

# MARKET EXPRESS

2025 Quarter 01



# 2025

Economic and  
Markets Outlook



中信银行(国际)

CHINA CITIC BANK INTERNATIONAL

China CITIC Bank International brings you market updates and commentaries from renowned financial gurus across the globe, keeping you abreast of the latest market developments while helping you to make smart, informed investment decisions.



## Macroeconomic Outlook – 2025

In 2024, the trajectories of major economies notably diverged. Fueled by massive public spending and ballooning debt, the U.S. economy continued to expand. Meanwhile, Europe was under considerable pressure, with Germany, the region's largest economy, mired in stagnation or outright contraction. China's growth should approach the official target of around 5%, but the real estate sector has yet to recover and consumer confidence needed improving. In 2025, global market's attention will likely be fixated on the impact of Trump 2.0's tariff policy on international trade and monetary policy.

### US – Trump 2.0 unlikely to rekindle inflationary risks

Domestically, tax cuts and deregulation are Trump's main tools to boost growth. The goal is to encourage investment by lowering corporate taxes and deregulation, as well as improve households' disposable income by reducing income taxes.

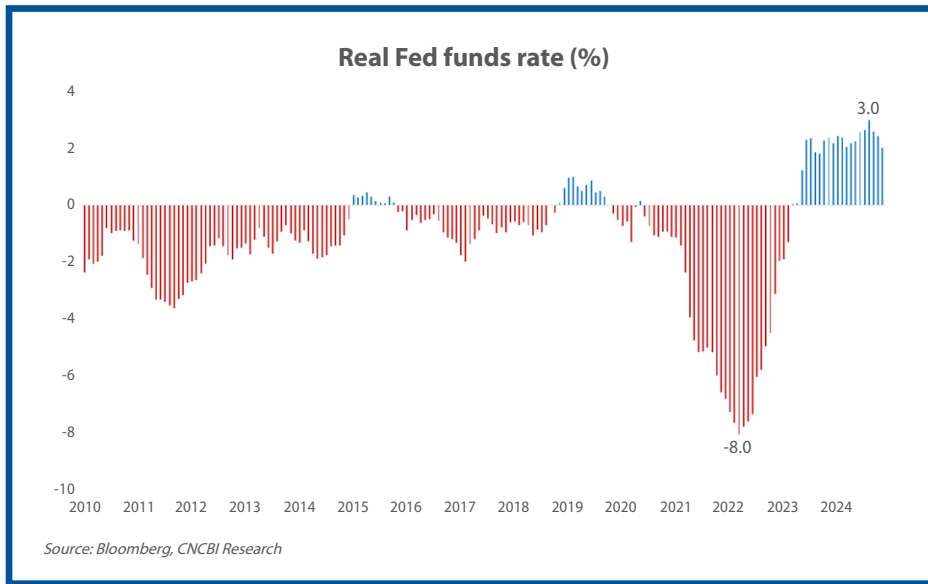
In his first term as President, Trump signed into law the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), the largest tax reform bill in 30 years. This legislation took effect in 2018, but most measures were scheduled to expire by the end of 2025. TCJA reduced the marginal rates and adjusted the widths of tax brackets, while corporate taxes were permanently lowered from 35% to 21%. During the campaign, Trump proposed extending TCJA, perpetuating the reductions of estate taxes and income taxes, and further lowering corporate taxes to 15%. As for deregulation, Trump promised to cut 10 existing rules for every new rule, in order to improve business environment by shrinking bureaucracy and getting rid of red tape.

In theory, should corporate and personal income tax cuts as well as deregulation succeed in boosting economic activities, reductions of tax rates may not necessarily lead to lower tax receipt. Nonetheless, given the current precarious situation of public finances, which resulted in a rare surge in treasury yields even as the Fed reduced interest rates, bold tax cuts could quickly turn into a reckless endeavor. In order to hedge against fiscal risks, Trump 2.0 could rely on both tariff income and spending cuts. Musk, who was pivotal in Trump's victorious campaign, believed that by improving efficiency and cutting waste, government spending can be reduced by as much as 2 trillion dollars, even greater than the deficit of fiscal 2024. Spending cuts of such scale would balance the budget or even turn it into a surplus. While the chances of total success are arguably slim, a long overdue focus on fiscal discipline will help facilitate and enact tax cuts.

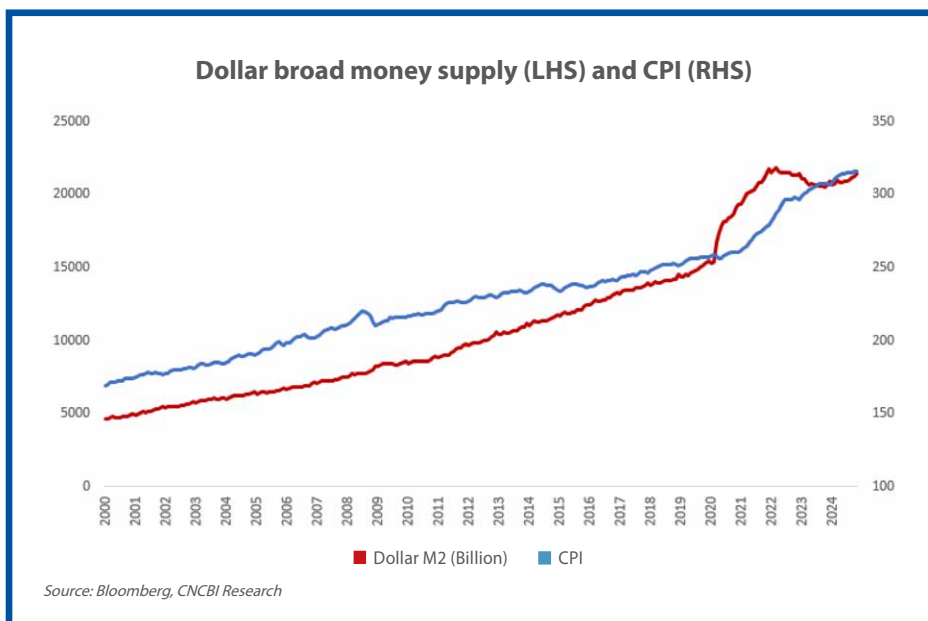
As Trump 2.0's economics and trade philosophy takes shape, tax cuts, deregulation, government spending cuts, and tariffs have emerged as four main pillars. The first two pillars aim to encourage production and investment and improve household income, whereas the last two pillars attempt to reduce fiscal burden by raising revenue and cutting spending. While the potential impact of tariffs is rightfully a particular concern, tariff threats should be deemed bargaining chips and will not fully materialize.

Granted, inflation risks as a result of potential new tariffs have affected the Fed's decision-making and the bond market's dynamics. As the Fed projects only 50 basis points of rate cuts for 2025, treasury yields traveled in the opposite direction and rose significantly. That said, the current monetary environment is drastically different from that during the runaway inflation period between 2021 and 2022. The necessary conditions for re-accelerating inflation are distinctly lacking.

For one, real interest rates remain in positive territory and therefore fairly restrictive. Ever since the financial crisis, measured as the difference between the Fed funds rate and the consumer price index (CPI), negative real interest rates had become the norm most of the time. That changed in March 2023, which marked the beginning of an extended period of positive real Fed funds rate and heightened monetary restrictiveness.



For another, money supply growth has slowed. As long as the central bank avoids repeating the mistake of creating excess money supply and a deluge of liquidity, rising prices of goods targeted by extra tariffs will not lead to a surge in overall inflation. From February 2020 to March 2022, the broad money supply (M2) of dollars soared 43%, resulting in rapidly rising CPI. While the Fed is gradually lowering the Fed funds rate, it is still carrying out a quantitative tightening program by reducing the size of its balance sheet, mitigating the risks of a resurgence of M2 and inflation.



Well-behaved inflation will justify a quicker pace of rate cuts than the Fed's current forward guidance of 50 basis points for 2025. The Fed funds rate could be lowered by 1 percentage point in 2025, and the rate-cutting cycle will be extended into 2026 and probably beyond.

### Europe – ECB firmly in easing mode to cope with a weak Euro-zone economy

The Euro-zone economy remained feeble in 2024, eking out growth of about 0.7%. Germany, the largest economy in Europe, probably contracted by 0.2%, solidifying its status as the weakest link in the region. In the meantime, France, the second largest economy, continues to be plagued by dire fiscal conditions and political upheaval. Face with the myriad of challenges, the ECB will have to keep easing monetary policy and lowering interest rates.

In the U.K., the labor party's budget has discouraged corporate investment and hiring and worsened business environment. GDP growth for 2024 was likely below 1%. The BOE, wary of a flare-up of inflation risks, has been rather cautious when it comes to cutting rates. Nevertheless, as long as inflation does not stray too far from the 2% target, the BOE may need to lower rates by 25 basis points in each quarter of 2025 to counter growth headwinds.

## Mainland China – Sino-U.S. trade relations a key determinant of growth

Even though Trump has threatened substantial tariffs against China, for the following three reasons, tariffs are likely bargaining chips instead of an end in itself. First, during Trump 1.0, in spite of escalating trade frictions, China and the U.S. eventually did manage to agree on a “phase one” trade deal. Although the outbreak of the pandemic rendered meeting the main goals of the deal virtually impossible, both parties gained experience of making compromises and building consensus. Second, while tariffs are a pillar of Trump 2.0’s economics and trade philosophy, they are not necessarily essential and could be replaced by other measures that benefit the U.S. In fact, at campaign rallies, Trump explicitly suggested Chinese automakers invest and create jobs in the U.S. to boost economic growth, so that they could avoid tariffs. This stance was completely opposite to the Biden administration’s seeming hostility to Chinese investments in the U.S. in any shape or form. Third, judging from Trump’s tariff threats against Canada, Mexico, the EU, and the BRICS, tariffs are the go-to solution to issues ranging from trade, border, immigration, drugs, energy, and de-dollarization, but they are certainly not the ultimate goal.

In 2024, Mainland China’s merchandise trade surplus approached 1 trillion dollars for the first time ever and was a main driver of economic growth. China’s exports competitiveness have been consistently improving thanks to comprehensive and resilient supply chains. Resolving trade frictions through dialogues and bilateral negotiations should be a mutually beneficial scenario preferred by both China and the U.S. Potential negative impact of Trump 2.0 on Chinese exports can be mitigated.

In 2024, the RMB’s exchange rate against the dollar was under considerable pressure. While there are a number of factors driving exchange rates, yield differential remains a decisive determinant. The RMB’s exchange rate largely depends on China-U.S. yield differentials. The 10-year yields of Chinese and U.S. sovereign bonds represent so-called risk-free returns on RMB and dollar assets, respectively. Thus, the difference between the two yields measures the relative appeal of the two currencies. In addition to measuring returns on a pair of currencies, the yield differential is also a price signal taking into consideration a number of factors including monetary policy, business cycles, and price trends, making it significantly correlated with exchange rates. There is a significantly positive correlation between the RMB’s exchange rate against the dollar and the China-U.S. yield differential. A greater U.S. yield differential supports a stronger dollar, and vice versa.

As the Fed has begun cutting rates, the divergence between Chinese and U.S. monetary policy is now gone, with both central banks on easing mode. However, in the U.S., due to rosier growth expectations, relatively stubborn inflation, soaring public debts, and reductions in the Fed’s balance sheet, treasury yields have yet to follow the Fed funds rate lower. As treasury yields stay elevated, a wider China-U.S. yield spread pushed the RMB’s exchange rate lower. This dynamic could change in 2025, since elevated U.S. treasury yields will have significantly more room to decline compared to Chinese yields that are already at multi-decade lows. Therefore, narrower yield spreads could eventually relieve downward pressure on the RMB.

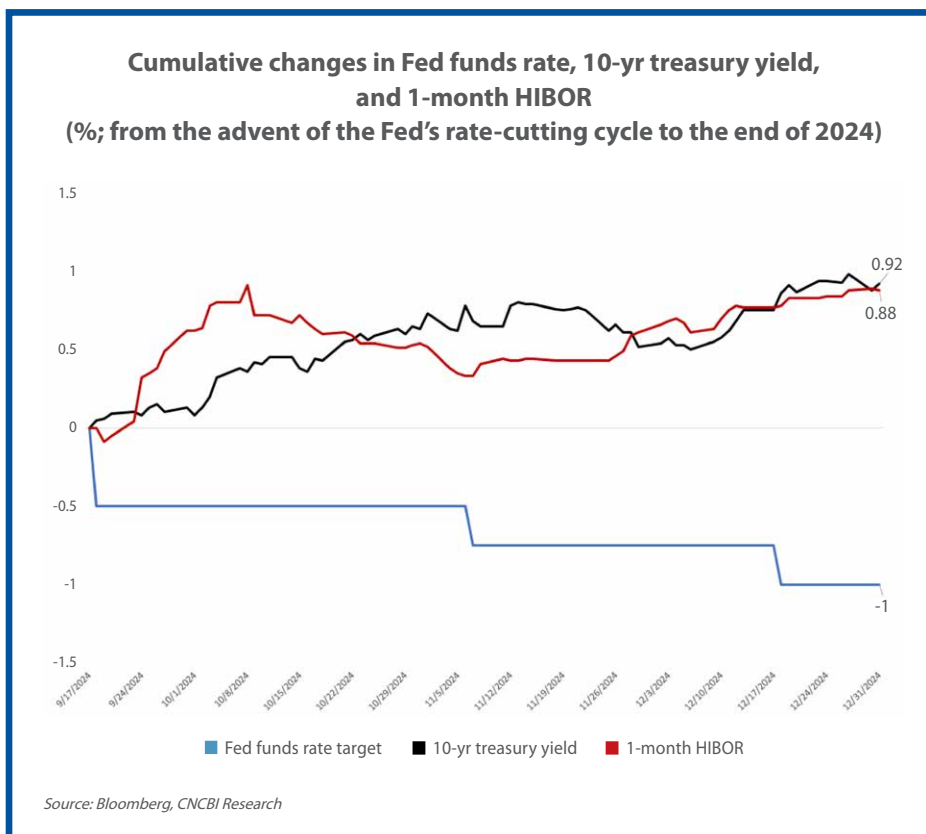


Note: LHS in inverse order. RMB strengthens when the red line goes up, and vice versa.

## Hong Kong – Interest rates to decline gradually; housing market stabilization on track

Hong Kong's economy grew moderately in 2024, with real GDP rising about 2.5%. The rebound in exports was a key growth driver, while the labor market remained robust, with unemployment rate consistently near cyclical low of 3%. Changing consumption patterns of tourists and local residents, coupled with a strong HK dollar, continued to pressure retail sales and private consumption. In 2025, the Fed's rate cuts theoretically should boost financial markets activities and asset prices. However, treasury yields have moved in the opposite direction, and both U.S. dollar and HK dollar interest rates remain at highly restrictive levels. In Hong Kong, the prospective positive impacts of lower U.S. policy rates on economic activities, banks' asset quality, and the housing market have been rather limited so far. In 2025, thanks to a healthy labor market and rising household income, private consumption will likely return to growth. Meanwhile, tariff uncertainties and a less favorable base for comparison will lead to slower growth of exports. The rate of GDP expansion may remain at about 2.5% in 2025.

As for interest rates, HIBOR has been rather volatile in spite of the Fed's rate-cutting cycle and lower HK dollar prime rates. If history is any guide, HK dollar prime rates will need to go down by another 25 basis points until they reach the floor. By contrast, elevated interbank rates will have more room for downward adjustment. In addition to the local monetary environment, HK dollar interbank rates will also hinge on U.S. treasury yields. While housing prices have begun to stabilize, the recovery will be restrained by still elevated interest rates. Private residential prices may rise by less than 5% in 2025.

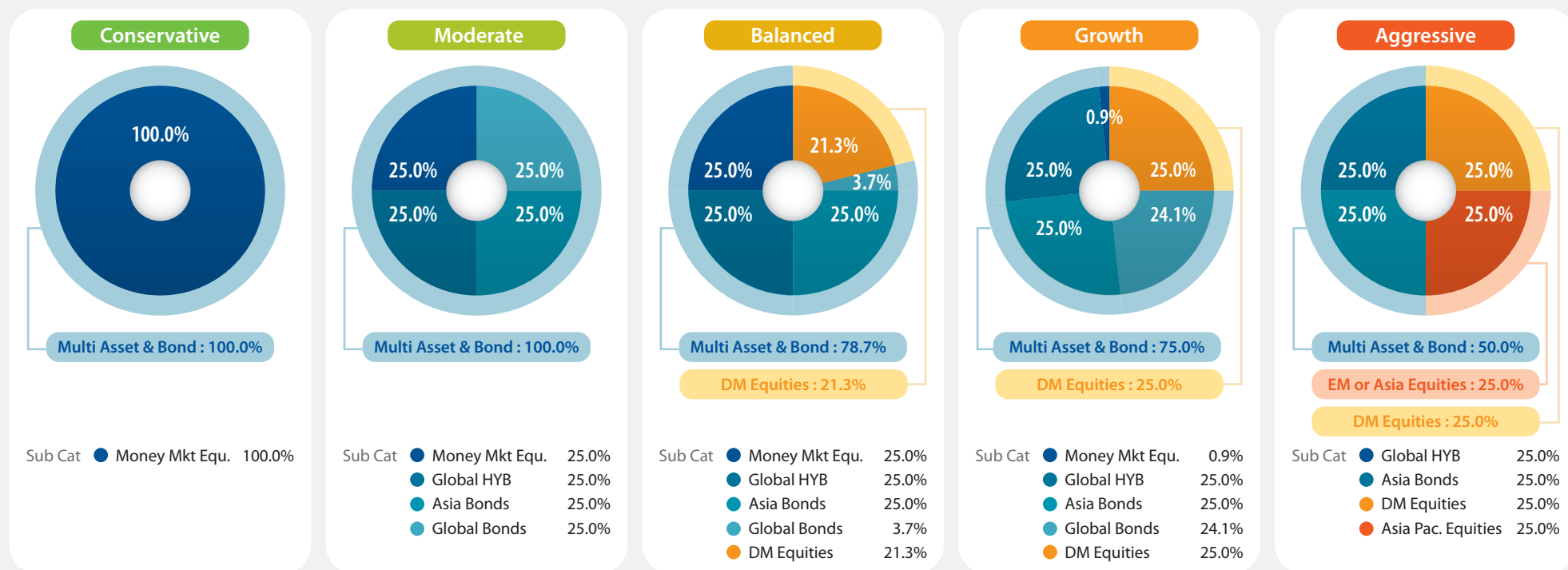


## Asset class outlook

Foreign exchanges		Outlook
US Dollar		+
The Euro		-
British Pound		0
Canadian Dollar		-
Japanese Yen		0
Renminbi		0
Australia Dollar		+
New Zealand Dollar		0
Bonds		Outlook
US Treasuries		0
European Sovereign		+
Chinese Sovereign		0
US IG		+
European IG		+
Asia IG		+
US HY		+
European HY		0
Asia HY		0
Equities		Outlook
United States		+
Europe		0
Japan		0
Asia (ex-Japan)		+
China A-share		0
Hong Kong		0

Note: Outlook “+” Positive, “-” Negative; “0” Neutral

## ► 5 Asset Allocation Portfolios As Your References



	Conservative	Moderate	Balanced	Growth	Aggressive
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### Annualized Expected Return, Annualized Expected Volatility

Return	1.72%	4.30%	5.20%	5.80%	6.20%
Volatility	0.60%	5.70%	7.30%	9.10%	11.40%

### Expected Cumulative Returns in Different Tenors

1 Year	1.73%	4.43%	5.16%	5.73%	6.35%
3 Years	5.25%	13.38%	15.93%	17.30%	18.35%
10 Years	18.58%	50.48%	63.00%	69.81%	73.32%

# Important Notices and Disclaimers

## Notes

1. The benchmarks of each subsidiary category asset class are: (a) DM Equities: MSCI World Total Return Index; (b) Asia Pacific Equities: MSCI AC Asia Pacific Net Total Return USD Index; (c) Emerging Market Ex. Asia Equities: MSCI Emerging Markets Excluding Asia Index; (d) Global Bond: Bloomberg Barclays Global-Aggregate Total Return Index Value Unhedged USD; (e) Asia Bond: J.P. Morgan Asia Credit Index Core; (f) Global High Yield Bond: Bloomberg Barclays Global High Yield Total Return Index Value Unhedged; and (g) Money Market Equivalent: S&P U.S. Treasury Bill 3-6 Month Total Return Index. Data is sourced from Bloomberg.
2. There are short terms applied in the material such as DM= Developed market, EM= Emerging market, Asia Pac.= Asia Pacific, Cat.= Category, Exp.= Expected, Ref.=Reference, Sub.= Subsidiary, Equ.=Equivalent, p.a. = per annual. Please contact your relationship manager if clarification required.

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2. The 360 Reference Portfolios are only applicable for customers who have a valid Investor Risk Analysis record with the Bank. There are five Reference Portfolios according to investors' Risk Tolerance Levels ("RTL"), namely Conservation (RTL1), Moderate (RTL 2), Balanced (RTL 3), Growth (RTL 4) and Aggressive (RTL 5), which are for reference only and subject to change from time to time without prior notice. A Conservation Reference Portfolio (RTL 1) is a portfolio which volatility is low. The likelihood that the investment value may fall below the original investment amount is remote. A Moderate Reference Portfolio (RTL 2) is a portfolio which volatility is low-to-medium. The likelihood that the portfolio value may fall below the original investment amount is low. A Balanced Reference Portfolio (RTL 3) is a portfolio which volatility is medium. The likelihood that the portfolio value may fall in a great extent below the original investment amount is medium. A Growth Reference Portfolio (RTL 4) is a portfolio which volatility is medium-to-high. The likelihood that the portfolio value may fall substantially below the original investment amount is high. An Aggressive Reference Portfolio (RTL 5) is a portfolio which volatility is high. It is very likely that the portfolio value may fall substantially below the original investment amount.
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5. The Annualized Expected Return, Annualized Expected Volatility and Expected Cumulative Returns for 1 year, 3 years and 10 years are forecasts and calculated based on historical data of each asset class benchmark during a specified data period and the model, which are for reference only. Investment product performance can deviate significantly from benchmarks and past performance is not an indicator of future returns. Any forecast contained herein constitutes an opinion only and is not indicative of actual future returns, events or occurrences. Further, where performance information is presented this does not take into account the effect of fees, commissions or other charges.

### **Risk Disclosure Statement**

1. Investment involves risks. The prices of investment products fluctuate, sometimes dramatically and the worst case may result in loss of your entire investment amount. Past performance is no guide to its future performance. Investors should consider their own investment objectives, investment experience, financial situation and risk tolerance level before making any investment decision. Investors should carefully read the relevant offering documents, in particular the investment policies and the risk factors and latest financial results information and are advised to seek independent professional advice before making any investment decision.
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# Fabulous Wealth Management Offers #

## 1. Investment Rewards Offer – up to HK\$48,000 Cash Rewards

Eligible Customers<sup>1</sup> who subscribe or purchase Eligible Investment Products including: Investment Funds (excluding Money Market Fund), Bonds (excluding Retail Bond IPO), Equity-Linked Investments, Structured Notes, Currency-Linked Deposit (only including Currency-Linked Deposit which subscribed via inMotion) and Structured Deposit (Excluding Structured Deposit with a deposit period of less than six months) and reach accumulated transaction amounts, can enjoy up to HK\$48,000 cash rewards.

1) Only applicable to CITICfirst, CITICdiamond, Private Banking customers.

## 2. Securities Trading Offer – Get “Lifetime Stock Purchases Fee Waiver” through inMotion “Rewards Go!”<sup>2</sup>

From 1 January to 30 June 2025, customers can register “Lifetime Stock Purchases Fee Waiver” mission through inMotion “Rewards Go!” to enjoy Stock Purchases Fee Waiver on registration month! Starting from the registration month, if customers maintain no less than HKD100,000 in Eligible HKD Accounts<sup>^</sup> (excluding time deposits) at the end of each month, the Stock Purchases Fee Waiver for monthly can be extended continuously!

In addition, all customers with registered “Lifetime Stock Purchases Fee Waiver” mission can also enjoy fabulous offers on a series of securities services:

- Enjoy purchase fee waiver via designated channels on designated trading days on the 1st, 11th, 21st & 31st of each month\*
- Up to HKD10,000 cash reward for stocks transfer-in or deposit

2) This offer must meet specified conditions, including registering for “Lifetime Stock Purchases Fee Waiver” mission through inMotion “Reward Go!” and maintaining no less than HKD 100,000 in eligible HKD accounts (except time deposits) at the end of each month after registration for continuing the securities purchases fee waiver. Securities purchases transaction must be conducted through inMotion or inVest. Investment involves risks, and offers are subject to terms and conditions. Please visit the website for details and the relevant risk disclosure statement.

<sup>^</sup> Counting the sum of HKD amount in the Eligible HKD Accounts, i.e. the existing personal HKD Current/Savings/One Account Deposit accounts except time deposits.

\* Please refer to relevant terms and conditions on the definition of designated trading days and channels to be eligible for this offer.

## 3. Investment Funds Offers – Up to HK\$5,000 Subscription Fee Rebate<sup>3</sup>

Selected customer can enjoy up to HK\$5,000 subscription fee rebate for first Investment Funds subscription (excluding Money Market Fund) via inMotion and Internet Banking during promotion period.

3) Only applicable to customers who have not subscribed any Investment Funds during 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024. The offer cannot be used in conjunction with Investment Rewards Offers.

## 4. Investment Funds Offers – Up to HK\$99,000 Transfer in Cash Rewards

Enjoy HK\$300 Cash Rewards for every cumulative fund transfer-in of HK\$100,000 during promotion period.

## 5. Robo 360 Offer

From now until 31 December 2025, enjoy \$0 Advisory Service Fee for customers who maintain Robo 360 Account.

## 6. Foreign Exchange Offer – inMotion Exclusive up to 2% FX Cash Rebate

Customers who have completed designated FX transaction via inMotion of the bank during promotion period, will be entitled to up to 2% cash rebate.

Designated FX Transaction	Maximum Cash Rebate
CNY	CN¥ 200
EUR	€25
GBP	£20
JPY	JP¥ 4,000

# Unless otherwise indicated, promotion period: 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2025. Terms and conditions apply. Please visit branches for details or browse the following website for the promotional materials and terms and conditions:

Details for “Investment Rewards Offer – up to HK\$48,000 cash rewards” <https://www.www.cncbinternational.com/personal/promotions/integrated-investment/en/index.html#aum>

Details for “Securities Trading Offer” [https://www.cncbinternational.com/personal/promotions/securities\\_trading/en/index.html](https://www.cncbinternational.com/personal/promotions/securities_trading/en/index.html)

Details for “Investment Funds Offers” <https://www.cncbinternational.com/personal/promotions/integrated-investment/en/index.html#investmentfunds>

Details for “Robo 360 offer” [https://www.cncbinternational.com/\\_document/investment\\_service/robo360\\_tnc.pdf](https://www.cncbinternational.com/_document/investment_service/robo360_tnc.pdf)

Details for “Foreign Exchange Offer” <https://www.cncbinternational.com/personal/promotions/integrated-investment/en/index.html#fx>

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### Risk Disclosure Statement for Structured Notes ("SN", also known as Private Placement Note, "PPN")

(1) Structured Notes (SN) are structured products and complex investment products involving derivatives. You should exercise caution in relation to this product and seek independent professional advice when necessary before making investment decisions. (2) SN is unauthorized by any regulatory authority in Hong Kong. Relevant offering documents have not been reviewed by the SFC and you are advised to exercise caution on this product. (3) SN is only available to professional investors. (4) SN is not equivalent to time deposits or its substitute and provide no guarantee of return or yield on investment. It is NOT protected by the Deposit Protection Scheme in Hong Kong. (5) SN is NOT principal protected and is NOT secured by any asset or collateral. In the worst case scenario, you could lose all of your investment. (6) If you invest in SN, they are relying upon the creditworthiness of the issuer and, as the case may be, the guarantor and no other person. Investors may get nothing back if the issuer and/or the guarantor becomes insolvent or defaults in performing its obligations in relation to the product. (7) Limited market making arrangements are available and you may suffer a loss if you sell your SNs before expiry - SNs are designed to be held until expiry. If you try to sell your SNs before expiry, the amount you receive for each SN may be substantially less than your original investment amount. (8) Before making any investment decision, you should read and understand the relevant offering documents for details and the risks involved and carefully consider your financial situation, investment experience and investment objectives. You should seek independent professional advice if needed. (9) SN is unlisted and not covered by the Investor Compensation Fund. (10) The maximum potential gain may be limited. It is possible that you may not receive any potential distribution amount for the entire scheduled tenor of this product. You may, at settlement, receive physical delivery of reference asset(s). (11) Investing in SN is not the same as investing in the reference assets. During the investment period, you have no rights in the reference asset(s). Changes in the market price of the reference asset may not lead to a corresponding change in the market value of, or your potential payout of the product. (12) Potential and actual conflicts of interest may arise from the different roles played by the issuer and its subsidiaries and affiliates in connection with the Product, which may be adverse to your interest in the Product. (13) SN involves risks, including but not limited to, liquidity risk, market risk, exposure to market price movements in case of physical delivery of underlying stock, currency/exchange rate risk, risks relating to RMB, discretion of the calculation agent, potential conflict of interest, settlement disruption, early termination/redemption, hedging risk, no claim against any reference item and extraordinary events. (14) The price or value of the SN may move up or down, and may even become valueless. It is as likely that losses will be incurred rather than profit made as a result of subscribing for, buying and selling the SN. Past performance is not indicative of future performance.

### Risk Disclosure Statements for Foreign Exchange

Foreign currency investments are subject to exchange rate risk which may result in gain or loss. The fluctuation in the exchange rate of foreign currency may result in losses in the event that customer converts the foreign currency into HKD or other foreign currencies. Renminbi is not freely convertible at present. The actual conversion arrangement will depend on the restrictions prevailing at the relevant time.

### Risk Disclosure Statements for Currency Linked Deposit ("CLD")

(1) CLD is NOT equivalent to time deposit. It is NOT protected by the Deposit Protection Scheme in Hong Kong. (2) Investing in CLD is not the same as buying the Linked Currency directly. During the Deposit Period, you have no rights in the Linked Currency, and movements in the exchange rate of the Linked Currency may not lead to any corresponding change in your return on CLD. (3) CLD involves risks, including but not limited to derivatives risk, market risk, liquidity risk, credit risk of the Bank, currency risk, risks relating to Renminbi and risks of early termination by the Bank. (4) The maximum potential gain is limited. (5) CLD is NOT principal protected and you could lose all of your deposit amount. (6) Currency-Linked Deposit is not covered by the Hong Kong Investor Compensation Fund.

### Risk Disclosure Statements for Structured Deposit ("SD")

(1) Not a time deposit - This product is NOT equivalent to, nor should it be treated as a substitute for, time deposit. It is NOT a protected deposit and is NOT protected by the Deposit Protection Scheme in Hong Kong. (2) Principal protection at maturity ONLY - This product is principal protected ONLY IF this product is held to maturity. If this product is early terminated, you may suffer from a substantial loss due to the devaluation of the embedded derivative(s). (3) Derivatives risk - This product is embedded with a currency swap with Spot Rate and Forward Rate as prescribed in the Product Term Sheet. Generally, when buying this product, you may be subject to market risk, credit risk, liquidity risk, legal risk and settlement risk. (4) Credit risk of the Bank - This product is not secured by any collateral. When you invest in this product, you will be relying on the Bank's creditworthiness. If the Bank becomes insolvent or defaults on its obligations under this product, you can only claim as an unsecured creditor of the Bank. In the worst case, you could suffer a total loss of your deposit amount. (5) Maximum potential loss - This product is principal protected at Maturity ONLY. You may lose your entire deposit amount if the Bank defaults in performing its obligations or there has been a tremendous devaluation of the Settlement Currency you receive at maturity. (6) Limited potential gain - The maximum potential gain is limited to the interest payment to be determined by reference to the Interest Rate. (7) No secondary market - This product is not a listed security. There is no secondary market for you to sell this product prior to its maturity. (8) Not the same as buying the Underlying currency - Investing in this product is not the same as buying the Linked Currency directly. Changes in the market price of the Linked Currency may not lead to corresponding changes to the market value and/or the performance of this product. (9) Liquidity risk - This product is designed to be held till maturity. You do not have a right to request early termination of this product before maturity. (10) Currency risk - If the Settlement Currency is not your home currency, and you choose to convert it back to your home currency upon maturity, you may make a gain or loss due to exchange rate fluctuations. (11) Risks relating to Renminbi - Where the Settlement Currency is in Renminbi, you should note that the value of Renminbi against other foreign currencies fluctuates and will be affected by, amongst other things, the PRC government's control (for example, the PRC government regulates conversion between Renminbi and foreign currencies), which may adversely affect your return under this product when you convert Renminbi into your home currency. Renminbi is not freely convertible at present. The actual conversion arrangement will depend on the restrictions prevailing at the relevant time.

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