSAR (CPGLO) jointly organised the first session of a webinar series to introduce the Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park in Malaysia and the Thai-Chinese Rayong Industrial Zone in Thailand, and promote collaboration of Hong Kong enterprises with these overseas Economic and Trade Co-operation Zones (ETCZs).
- 16 Jun The Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (IPPA) between Hong Kong and Mexico came into force.
- 17 Jun Hong Kong was ranked seventh globally in the International Institute for Management Development’s World Competitiveness Yearbook 2021.
- 18 Jun FS announced the details of the Consumption Voucher Scheme. Eligible Hong Kong permanent residents and new arrivals aged 18 or above and residing in Hong Kong may register to receive electronic consumption vouchers with a total value of \$5,000 by instalments.
- 21 Jun The Government announced the subscription and allocation results of the eighth tranche of inflation-linked retail bond, or iBond, under the Government Bond Programme. About 709 000 valid applications were received for a total of \$53.9 billion in principal amount of bonds. The final issue amount was \$20 billion with a tenor of three years.
- 22 Jun The BRO of CEDB and the Commercial Office of the Economic Affairs Department of the CPGLO jointly organised the second session of a webinar series to introduce the PT Kawasan Industri Terpadu Indonesia China and CFLD Karawang New Industry City in Indonesia, as well as Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone in Cambodia, and promote collaboration of Hong Kong enterprises with these overseas ETCZs.
- 24 Jun The PBoC issued in Hong Kong RMB5 billion RMB Bills with tenor of six months.
- 25 Jun Financial Institutions (Resolution) (Contractual Recognition of Suspension of Termination Rights - Banking Sector) Rules was gazetted (The Rules). The Rules were designed to facilitate the operationalisation of the resolution regime in Hong Kong by reducing the risk of disorderly termination of contracts in resolution on a mass scale, thereby strengthening the resilience and stability of our financial system.

- 27 Jun MTR Tuen Ma Line (TML) was fully commissioned, extending the original TML Phase 1 from Kai Tak Station to Hung Hom Station, and linking up the original West Rail Line. There are six interchange stations connecting four other railway lines on the TML full Line. With 27 stations along a route length of approximately 56 kilometres, the TML is currently the longest railway line in Hong Kong.
- 28 Jun-1 Jul CE visited Beijing to attend the celebration activities of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China.
- 1 Jul The Government commenced the three-year Cash Allowance Trial Scheme to provide cash allowance to eligible Public Rental Housing (PRH) General Applicant households, with a view to relieving the pressure on livelihood of grassroots families which have waited for PRH allocation for a prolonged period of time. As at year end, the Government had disbursed cash allowance to around 67 000 eligible PRH General Applicant households.
- 4 Jul The Consumption Voucher Scheme started to accept registration.
- 12 Jul FS led the Government officials to attend the fourth Joint Conference on Advancing Hong Kong's Full Participation in and Contribution to the Belt and Road Initiative. The meeting was organised virtually by the Government, the National Development and Reform Commission and other relevant Mainland ministries.
- 14 Jul The Alliance for Green Commercial Banks hosted the second virtual roundtable on "CEO Talk: BUILDING a Green Future", which discussed the strategies and initiatives in greening the real estate sector, as well as opportunities in green building and related financing in Asia.
- 15 Jul The Green and Sustainable Finance Cross-Agency Steering Group launched the Centre for Green and Sustainable Finance to help the financial industry manage the risks and capture the opportunities presented by climate change. The Centre is a cross-sector platform which coordinates the efforts of financial regulators, Government agencies, industry stakeholders and academia in capacity building and policy development. It will also serve as a repository for resources, data and analytics which support the transition to a more sustainable development pathway.
- The HKMA together with the Banking Sector SME Lending Coordination Mechanism announced a further 90-day repayment deferment for trade facilities under the Pre-approved Principal Payment Holiday Scheme.
- 16 Jul CE attended the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Informal Leaders' Retreat through video conferencing to exchange views with the leaders of other economies on strategies to fight against the pandemic and accelerate economic recovery.
- The HKMA's certification of funds under the Inland Revenue (Amendment) (Tax Concessions for Carried Interest) Ordinance 2021 (Ordinance) came into operation. The Ordinance came into effect on 7 May 2021 to give profits tax and salaries tax concessions in relation to eligible carried interest received by, or accrued to, qualifying persons and qualifying employees on or after 1 April 2020.

- 21 Jul The Alliance for Green Commercial Banks hosted the virtual roundtable “Practitioner Talk: BUILDING a Green Future”, which invited leaders and experts in green building, green finance and policy-making to share their insights on the development in green building in Hong Kong and Asia.
- 22 Jul The HKMA hosted a virtual symposium on the Commercial Data Interchange (CDI). The Symposium attracted over 300 senior representatives from more than 100 organisations of the banking sector and stored value facility (SVF) operators. The symposium highlighted the current status and road map of the development of CDI, and the support the HKMA would offer along the way.
- The HKMA also announced the launch of the CDI Innovation Hub with a view to further facilitating the development and adoption of CDI, as well as assisting in the matchmaking between potential data providers and data users.
- 28 Jul In light of public interest, FS appointed an Inspector to investigate into the affairs of Next Digital Limited pursuant to the power conferred on him by section 841(2) and (3) of the Companies Ordinance (Cap. 622).
- 30 Jul To support Hong Kong enterprises in developing more diversified markets and capturing the opportunities brought by the 14th Five-Year Plan, the Government enhanced the Dedicated Fund on Branding, Upgrading and Domestic Sales, including extending its geographical coverage in phases to all 37 economies with which Hong Kong has signed FTAs and/or IPPAs, and increasing the cumulative funding ceiling per enterprise to \$6 million.
- The HKMA announced the conversion of the temporary US Dollar Liquidity Facility to a standing arrangement, with the key operational parameters remaining unchanged. The US dollar funding market in Hong Kong has been operating smoothly, and the US Dollar Liquidity Facility is mainly a backstop facility by nature.
- The Government released the advance estimates on GDP figures for the second quarter of 2021. Hong Kong economy was on the path to recovery alongside the improving global economic conditions and receding local epidemic, with real GDP sustaining notable year-on-year growth of 7.5% in the second quarter of 2021. The economic recovery was still uneven as tourism remained at a standstill due to the pandemic.
- 6 Aug The Government announced the subscription and allocation results of the sixth tranche of Silver Bond issued under the Government Bond Programme. The Silver Bond targets Hong Kong residents with the eligible age for subscription lowered from 65 to 60. About 257 000 valid applications were received for a total of \$67.9 billion in principal amount of bonds. The final issue amount was \$30 billion with a tenor of three years.
- 13 Aug The Government released the revised GDP figures for the second quarter of 2021. The Hong Kong economy remained on track for recovery alongside the improving global economic conditions and receding local epidemic. Real GDP continued to grow notably by 7.6% in the second quarter over a year earlier. Total exports of goods grew strongly alongside the revival of external demand, while consumption and investment demand gathered further steam.

In the August review of the economic forecast for 2021, the forecast real GDP growth was revised upwards to 5.5%-6.5%. The forecast rates of underlying and headline consumer price inflation rates for 2021 were maintained at 1% and 1.6% respectively.

- 20 Aug The SFC approved the launch of an A shares index futures contract by the HKEX, a major milestone in the development of Hong Kong's capital markets which strengthens its position as a financial risk management centre.
- The PBoC issued in Hong Kong a total of RMB25 billion RMB Bills with tenors of three months and one year.
- 25 Aug The HKMA announced a plan to suitably increase the issuance size of Exchange Fund Bills through increasing the issuance size of 91-day Exchange Fund Bills by HK\$5 billion in each of the eight regular tenders in September and October 2021, with a view to meeting the ongoing demand for Exchange Fund paper by banks amidst the abundance of liquidity in the banking system.
- 30 Aug CE and the Mayor of Shanghai co-chaired the Fifth Plenary Session of the Hong Kong/Shanghai Co-operation Conference through video conferencing. Consensus was reached on co-operation in 13 areas. Four co-operation agreements on trade, innovation and technology, healthcare and culture were signed.
- 1 Sep The Government and the Ministry of Commerce signed a MoU on enhancing exchanges and co-operation in promoting high-quality development of overseas ETCZs.
- 1-2 Sep The Government and the HKTDC co-organised the sixth Belt and Road Summit, with over 6 000 government officials, entrepreneurs and professionals from over 80 countries and regions registered for participation. More than 770 one-on-one business matching sessions for over 260 projects were held.
- An the Summit, the HKMA Infrastructure Financing Facilitation Office hosted a panel discussion on “ ‘Greener’ Bay Area: through the Sustainable Finance Lens”, delving into sustainable development and related financing in the Greater Bay Area, with a focus on green supply chain and infrastructure financing.
- 3 Sep In line with Government's further measures announced on 25 August to sustain the support for businesses and individual sectors, HA approved the extension of rent concession for its eligible non-domestic tenants. The total rent foregone is estimated at around \$2,946 million for the 30-month rent concession period up to end March 2022.
- 6 Sep The Central Government promulgated the Plan for Comprehensive Deepening Reform and Opening Up of the Qianhai Shenzhen-Hong Kong Modern Service Industry Co-operation Zone (the Qianhai Plan), a key strategic plan to elevate the level of co-operation amongst Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao. The Qianhai Plan utilises modern service industries as an entry point to foster the acceleration of the building of a system of modern services that is compatible with Hong Kong and international standards and to further promote Guangdong/Hong Kong and Hong Kong/Shenzhen co-operation, with a view to enabling Hong Kong to better integrate into the overall development of our country.



CE led the HKSAR delegation to Shenzhen for the High-level Meeting cum Hong Kong/Shenzhen Co-operation Meeting 2021 with the delegation of the Shenzhen Government. In the meeting, both sides discussed various areas of co-operation. The governments of the HKSAR and Shenzhen had earlier agreed to set up 19 working groups to take forward Hong Kong/Shenzhen co-operation on all fronts.

The governments of HKSAR and Shenzhen signed the “Co-operation Arrangement on the Establishment of ‘One Zone, Two Parks’ in the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Co-operation Zone at the Lok Ma Chau Loop” (Co-operation Arrangement), setting out the direction of co-operation for the development of the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Co-operation Zone (Co-operation Zone), comprising the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park (HSITP) and the Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Zone (SZ I&T Zone). At the same time, the governments of both sides launched a joint policy package of measures conducive to the flow of talent, scientific research resources and business development, etc.

The Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTPC) also signed a framework agreement with Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Cooperation Zone Development Co Ltd in the form of an annex to the Co-operation Arrangement. Before the completion of the first batch of buildings in the HSITP, the HKSTPC will kick-start the establishment of the Shenzhen branch of the Hong Kong Science Park, including Greater Bay Area InnoAcademy and Greater Bay Area InnoExpress, in the SZ I&T Zone.

7 Sep The Ministry of Science and Technology, the China Association for Science and Technology (CAST) and the National Natural Science Foundation of China presented a number of measures on supporting Hong Kong’s development in innovation and technology (I&T) which would benefit Hong Kong’s future advancement. The measures included opening up more national-level science and technology programmes to Hong Kong, allowing young academics in Hong Kong to apply for the “Young Scientists Fund” under the National Natural Science Foundation of China, welcoming personnel and experts in Hong Kong’s science and technology sector to participate in nationwide academic associations of the CAST as well as be admitted to the National Science and Technology Expert Database and the Award Assessment Expert Database, enhancing the mechanism on shared use of large-scale instruments and equipment with Hong Kong, deepening science and technology exchanges between people in the Mainland and Hong Kong, and supporting Hong Kong to participate in the setting up of a National Center of Technology Innovation.

AAHK held a ceremony to mark the completion of the runway pavement works for the new Third Runway, a major milestone of the Three Runway System project at the HKIA.

10 Sep The Cross-boundary WMC was formally launched, and the HKMA promulgated the implementation details, providing supervisory guidance for the industry. The PBoC and the AMCM also promulgated the respective implementation details of the Cross-boundary WMC applicable to the Mainland and Macao. This marked the conclusion of the supervisory framework with implementation details required for the formal launch of the Cross-boundary WMC.

14 Sep Hong Kong was once again ranked as the freest economy in the world by the Fraser Institute, retaining the top rank since 1996.

- 15 Sep The HKMA and the PBoC jointly announced the launch of Southbound Trading under Bond Connect on 24 September. The two regulators agreed on the principles of cross-boundary supervisory cooperation under Southbound Trading and signed an amended version of “Memorandum of Understanding between the People’s Bank of China and Hong Kong Monetary Authority on Strengthening Supervisory Cooperation under Bond Connect”.
- 20 Sep CEDB and the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam jointly organised the webinar titled “Revival under the ‘New Normalcy’: Hong Kong - Viet Nam Partnership” to explore collaboration opportunities in such fields as trade, investment, professional services as well as innovation and technology, and enhance people-to-people bonds. The webinar attracted some 500 sign-ups.
- 21 Sep The Government announced that the application period of the Personal Loan Guarantee Scheme would be extended to end-April 2022.
- The HKMA together with the Banking Sector SME Lending Coordination Mechanism announced that the Pre-approved Principal Payment Holiday Scheme would be extended for another six months to end-April 2022, except for repayment of trade loans which was deferred by 90 days.
- The Government announced further enhancements to the support measures under the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme. The maximum duration of principal moratorium for the 80% Guarantee Product, the 90% Guarantee Product and the Special 100% Loan Guarantee under the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme would be extended from 18 months to 24 months, and the application period for principal moratorium would also be extended to end-June 2022.
- 22-24 Sep CE visited Chengdu to hold the High-level Meeting cum the Second Plenary Session of the Hong Kong/Sichuan Co-operation Conference with the leaders of Sichuan. Consensus was reached on co-operation in 12 areas. Three co-operation agreements on economic and trade, Chinese medicine and vocational education were also signed. CE also attended the 2021 Pan-Pearl River Delta Regional Co-operation Chief Executive Joint Conference, and held bilateral meetings with the leaders of the provinces/region attending the joint conference to discuss various matters, including enhancing the connection of various key national strategies in the region, fostering domestic and international dual circulation, and jointly participating in the high-quality development of the New Land and Marine Routes for Western Regions.
- 23 Sep The Ministry of Finance (MoF) issued in Hong Kong a total of RMB7 billion RMB sovereign bonds with tenors of two and five years. RMB1 billion of additional bonds which would mature in 2031 was also tendered.
- 24 Sep The PBoC issued in Hong Kong a total of RMB5 billion RMB Bills with tenor of six months.
- Southbound Trading under Bond Connect was launched. Operation was smooth on the first trading day, with more than 150 transactions amounting to a total of around RMB4 billion.
- 26-28 Sep CE visited Xi’an to attend the closing ceremony of the 14th National Games, join the National Games flag handover ceremony with the Governor of Guangdong Province and the Chief Executive of the Macao SAR, and meet with the leaders of the General Administration of Sport of China and Shaanxi Province.

- 27 Sep FS announced the publication of the “Report on Hong Kong’s Business Environment: A Place with Unique Advantages and Unlimited Opportunities”. The Report reviewed and set out Hong Kong’s current business environment and advantages following the events over the past two years, and described the development opportunities available to Hong Kong under the country’s new phase and pattern of development.
- 29 Sep The Treasury Markets Summit 2021, jointly organised by the HKMA and the Treasury Markets Association (TMA), was held in Hong Kong. The Summit’s panels covered the impact of the pandemic on global economic outlook and financial markets, and the implication of CBDC on the financial markets. Over 580 local and overseas participants attended the Summit, including representatives from regulatory authorities, treasury market practitioners, asset managers as well as senior executives and professionals from banks, other financial institutions and corporates.
- 30 Sep The Insurance Authority (IA) and the HKMA issued a circular outlining key findings of the joint inspection on premium financing activities carried out by long term insurers and licensed insurance intermediaries (including banks), which was the first of its kind pursued by the two regulators.
- 1 Oct The first insurance-linked security was issued in Hong Kong in the form of a catastrophe bond which provides protection against losses inflicted by typhoons in the Mainland.
- 4 Oct The HKMA released a technical whitepaper on retail CBDC, titled “e-HKD: A technical perspective”. The whitepaper explored potential architectures and technical design options for issuing and distributing retail CBDCs, and solicited feedback on the proposed architecture from the academia and industry.
- 6 Oct CE delivered the 2021 Policy Address, putting forward initiatives in various aspects. In particular, the Northern Metropolis Development Strategy aims to transform the northern part of Hong Kong into a lively and attractive area providing more land for housing, technology development and other industries. Leveraging the Central Government’s support, the Government pledges to boost Hong Kong’s competitiveness as the eight international centres or hubs as charted in the 14th Five-Year Plan.
- With a view to improving the living environment and conditions of those who have been waiting for PRH for a long period of time and living in inadequate housing, the Government announced the provision of 5 000 additional transitional housing units to further increase the overall supply to 20 000 units in the coming few years, and the increase of funding amount under the relevant funding scheme to \$11.6 billion.
- 7 Oct The number of business operations in Hong Kong with parent companies overseas or in the Mainland and the number of start-ups in Hong Kong both reached record high in 2021. According to government surveys, there are a total of 9 049 overseas and Mainland companies and 3 755 start-ups in Hong Kong.
- The SFC and the HKMA released the findings of their first joint survey on the Sale of Non-exchange Traded Investment Products by licensed corporations (LCs) and registered institutions (RIs). A total of 308 LCs and 64 RIs reported selling investment products with an aggregate transaction amount of \$5,700 billion during 2020, with the participation of over 700 000 investors.

- 8 Oct The Legislative Council approved the increase of loan guarantee commitment for the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme by \$35 billion to \$218 billion, thereby extending the application period of the Special 100% Guarantee Product to 30 June 2022.
- The Government promulgated the final report of the “Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030” study, setting out the territorial spatial development strategy for the city beyond 2030, with projections on the overall demand and supply of land over a 30-year period from 2019 to 2048 and recommendations on sources of supply underpinned by a spatial planning framework. With a more visionary, forward looking and capacity creating approach in making the projection, the Report projected that the overall demand for land would be about 6 200 hectares. With the adoption of a multi-pronged land supply strategy, the overall land supply during the projection period is about 7 300 hectares.
- Hong Kong joined the consensus of the international society to implement an international tax reform package with effect from 2023 to address base erosion and profit shifting, including the imposition of a global minimum effective tax rate on multinational enterprises.
- 12 Oct The Shenzhen Municipal People's Government issued in Hong Kong a total of RMB5 billion offshore RMB municipal government bonds, with tenors of two, three and five years. The three-year and five-year bonds were green bonds. All the bonds were lodged with the Central Moneymarkets Unit (CMU) of the HKMA. It was the first time a Mainland municipal government issued bonds outside the Mainland.
- 13-14 Oct CE visited Guangzhou to attend the opening ceremony of the 130th session of the China Import and Export Fair and the Pearl River International Trade Forum, and meet with the leaders of the city.
- 13-15 Oct FS visited Guangzhou to attend the Forum on International Trade & Cooperation of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area of the first Pearl River International Trade Forum, and met with Hong Kong young people who started their businesses in the Mainland.
- 18 Oct HKEX launched its A-share derivatives contract, the MSCI China A 50 Connect Index Futures, confirming Hong Kong as the global international go-to market for accessing the Mainland market.
- The HKMA announced the list of eligible Hong Kong banks which can launch Cross-boundary WMC services. These banks, together with their respective Mainland partner banks, can start providing Cross-boundary WMC services on 19 October 2021.
- 20 Oct The MoF tendered through the HKMA a total of RMB6 billion Additional Bonds which would mature in 2023 and 2028 respectively.
- The HKMA announced a plan to suitably increase the issuance size of Exchange Fund Bills through increasing the issuance size of 91-day Exchange Fund Bills by \$5 billion in each of the selected eight regular tenders in November and December 2021, with a view to meeting the ongoing demand for Exchange Fund paper by banks amidst the abundance of liquidity in the banking system.

The Legislative Council passed the Landlord and Tenant (Consolidation) (Amendment) Bill 2021 to regulate domestic tenancies in respect of subdivided units (SDU) and provide protection to SDU tenants in various aspects.

21 Oct The HKMA and the PBoC jointly announced the signing of a MoU, which links up the PBoC's Fintech Innovation Regulatory Facility with the HKMA's Fintech Supervisory Sandbox, in the form of a "network". The "network link-up" aims to provide a "one-stop platform" to allow eligible financial institutions and tech firms to conduct pilot trials of cross-boundary fintech initiatives, concurrently in Hong Kong and Mainland Greater Bay Area cities.

22 Oct FS attended the APEC Finance Ministers' Meeting 2021 virtually. FS addressed the meeting on Government's fiscal strategies for addressing the pandemic, and the opportunities and challenges presented by the pandemic for the global economy.

The Legislative Council passed the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes (Amendment) Bill 2021 to provide for the implementation of the eMPF Platform, setting out the operating framework and mandatory use of the eMPF Platform, the mechanism to ensure a straight pass-on of cost savings achieved from the streamlined administrative work flow to MPF scheme members, the roles and responsibilities of different parties, as well as miscellaneous amendments.

25-27 Oct The Office of the Communications Authority successfully auctioned a total of 255 MHz of spectrum in the 700 MHz, 850 MHz, 2.5/2.6 GHz and 4.9 GHz bands which were acquired by four mobile network operators for enhancing their 5G services, at total spectrum utilisation fees of about \$1.88 billion.

26 Oct FS attended the Annual Meeting of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank virtually.

28 Oct The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (ETO) in Dubai, the Government's first ETO in the Middle East region and our 14th overseas ETO, commenced operation.

29 Oct The HKMC announced that the Fixed-rate Mortgage Scheme would be converted from a pilot programme into a permanent product starting from 1 November 2021. The current fixed interest rates per annum under the scheme would be maintained until end-January 2022, and would be determined and announced monthly thereafter.

31 Oct-6 Nov The Hong Kong Maritime and Port Board organised the fifth edition of the Hong Kong Maritime Week. The Week comprised 38 online and/or physical activities staged by 43 local and international organisations, attracting around 18 000 representatives from overseas and local maritime and port stakeholders, students and members of the general public.

1 Nov New fund re-domiciliation mechanisms under the open-ended fund company (OFC) regime and the limited partnership fund (LPF) regime were introduced, allowing existing funds set up in the form of a company or limited partnership outside Hong Kong to apply for registration as an OFC or LPF in Hong Kong respectively.

To enhance public service delivery and regulate entities more effectively, the Companies Registry implemented Phase 1 of a new initiative of Unique Business Identifier (UBI) for LPFs. The 8-digit Business Registration Number was adopted as the UBI of an LPF, facilitating the communication between the LFP and government departments or businesses.

The Government released the advance estimates on GDP figures for the third quarter of 2021. Hong Kong's economic recovery became more entrenched alongside the continued revival of global economic activity and stable local epidemic situation, with real GDP increasing by 5.4% over a year earlier.

1-5 Nov The annual flagship Fintech event, the Hong Kong Fintech Week 2021, was successfully held. The event, comprising both virtual and physical events for the first time, attracted over 20 000 attendees, and drew more than 4 million online views. More than 400 exhibitors and over 300 speakers from 87 economies participated in it. In the event, the HKMA announced two new initiatives to further strengthen Hong Kong's fintech capabilities:

- The HKMA and the Bank for International Settlements Innovation Hub Hong Kong Centre concluded Project Genesis, which, among other achievements, concept-tested the issuance of tokenised green bonds to retail investors in Hong Kong. The HKMA would further look into the feasibility of piloting the issuance of tokenised green bonds under the Government Green Bond Programme; and

- The HKMA announced the launch of Anti-Money Laundering Regtech Lab series in collaboration with Cyberport as the next phase to encourage Regtech adoption.

The HKMA also made good progress on the initiatives implemented under its "Fintech 2025" strategy, covering areas including data, cross-boundary fintech cooperation, talent development, CBDC, and funding support.

2 Nov CEDB and the Consulate General of the Kingdom of Cambodia in Hong Kong jointly organised the webinar titled "Hong Kong - Cambodia Partnership", in which leading figures from both places across different sectors shared with some 350 sign-ups the experience of Hong Kong enterprises in going global and the latest market updates of Cambodia.

2-3 Nov The Government and the HKTDC jointly organised the 11th edition of the Asian Logistics, Maritime and Aviation Conference, with the theme "Resilience • Agility • Sustainability: Reshaping the Global Supply Chain", in a hybrid of online and physical formats. The event attracted more than 11 000 viewers from over 60 countries and regions, including business leaders and practitioners from logistics, maritime, aviation and supply chain management industry.

3 Nov Site 3 of the New Central Harbourfront was awarded at a premium of \$50.8 billion on a 50-year land grant following a two-envelope open tender.

The IFC announced that it will partner with the HKMA and another institutional investor to create a new US\$3 billion global platform for climate-smart investment aligned with the Paris Agreement. The new program, Managed Co-Lending Portfolio Program (MCP) One Planet, combined institutional investor contributions with IFC's own funds to scale up climate-responsible financing for private companies in emerging markets. MCP One Planet would create the world's first cross-sectoral portfolio of emerging-market loans aligned with the Paris Agreement.

5 Nov The Executives' Meeting of East Asia-Pacific Central Banks (EMEAP) announced the finalisation of the project to promote investment in green bonds through the Asian Bond Fund. The EMEAP believed this initiative would help catalyse further deepening of local currency-denominated bond markets, in particular green bond markets in the region.

- 8 Nov The Hong Kong Academy of Finance launched a new leadership development programme. This Financial Leaders Programme aimed at nurturing the next generation of top level financial leaders through inspiring talents with considerable experience in the financial industry, equipping them with a mindset to lead, enhancing their understanding of financial issues from a macro and systemic perspectives, as well as expanding their professional network.
- 10 Nov The Government released the “Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report 2020”. Affected by the pandemic, the Hong Kong economy experienced a severe recession in 2020. In response to this major challenge, the Government rolled out a series of non-recurrent measures in 2020 to stabilise the economy and relieve the pressures on the grassroots’ livelihood. According to the report, after taking into account the policy intervention of all selected measures (including the recurrent cash measures, non-recurrent cash measures and means-tested in-kind benefits), the overall poor population and the poverty rate in 2020 were 553 500 persons and 7.9% respectively. As compared with the number of poor population in 2019, 88 000 persons were relieved from poverty and the poverty rate dropped by 1.3 percentage points. The poverty alleviation impact of all selected measures in 2020 was a record high.
- 11 Nov CE attended the APEC Economic Leaders’ Dialogue with the APEC Business Advisory Council through video conferencing, during which she and the leaders of the other economies exchanged views with ABAC representatives on the priority issues as economies emerged from the pandemic.
- 12 Nov CE attended the APEC Economic Leaders’ Meeting through video conferencing to pledge support for international co-operation in fighting against the pandemic and championing free trade as a solution for the post-pandemic global economy recovery.
- The Government released the revised GDP figures for the third quarter of 2021. Hong Kong’s economic recovery became more entrenched in the third quarter, with real GDP growing by 5.4% year-on-year. Total exports of goods grew notably year-on-year, supported by the continued revival of major economies and vibrant regional trade flows. Private consumption expenditure rose appreciably thanks to the stable local epidemic situation, improved labour market conditions and the Consumption Voucher Scheme.
- In the November review of the economic forecast for 2021, the forecast real GDP growth was revised to 6.4%. The forecast rate of underlying consumer price inflation for 2021 was revised downwards to 0.7% from 1% in the August round of review. The corresponding forecast rate of headline consumer price inflation was maintained at 1.6%.
- 16 Nov The Alliance for Green Commercial Banks hosted the third virtual roundtable on “Climate Risk in Action: A Conversation with Practitioners”, which discussed the current strategies, as well as the opportunities and challenges in climate risk management.
- 17 Nov The Government made a successful offering of US\$3 billion worth of green bonds denominated in US dollars and Euro under the Government Green Bond Programme. The offering comprised three tranches of US\$1 billion 10-year, EUR1.25 billion 5-year, and EUR500 million 20-year. The 20-year tranche was at the time the longest euro-denominated green bond issued by an Asian government, as well as the Government’s inaugural offering of euro-denominated bonds, setting an important new benchmark for potential issuers in Hong Kong and the region.

The MoF issued in Hong Kong a total of EUR4 billion offshore sovereign bonds, with tenors of 3 years, 7 years and 12 years.

The MoF issued in Hong Kong a total of RMB6 billion additional bonds which would mature in 2023, 2026 and 2031 respectively.

- 18 Nov The Government issued the first batch of 1-year Floating Rate Notes indexed to the Hong Kong Dollar Overnight Index Average (HONIA) for \$1 billion under the institutional part of the Government Bond Programme to facilitate the adoption and usage of HONIA as an alternative reference rate in Hong Kong.
- 19 Nov The PBoC issued in Hong Kong a total of RMB25 billion RMB Bills with tenors of three months and one year.
- 23 Nov The Government made a successful offering of RMB5 billion offshore renminbi green bonds under the Government Green Bond Programme. The offering comprised two tranches of RMB2.5 billion 3-year and RMB2.5 billion 5-year. It was the Government's inaugural offering of renminbi-denominated bonds, setting an important new benchmark for the offshore renminbi market.
- 23-25 Nov The HKMA led the delegation of the Hong Kong Association of Banks (HKAB) to have annual meetings with relevant agencies of the Central Government via video conference. The meeting discussed the economic and financial conditions in Hong Kong and the Mainland, development of Hong Kong's international financial centre, as well as issues of mutual interest.
- 28 Nov-  
1 Dec CE and the Secretary of the Communist Party of China Hubei Provincial Committee, leading the government delegations of the two places, held the High-Level Meeting cum the First Plenary Session of the Hong Kong/Hubei Co-operation Conference in Wuhan, Hubei. At the meeting-cum-plenary, both sides established a new co-operation mechanism, which was the first high-level government co-operation mechanism established by the HKSAR with a central region province of the Mainland. Consensus was reached on co-operation in 13 areas. Two co-operation agreements on economic and trade and culture were signed. CE also met with the leaders of Wuhan and delivered a speech at Wuhan University.
- 29 Nov The Hong Kong ICT Awards 2021 Awards Presentation Ceremony was held to give recognition and encouragement to outstanding ICT products and solutions developed by local innovators.
- 29 Nov-  
4 Dec "Business of Design Week" (BODW) was held in hybrid mode in Hong Kong. It was the world's largest annual design event of Asia and one of the leading design events. The United Kingdom was the strategic partner again for the 2021 edition. As of 31 December 2021, over 1.02 million counts (comprising physical attendance (over 120 000) and TV/online views (over 900 000)) participated in the BODW 2021 and other concurrent events.
- 1 Dec All digital terrestrial television frequency channels were migrated to the 500 MHz band, thereby vacating spectrum in the 600/700 MHz bands for high value-added mobile telecommunications services including 5G.



The Development Bureau hosted the seminar for young construction professionals, with the theme "Catching the Next Wave", which aimed to provide insights to the young professionals on the coming opportunities and how to prepare for the next wave of major infrastructure development in meeting the social and economic needs of Hong Kong. The seminar brought together about 200 young construction professionals and stakeholders in the construction industry, with speakers from different entities of the industry sharing their views and advice on seizing opportunities in the future.

3 Dec The HKMA announced the launch of a new module on fintech under the Enhanced Competency Framework to promote talent development and enhance the professional competence of existing banking practitioners working in functions that involved technological innovation for financial services in the banking industry.

7 Dec The IA hosted the Asian Insurance Forum 2021 with the theme of "Opportunities and Challenges in the Post-pandemic New Normal", focusing on popular topics such as the dual circulation economic strategy, climate change and green finance, fintech development and regulatory outlook. More than 1 000 onsite or online guests in Hong Kong and around the Asia-Pacific region participated in the discussion.

8 Dec The Government published the Long Term Housing Strategy Annual Progress Report 2021. Based on the latest projection, the total housing supply target for the 10-year period from 2022/23 to 2031/32 is 430 000 units, with the public/private split of total housing supply maintaining at 70:30. Accordingly, the public housing supply target is 301 000 units, while the private housing supply target is 129 000 units. The Government has identified about 350 hectares of land required for providing about 330 000 public housing units, which can meet the estimated public housing demand of 301 000 units in the said 10-year period.

9 Dec The PBoC and the HKMA co-organised a joint seminar "Hong Kong's Positioning and Prospect as an International Financial Centre", with thematic discussions focusing on the positioning and future development of Hong Kong as an international financial centre and an offshore RMB business hub.

10 Dec With the active participation of the HKMA, HKAB and the DTC Association jointly launched the revised Code of Banking Practice to strengthen protection of banking consumers amidst latest development in financial technology and evolving consumer needs.

The Government launched the "Hong Kong Health Code" system to allow members of the public to register real-name accounts and use the system, so as to prepare for quarantine-free travel between Guangdong, Macao and Hong Kong.

13 Dec The HKMA announced a plan to suitably increase the issuance size of Exchange Fund Bills through increasing the issuance size of 91-day Exchange Fund Bills by \$5 billion in each of the eight regular tenders in January and February 2022, with a view to meeting the ongoing demand for Exchange Fund paper by banks amidst the abundance of liquidity in the banking system.

14 Dec The Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme Authority signed a MoU with the Monetary Authority of Macao on information exchange, professional training and technical sharing to strengthen cooperation between the two regulatory bodies.

- 16 Dec The Green and Sustainable Finance Cross-Agency Steering Group announced the progress made and the way forward to advance Hong Kong's position as a leader in green and sustainable finance, with focus on the Centre for Green and Sustainable Finance, taxonomies, climate-related disclosures and sustainability reporting as well as carbon market opportunities.
- 17 Dec The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong announced new rules to create a listing regime for special purpose acquisition companies (SPACs) that will take effect on 1 January 2022, making Hong Kong's markets more internationally attractive, competitive and diversified.
- 20-23 Dec CE visited Beijing to brief state leaders on the latest economic, social and political situation in Hong Kong.
- 21 Dec The PBoC issued in Hong Kong RMB5 billion RMB Bills with tenors of six months.
- 30 Dec The HKMA published the results of its pilot climate risk stress test. The results showed that, under extreme scenarios, climate risks could potentially cause significant adverse impacts on the banking sector and that banks need to take early actions to manage them. However, the overall assessment indicated that the banking sector remained resilient to climate-related shocks given the strong capital buffers built up by the banks over the years.