

Ghana ECONOMY Watch



Table 8: Bank of Ghana Prime Rates, Average Interbank Base Rates

Year/Month	BoG Prime Rate	Ave. interbank rates	Ave. DMB Base rates
Dec-2002	24.50	20.023	29.25
Dec-2003	21.50	17.67	29.00
Dec-2004	18.50	16.19	25.00
Dec-2005	15.50	10.23	21.45
Dec-2006	12.50	12.56	20.85
Dec-2007	13.50	11.98	18.77
Dec-2008	17.00	19.03	27.25
June-2009	18.50	22.47	30.52
Dec-2009	18.00	16.53	31.40
2010			
January	18.00	16.07	31.29
February	16.00	16.11	30.92
March	16.00	15.11	29.90
April	15.00	14.74	29.25
May	15.00	14.06	28.71
June	15.00	13.36	28.63
July	13.50	13.06	28.50
August	13.50	12.64	27.10
September	13.50	12.32	26.46
October	13.50	12.07	26.17
November	13.50	11.69	26.03
December	13.50	11.65	25.79
2011			
January	13.50	11.67	24.69
February	13.50	11.65	24.63
March	13.50	11.60	23.54
April	13.00	11.57	24.43
May	13.00	11.63	X
June	13.00	11.67	X

Source: Bank of Ghana Statistical Bulletins, 2009/2010

Note: X-Data not Available

Figures from September 2010 – June 2011 (Average Interbank Rates are authors calculation based on weekly rates from BoG website.)

Balance of Payments

The Balance of Payment (BOP) is a record of a country's transactions with the rest of the world in a specific time period, usually a year. It reflects all payments and liabilities to foreigners (debits) and all payments and obligations received from foreigners (credits). According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) "Balance of Payments" is a statistical statement that summarises transactions between residents and non-residents during a period. The BOP is determined by the country's exports and imports of goods, services, and financial capital, as well as financial transfers.

The BOP comprises the current account, the capital account, and the financial account. Together, these accounts balance in the sense that the sum of the entries is conceptually zero.

The Current Account

The current account is one of the two major components of the balance of payment, the other being the capital account. It is the sum of the balance of trade (export minus imports of goods and services), net factor income (such as interest and dividends) and net transfer payments (such as foreign aid).

Mathematically, the current account is expressed as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Current Account} &= \text{Balance of Trade} \\ &+ \text{Net Factor Income from abroad} \\ &+ \text{Net Unilateral Transfers from abroad} \end{aligned}$$

A current account surplus (or deficit) is the amount by which exports of goods and services plus inward transfers exceeds, or falls short of, imports of goods and services. A current account surplus increases a country's net foreign assets by the corresponding amount, and a current account deficit reduces the net foreign assets. It is called the current account because goods and services are generally consumed in the current period.

Capital Accounts

The capital account is a record of a country's inflows and outflows of payments and transfer of ownership of fixed assets (capital goods). The capital account records all transactions between a domestic and foreign resident that involves change of ownership of an asset. It is the net result of public and private international investment flowing in and out of a country. This includes foreign direct investment, portfolio investment (such as changes in holdings of stocks and bonds) and other investments (such as changes in holdings of loans, bank accounts, and currencies).

Overall Balance of Payment Account

This is the sum of the current account and the capital account. As stated above, the overall balance of payment is expected to balance out. In other words, the sum of the entries conceptually equals zero. Tables 9 and 10 give the summary of the annual balance of payment from 2008 to projected values for 2011 and the first quarter estimates for 2010 and 2011 respectively.

Table 9: Annual Balance of Payments (in millions of US Dollars)

	2008	2009	2010	2011
A. Current Account	-3,543.10	-1,598.50	-2,910.70	-2,341.40
Merchandise Exports	5,269.70	5,839.70	6,764.00	9,909.00
Cocoa	1,487.00	1,866.00	2,157.00	2,108.00
Gold	2,246.30	2,551.40	3,177.00	3,310.00
Timber	316.8	179.8	159.8	175.5
Petroleum				2,993.00
Others	1,219.70	1,242.50	1,270.20	1,322.50
Merchandise Imports	-10,268.50	-8,046.30	-10,485.00	-12,503.00
Non-oil	-7,911.80	-6,557.30	-8,398.00	-10,209.00
Oil	-2,356.80	-1,489.00	-2,087.00	-2,294.00
Trade Balance	-4,998.80	-2,206.60	-3,721.00	-2,594.00
Services (Net)	-497.2	-1,173.40	-905.7	-1,056.00
Income (Net)	-258.7	-296.5	-278.1	-1,238.00
Transfers (Net)	2,211.50	2,078.00	1,994.10	2,546.60
Capital & Financial Account	2,943.30	3,067.10	3,539.80	3,156.40
Direct Investment	1,211.60	1,677.80	1,978.70	1,983.00
Portfolio Investment	-49	-43.6	503.7	300
Other Investment	1,780.70	1,432.90	1,057.40	873.4
Net Errors and Omissions	-340.9	-309.8	-314.1	0
Overall Balance (BOP)	-940.8	1,158.80	315	815

Source: Bank of Ghana Monetary Policy Report Vol.4 No.4/2010 Pg 15

Table 10: First Quarter Balance of Payments (in millions of US Dollars)

	2010	2011
A. Current Account	220.2	565.8
Merchandise Exports	1,900	3,000
Cocoa	682.5	859.4
Gold	787	1.2
Timber	X	X
Petroleum	-	484.2
Merchandise Imports	2,500	3,300
Non-oil	2,000	2,700
Oil	493.5	614.4
Merchandise Trade Deficit	584.2	248.6
Capital & Financial Account	953.5	229.6
Overall Balance (BOP)	152	154.2

Source: Bank of Ghana Monetary Policy Committee Press Statement (May 2011)
Note: X-Data not Available

Government Spending or the Fiscal Balance

Governments generate revenue through taxation and grants. Governments also obtain some amount of revenue from non-tax sources such as fees and fines imposed at the courts. The revenues raised in a particular year are used in financing government expenditures programmed for the year. In other words, in implementing its budget, government is primarily involved in raising revenue and using the revenue to finance expenditures.

If in a particular year, the revenue raised is exactly the same as the expenditure incurred, we say the government budget is balanced. If on the other hand, government revenue exceeds its expenditure in a particular year, the budget is said to have recorded a surplus. A budget deficit occurs if government revenue is less than its expenditure. Either way there is fiscal imbalance. Fiscal surplus is when revenue exceeds expenditure. Fiscal deficit occurs when revenue is less than expenditure.

Table 11: Government Revenue & Expenditure for First Quarter 2010 & 2011 (in millions of GH¢)

	2010	2011	2011
	Q1	Q1	Estimate
Tax Revenue	1,146.80	1,601.50	7,683.00
% of GDP	2.6	3	14.4
Non-Tax Revenue	21.5	46.3	537.5
Others	117.7	100	-
Grants	305.2	139.2	517.4
% of GDP	0.7	0.3	1
Total Domestic Revenue	1,286.00	1,747.80	8,220.60
% of GDP	2.9	3.3	15.4
Total Revenue & Grants	1,591.20	1,886.90	8,738.00
% of GDP	3.6	3.5	16.4
Total Expenditure	1,930.10	2,754.30	9,433.40
% of GDP	4.3	5.2	17.7
OVERALL BALANCE (commitment)	-338.8	-867.4	-695.4
% of GDP	-0.8	-1.6	-1.3
OVERALL BALANCE (Cash Incl. Divestiture)	-621.4	-828.1	-962.7
% of GDP	-1.4	-1.6	-1.8
Wages & Salaries, Pensions & SSP	702.9	869.6	4,472.80
% of GDP	1.6	1.6	8.4

Source: Bank of Ghana Monetary Policy Report (2011)

Note: Q1-1st Quarter

International Reserves

These are assets of the central bank held in different reserve currencies, mostly the Dollar and to a lesser extent the Euro, Pound and the Yen. In a flexible exchange rate system, official international reserve assets allow a central bank to purchase the domestic currency, which is considered a liability for the central bank (since it prints the money itself as IOUs). This action can stabilise the value of the domestic currency. In essence, buying and selling official international reserves in one way the central influences the exchange rate.

In Ghana, international reserves are mostly held in the US Dollar. The international reserves position of the country is often expressed in terms of months of import cover. That is, the number of months of imports reserves can cover.

As of the end of April 2011, the gross international reserves was US\$4.9 billion which represents 3.8 months of import cover.

Conclusion

In this newsletter, we have explained in the simplest language possible some of the technical jargons often used to describe the economy and its performance. We have also provided data on inflation, the exchange rates, and the interest rates, the balance of payment, and government revenue and spending as well as the international reserve position of the country. We encourage users to provide feedback in case any issue is not so clear to them.

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