

# Policy Considerations

## Highlights of the May MPC meeting

- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) maintained the OPR at 3.00% at the January and March 2024 MPC meetings, and most recently also at the May 2024 MPC meeting.
- The MPC remains vigilant to ongoing developments to inform the assessment on the outlook of domestic inflation and growth.

## Monetary policy remains supportive of the economy

At the January and March 2024 MPC meetings, and also at the most recent meeting in May, the MPC maintained the OPR at 3.00%.

At the May meeting, the MPC assessed that the global economy continues to expand amid resilient labour markets in some countries and continued recovery in global trade. Looking ahead, global growth is expected to be sustained, as headwinds from tight monetary policy and reduced fiscal support will be cushioned by positive labour market conditions and moderating inflation. Global trade is expected to strengthen further as the global tech upcycle gains momentum. While global headline and core inflation continued to edge downwards in recent months, the pace for disinflation has slowed in some advanced economies. This increases the prospect of interest rates to remain high for longer, particularly in the US.

The growth outlook remains subject to downside risks, mainly from further escalation of geopolitical tensions, higher-than-anticipated inflation outturns, and volatility in global financial markets.

For the Malaysian economy, the latest indicators as at the May MPC meeting point towards higher economic activity in the first quarter of 2024, driven by resilient domestic expenditure and a positive turnaround in exports. Going forward, the recovery in exports is expected to gather momentum supported by the global tech upcycle and continued strength in non-electrical and electronics goods. Tourist arrivals and spending are also poised to rise further. Continued employment and wage growth remain supportive of household spending. Investment activity would be supported by the ongoing progress of multi-year projects in both the private and public sectors, the implementation of catalytic initiatives under the national master plans, as well as the higher realisation of approved investments. The growth outlook is subject to downside risks from weaker-than-expected external demand and larger declines in commodity production. Meanwhile, upside risks to growth mainly emanate from greater spillover from the tech upcycle, more robust tourism activity, and faster implementation of existing and new projects.

Headline and core inflation averaged 1.7% and 1.8% in the first quarter of 2024 respectively. Looking forward, inflation in 2024 is expected to remain moderate, broadly reflecting stable demand conditions and contained cost

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pressures. The outlook for the rest of the year is dependent on the implementation of domestic policy on subsidies and price controls, as well as global commodity prices and financial market developments. After incorporating the potential impact of subsidy rationalisation, headline and core inflation are projected to average between 2%–3.5% and 2%–3% for the year respectively.

The ringgit currently does not reflect Malaysia's economic fundamentals and growth prospects. External factors, namely shifting expectations of major economies' monetary policy paths and ongoing geopolitical tensions, have led to heightened volatility in both capital flows and exchange rates across the region, including the ringgit. The coordinated initiatives by the Government and BNM with the Government-Linked Companies (GLCs) and

Government-Linked Investment Companies (GLICs), and corporate engagements have gained further traction, cushioning the pressure on the ringgit. BNM will continue to manage risks arising from heightened financial market volatility. Over the medium term, domestic structural reforms will provide more enduring support to the ringgit.

At the current OPR level, the MPC deemed that the monetary policy stance remains supportive of the economy and is consistent with the current assessment of the inflation and growth prospects. The MPC remains vigilant to ongoing developments to inform the assessment on the outlook of domestic inflation and growth. The MPC will ensure that the monetary policy stance remains conducive to sustainable economic growth amid price stability.