


ACI Oman Joins the Global ACIFMA Community: A Milestone for the Sultanate's Financial Market

We are proud to announce that ACIFMA Oman, under the sponsorship of CBFS (College of Banking and Financial Studies) has officially joined the global ACI FMA (Financial Markets Association) network, becoming the 61st country to be affiliated under the ACIFMA umbrella on 18th June 2025.

This historic milestone was formalized during the ACI FMA Council Meeting held in Paris, where our membership received unanimous approval. It reflects not only a recognition of Oman's growing footprint in the global financial landscape but also a collective regional aspiration to elevate professionalism, governance, and connectivity across Middle Eastern markets.

Joining the ACIFMA community provides Oman with a unique platform to collaborate with a network of seasoned professionals and institutions dedicated to enhancing standards in ethics, conduct, and education in financial markets. For ACI Oman, this is more than an affiliation—it is a commitment to actively contribute to the advancement of market best practices, capacity building, and regional integration.

Oman's financial market has witnessed steady transformation over the past decade, particularly through regulatory reforms, the expansion of Islamic finance, and a growing focus on digital innovation and sustainability. The Central Bank of Oman and the Financial Services Authority have both taken progressive steps to enhance transparency, market infrastructure, and investor confidence. Yet, challenges remain—including deepening liquidity, broadening investor participation, and fostering talent that meets the evolving demands of modern financial markets. As of May 2025, Oman hosts 20 licensed banks, including three specialized institutions, with total deposits reaching approximately USD 84 billion—reflecting an annual growth of 7.9%. Total lending also saw an 8% year-on-year increase, rising to USD 87 billion.

In this context, ACI Oman's alignment with ACIFMA comes at a crucial time. Through its focus on professional development, code of conduct training, and international engagement, ACI Oman aims to play a pivotal role in supporting the next phase of market maturity and integration.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the members of the ACIFMA community for their support and look forward to building strong, collaborative relationships that drive excellence across borders.

**Suad Al Balushi**
**ACI FMA Oman President**

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Ghana's financial markets are navigating a delicate but encouraging phase of recovery and repositioning. Following the 2022 debt default and the subsequent Domestic Debt Exchange Programme (DDEP), we are witnessing gradual improvements in macroeconomic stability, underpinned by stronger fundamentals and proactive policy measures.

Ghana, the largest gold producer in Africa, has seen its currency, the cedi, appreciate by over 30% this year against major currencies, making it the world's top-performing currency. This has been supported by an improved trade surplus, rising gold prices, and a weaker US dollar. Gold, which remains Ghana's largest export, has seen prices surge beyond $3,400 per ounce, providing a critical buffer for foreign exchange reserves, which now stand at $10.7 billion. Interestingly, the migration of cocoa workers into gold mining, driven by better prices and persistent crop diseases, has also boosted activity in local banking channels and contributed to liquidity.

On the monetary front, the Bank of Ghana has maintained its hawkish stance, keeping the policy rate at 28.0% to anchor inflation expectations. Inflation has cooled to 18.40% as of May 2025, reaching the lowest point since February 2022, mainly supported by a stronger currency, despite underlying pressures reflected in consumer prices. Adjustments to reserve requirements have also been implemented to manage liquidity more efficiently.

Despite a moderation in headline GDP growth, business and consumer confidence have improved, aided by currency stability, enhanced market sentiment, and ongoing fiscal reforms. Ghana's improved credit ratings and a stronger external position have restored some investor confidence, but challenges such as secondary market liquidity, compressed treasury yields (over 1300 basis points decline year-to-date), and shallow corporate debt markets remain.

ACI Ghana continues to be instrumental in strengthening market structure, promoting ethical conduct, and building technical expertise across market participants. Our efforts focus on enhancing transparency, fostering repo market development, and supporting financial market education aligned with international best practices.

Ghana's journey toward deeper, more resilient capital markets is far from complete, but with collaborative efforts among regulators, industry players, and associations like ACI Ghana, the foundation is being laid for sustained growth, improved liquidity, and greater integration with global financial markets.

**Lawrence Osilaja Boampong**
**ACI FMA Ghana President**


HKFXC Update for H1 2025

The USDHKD spot rate began the year at 7.77 and appreciated steadily over the first four months, reaching the strong-side convertibility undertaking level of 7.75 in early May. The strength in HKD was supported by several key market developments from January to April.

Firstly, global capital flows increasingly diversified into Asian currencies amid rising global macroeconomic uncertainties, such as U.S. trade policy headlines. These dynamics supported regional FX markets, including the HKD.

Secondly, the Hong Kong stock market outperformed global peers this year. The Hang Seng Index rose from 20,060 at the start of the year to 22,119 by the end of April, driven by the narrative that AI is revaluing China's technology-related assets. Average daily turnover in the Hong Kong stock market reached HK$242.7 billion in Q1 2025 — an 84% increase compared to the 2024 full-year average — indicating strong investor participation and capital inflows.

In addition, Hong Kong's IPO market remained active. During Q1 2025, IPO fundraising totaled HK$17.7 billion, nearly three times more than the amount raised in the same period last year and the highest first-quarter total since 2021. This was driven not only by a 25% increase in the number of completed deals but also by a 195% growth in average deal size. A strong IPO pipeline further reinforced positive investor sentiment. Seasonal demand for HKD also increased in Q2 as listed companies prepared for dividend payouts.

These combined factors led the USDHKD spot rate to reach the strong-side convertibility limit of 7.75 in early May. In line with the Linked Exchange Rate System, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) intervened by selling HK$129.4 billion and buying US$16.7 billion between May 3 and May 6. This liquidity injection increased the aggregate balance — a key measure of interbank liquidity — from approximately HK$40 billion to over HK$170 billion. As a result, local funding costs fell significantly. The three-month HIBOR dropped from 4.2039 percent at the beginning of the year to 1.708 percent by the end of May. This easing environment supports local business financing and reduces mortgage burdens for households.

The interest rate differential — measured by the spread between 1-month HIBOR and 1-month Term SOFR — widened notably following the HKMA's intervention, reaching approximately 370 basis points by end-May, compared to 40 to 60 basis points earlier in the year. This has increased the appeal of carry trades and contributed to the recent appreciation of the USDHKD spot rate, which has edged closer to 7.85, the weak-side convertibility level.

While external uncertainties remain, the HKD market has continued to show resilience, and the HKMA has demonstrated its firm commitment to the Linked Exchange Rate System. With improved market liquidity, overall interbank activities have remained smooth and orderly.

**Chordio Chan**
**Treasury Markets Association Chief Executive Officer**

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One of the major challenges when talking about Monaco as a financial place is the foreign misconception especially on the economic front. Contrary to the widespread beliefs Monaco is not just a seaside destination, home to glamourous jet-set and ultra-high net worth individuals.

Beyond the glitter, Monaco is a thriving economy worth billions of euros with a steady 5% annual growth in the last decades. In 2024 the state budget surplus neared 200 million euros, employment was up 5.5% and GNP per capita reached 250,000 dollars.

Monaco is a secure place for people, goods and data, strategically located in the heart of Europe. Its political stability, high quality of life and prestigious human network coupled with an attractive tax policy and agile working environment make Monaco appealing to many entrepreneurs and investors who choose to settle down and coordinate their international business from the Principality.

The Government and the Princely family have for decades invested in topics that have now become mainstream like green economy, ocean preservation and ecological transition as well as digital transition. Monaco is on the forefront of innovation into these areas and attracts many young tech entrepreneurs.

In such an environment, the banking and financial industries are key elements. They play a proactive and unique role in this dynamic by connecting entrepreneurs with both local and international networks. Monaco counts 24 banks and 70 asset managers; the banking sector is well anchored and stable, 2 banks having recently celebrated their 100th anniversary in the Principality. The activity remains focussed on private banking and wealth management, but the financial industry has to keep the pace up to match the unique and very eclectic needs of its clients and entrepreneurs.

The FATF decision to put Monaco on its 'grey list' on spring 2024 naturally raised fears about bank departures, capital flight or and activity slowdown. In fact, none of the above materialised so far. Assets deposited in the Principality's banks increased by 10% in 2024 and three new asset managers opened offices in Monaco including one of the largest alternative investment funds. Caution and intense regulatory activity will remain the watchwords in 2025 and Monaco is determined to continue its compliance efforts and discussions with international supervisors. However, for the time being, the grey listing does not seem to hamper the confidence in the Monegasque financial centre.

**Sophie Gest**
**ACI Monaco President**

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