



BANK OF CANADA
BANQUE DU CANADA

Bank of Canada maintains overnight rate target at 1 per cent

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Relations

Ottawa, Ontario

October 25, 2011

The Bank of Canada today announced that it is maintaining its target for the overnight rate at 1 per cent. The Bank Rate is correspondingly 1 1/4 per cent and the deposit rate is 3/4 per cent.

The global economy has slowed markedly as several downside risks to the projection outlined in the Bank's July *Monetary Policy Report* (MPR) have been realized. Financial market volatility has increased and there has been a generalized retrenchment from risk-taking across global markets. The combination of ongoing deleveraging by banks and households, increased fiscal austerity and declining business and consumer confidence is expected to restrain growth across the advanced economies. The Bank now expects that the euro area—where these dynamics are most acute—will experience a brief recession. The Bank's base-case scenario assumes that the euro-area crisis will be contained, although this assumption is clearly subject to downside risks. In the United States, diminished household confidence, tighter financial conditions and increased fiscal drag are expected to result in weak real GDP growth through the first half of 2012, before growth strengthens gradually thereafter. In Japan, reconstruction activity is projected to boost growth over 2012-13, although Japan's economy will be constrained by reduced global activity and the sharp appreciation of the yen.

Growth in China and other emerging-market economies is projected to moderate to a more sustainable pace in response to weaker external demand and the lagged effects of past policy tightening. These developments, combined with recent declines in commodity prices, are expected to dampen global inflationary pressures.

The outlook for the Canadian economy has weakened since July, with the significantly less favourable external environment affecting Canada through financial, confidence and trade channels. Although Canadian growth rebounded in the third quarter with the unwinding of temporary factors, underlying economic momentum has slowed and is expected to remain modest through the middle of next year. Domestic demand is expected to remain the principal driver of growth over the projection horizon, though at a more subdued pace than previously anticipated. Household expenditures are now projected to grow relatively modestly as lower commodity prices and heightened volatility in financial markets weigh on the incomes, wealth and confidence of Canadian households. Business fixed investment is still expected to grow solidly in response to very stimulative financial conditions and heightened competitive pressures, although it will be dampened by the weaker and more uncertain global economic environment. Net exports are expected to remain a source of weakness, owing to sluggish foreign demand and ongoing competitiveness challenges, including the persistent strength of the Canadian dollar.

Overall, the Bank expects that growth in Canada will be slow through mid-2012 before picking up as the global economic environment improves, uncertainty dissipates and confidence increases. The Bank projects that the economy will expand by 2.1 per cent in 2011, 1.9 per cent in 2012, and 2.9 per cent in 2013.

The weaker economic outlook implies greater and more persistent economic slack than previously anticipated, with the Canadian economy now expected to return to full capacity by the end of 2013. As a result, core inflation is expected to be slightly softer than previously expected, declining through 2012 before returning to 2 percent by the end of 2013. The projection for total CPI inflation has also been revised down, reflecting the recent reversal of earlier sharp increases in world energy prices as well as modestly weaker core inflation. Total CPI inflation is expected to trough around 1 per cent by the middle of 2012 before rising with core inflation to the two per cent target by the end of 2013, as excess supply in the economy is slowly absorbed.

Several significant upside and downside risks are present in the inflation outlook for Canada. Overall, the Bank judges that these risks are roughly balanced over the projection horizon.

Reflecting all of these factors, the Bank has decided to maintain the target for the overnight rate at 1 per cent. With the target interest rate near historic lows and the financial system functioning well, there is considerable monetary policy stimulus in Canada. The Bank will continue to monitor carefully economic and financial developments in the Canadian and global economies, together with the evolution of risks, and set monetary policy consistent with achieving the 2 per cent inflation target over the medium term.

Information note

A full update of the Bank's outlook for the economy and inflation, including risks to the projection, will be published in the MPR on 26 October 2011. The next scheduled date for announcing the overnight rate target is 6 December 2011.
Content Type(s): **Press, Press releases**