

BOND FUND

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Memorandum Note

The Bond Fund was established by the Resolution passed by the Legislative Council under section 29 of the Public Finance Ordinance (Cap. 2) on 8 July 2009 in connection with the implementation of the Government Bond Programme to promote the further and sustainable development of the bond market in Hong Kong. The Programme can provide more diversified investment products and avenues for financing to attract more overseas capital, and reinforce Hong Kong's position as an international financial centre. The Programme consists of an institutional part and a retail part. The Fund does not form part of the fiscal reserves and is managed separately from other Government accounts. The Fund is placed with the Exchange Fund for investment purposes and attracts investment income on the basis of the "fixed rate" sharing arrangement applicable to the fiscal reserves.

2 On 26 March 2014, the Loans (Amendment) Ordinance 2014 was enacted by the Legislative Council putting in place a legal framework for the issuance of alternative bonds under the Government Bond Programme. The enactment amends the Loans Ordinance (Cap. 61) so that money raised by the Government by alternative bonds issued under a specified alternative bond scheme set up by the Government is treated as money borrowed by the Government and may be credited to the Fund. Amendments were also made to the Resolution passed under section 29 of the Public Finance Ordinance (Cap. 2) so that money can be expended from the Fund for making redemption payments and periodic distribution payments under the scheme and for paying the expenses in relation to the borrowing.

3 The Resolution passed under section 29 of the Public Finance Ordinance (Cap. 2) provides, inter alia, that—

- (a) the Fund is to be administered by the Financial Secretary, who may direct or authorize other public officers to administer the Fund and delegate the power of administration to other public officers;
- (b) the following are to be credited to the Fund—
 - (i) sums borrowed under section 3 of the Loans Ordinance (Cap. 61) that are required to be credited to the Fund by any resolution of the Legislative Council approving the borrowing;
 - (ii) sums received by way of interest, dividends or investment income earned in respect of the sums held in the Fund;
 - (iii) any appropriations from the general revenue that may be approved by the Legislative Council;
 - (iv) any other sums that may be received for the purposes of the Fund;
- (c) earnings from interest or dividends on investments of the Fund are to be retained for the purposes of the Fund;
- (d) the Financial Secretary may expend money from the Fund for the purposes of—
 - (i) repaying or, if appropriate, paying the principal of, interest on, and expenses incurred in relation to, any sums that have been borrowed under section 3 of the Loans Ordinance (Cap. 61) for the purposes of the Fund; and
 - (ii) investing in the manner the Financial Secretary considers appropriate for the prudent management of the Fund, and paying the expenses incurred in relation to the investments;
- (e) for sums borrowed in the manner mentioned in section 2A of the Loans Ordinance (Cap. 61), the power under sub-paragraph (d) above includes—
 - (i) paying the sums referred to in subsection (1)(e) of that section; and
 - (ii) paying the expenses incurred in relation to the borrowing;
- (f) the Director of Accounting Services, under the authority of a funds warrant issued by the Financial Secretary, is to pay from the Fund any sums that may be required to meet expenditures from the Fund; and
- (g) the Financial Secretary may transfer from the Fund to the general revenue the balance held in the Fund, if so approved by the Legislative Council, when all financial obligations and liabilities are met in relation to any sums that have been borrowed under section 3 of the Loans Ordinance (Cap. 61) for the purposes of the Fund.

4 The Legislative Council passed a Resolution under section 3 of the Loans Ordinance (Cap. 61) on 8 July 2009, authorising the Government to borrow from any person from time to time for the purposes of the Bond Fund such sums not exceeding in total \$100 billion or equivalent, being the maximum amount of all borrowings that may be outstanding by way of principal at any time. The Legislative Council later passed a Resolution under section 3 of the Loans Ordinance (Cap. 61) on 22 May 2013 and another on 21 July 2021, to raise the authorised borrowing ceiling first to \$200 billion or equivalent and then to \$300 billion or equivalent.

5 In September 2014, the Government made an inaugural issuance of alternative bonds under the Government Bond Programme. The proceeds, repayments and periodic distribution payments of alternative bonds are recorded in the Bond Fund under the subheads "receipts representing proceeds from issuance of alternative bonds", "payments representing repayment of alternative bonds", and "payments representing periodic distribution payments for alternative bonds" respectively.

6 In 2014, under the institutional part of the Government Bond Programme, the Government introduced two measures to enhance the liquidity of relevant bonds, namely, bond swap facility (which involves the early redemption of certain bonds for issuance of other bonds of the same monetary value for a short period and the reversal of these

BOND FUND

transactions on a later date) and switch tender (which involves the early redemption of certain bonds in market value for issuance of other bonds at tender prices). These measures entail additional issuances and early redemptions of relevant bonds. They have been recorded in the Bond Fund as proceeds from issuance of bonds, as well as repayments for bonds, under bond swap facility and switch tender as appropriate.

7 Payments from the Fund for 2022–23 and 2023–24 are estimated at \$44,691,810,000 and \$64,734,319,000 respectively. The expected payment items mainly include payments representing periodic distribution payments for alternative bonds issued, interest payments and repayments for bonds issued and to be issued under the Government Bond Programme (including repayments for bonds under tender or subscription, switch tender and bond swap facility) as well as other relevant expenses (e.g. expenses for external services procured in the course of implementing the Government Bond Programme).

8 Receipts from issuance of bonds (including issuance of bonds under tender or subscription, switch tender and bond swap facility) and investment income for 2022–23 and 2023–24 are estimated at \$82,830,803,000 and \$83,187 million respectively.

BOND FUND

(Payments)

Sub-head (Code)	Actual expenditure 2021-22	Revised estimate 2022-23	Estimate 2023-24	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
Head G01—Bond Fund				
100	Repayments for bonds under tender or subscription	17,785,520	37,582,075	53,496,240
101	Repayments for bonds under switch tender.....	—	1,647,200	2,000,000
102	Repayments for bonds under bond swap facility.....	—	—	1,000,000
120	Interest payments for bonds	3,022,549	5,136,440	7,905,750
125	Payments representing periodic distribution payments for alternative bonds.....	244,067	246,000	246,000
130	Others	98,428	80,095	86,329
Total (Payments).....		21,150,564	44,691,810	64,734,319

BOND FUND

(Receipts)

Sub-head (Code)	Actual receipts 2021-22	Revised estimate 2022-23	Estimate 2023-24	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
Head G01—Bond Fund				
200	Proceeds from issuance of bonds under tender or subscription.....	70,101,503	68,500,000	73,500,000
201	Proceeds from issuance of bonds under switch tender.....	—	1,854,651	2,000,000
202	Proceeds from issuance of bonds under bond swap facility....	—	—	1,000,000
	Investment income	8,227,246	12,476,152	6,687,000
Total (Receipts).....		78,328,749	82,830,803	83,187,000

BOND FUND

Movement of the Account

	Actual				Revised Estimate	Estimate
	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Opening Balance	138,155	138,403	121,057	152,848	210,026	248,165
Revenue	25,924	25,064	53,922	78,329	82,831	83,187
Expenditure	25,676	42,410	22,131	21,151	44,692	64,734
Surplus/(Deficit)	248	(17,346)	31,791	57,178	38,139	18,453
Closing Balance	138,403	121,057	152,848	210,026	248,165	266,618

Revenue Analysis

	Actual				Revised Estimate	Estimate
	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Proceeds from issuance of bonds under tender or subscription	19,458	21,039	49,341	70,102	68,500	73,500
Proceeds from issuance of bonds under switch tender	—	—	—	—	1,855	2,000
Proceeds from issuance of bonds under bond swap facility	—	—	—	—	—	1,000
Investment income	6,466	4,025	4,581	8,227	12,476	6,687
Total Revenue	25,924	25,064	53,922	78,329	82,831	83,187

BOND FUND

Expenditure Analysis

	Actual				Revised Estimate	Estimate
	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Repayments for bonds under tender or subscription	23,346	32,335	12,456	17,786	37,582	53,496
Repayment for bonds under bond switch tender	—	—	—	—	1,647	2,000
Repayments for bonds under bond swap facility	—	—	—	—	—	1,000
Payments representing repayments of alternative bonds	—	7,830	7,753	—	—	—
Interest	1,763	1,762	1,546	3,023	5,137	7,906
Payments representing periodic distribution payments for alternative bonds	552	472	316	244	246	246
Others	15	11	60	98	80	86
Total Expenditure	25,676	42,410	22,131	21,151	44,692	64,734