

Singapore: Core inflation turns negative

Negative core inflation is another reason for the Monetary Authority of Singapore to join the global central bank easing wave



Source: Shutterstock

-0.1%

Core inflation in February

Year-on-year

Lower than expected

Services take hit from Covid-19 spread

Singapore released consumer price data for February showing a slowdown in headline inflation to 0.3% year-on-year from 0.8% in the previous month and in core inflation to -0.1% from 0.3%. While the headline matched our forecast, the core was weaker than our expectation for it to remain unchanged at 0.3% (consensus 0.4% and 0.1%, respectively). The slump was seen across most CPI components as the spread of Covid-19 weakened consumer spending. But heavyweight items, such as housing and transport, continued to be the key drags.

What was the cause of negative core inflation? Most services except communication. Transport

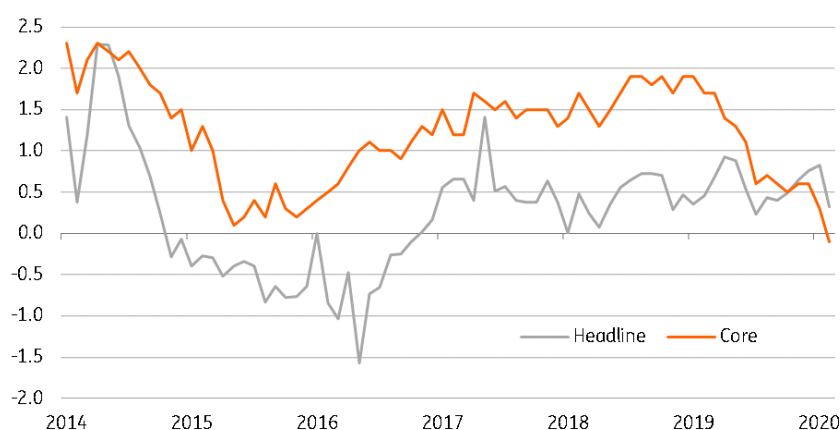
(both private and public) and recreation and holiday-related CPI components stood out for their sharp declines. But that's not all. Food and fuel and utility prices also played a part in dragging down the core measure.

Negative price trend to persist

It won't be too long before headline inflation follows the core rate into negative territory. It could be as early as March, in our view. Moreover, with increasingly weak economic activity leading to potential job losses, we may see negative inflation becoming the trend for the rest of the year. We recently cut our annual inflation forecast for 2020 to 0.2% from 0.8%. We don't think this is the last downgrade.

We also believe a downgrade of the official view of both headline and core inflation this year, in a 0.5-1.5% range, is imminent.

Consumer price inflation (% year-on-year)



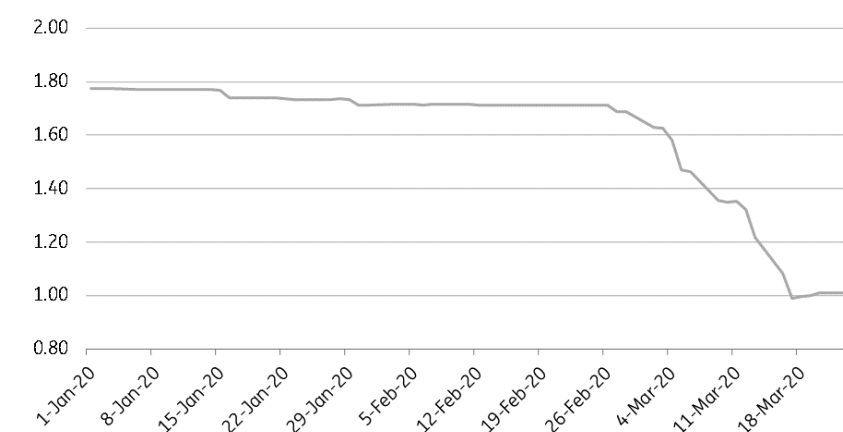
Source: Bloomberg, ING

Another push for the MAS easing

Negative core inflation is another driver for the Monetary Authority of Singapore to ease monetary policy in order to support the economy, which is bracing for recession. Although the MAS has yet to verbalise its easing stance, the accelerated depreciation of the Singapore dollar Nominal Effective Exchange Rate suggests that the central bank has been accommodating easing within the existing S\$-NEER policy band. This is further reflected by a near-halving of interbank rates this month.

We continue to expect MAS to officially re-centre the S\$-NEER policy band at a lower level, with a zero rate of appreciation, anytime from now until the scheduled policy review in mid-April. The earlier the better.

3-month Singapore Interbank offer rate (SIBOR)



Source: Bloomberg, ING

Author

Amrita Naik Nimbalkar

Junior Economist, Global Macro

amrita.naik.nimbalkar@ing.com

Mateusz Sutowicz

Senior Economist, Poland

mateusz.sutowicz@ing.pl

Alissa Lefebvre

Economist

alissa.lefebvre@ing.com

Deepali Bhargava

Regional Head of Research, Asia-Pacific

Deepali.Bhargava@ing.com

Ruben Dewitte

Economist

+32495364780

ruben.dewitte@ing.com

Kinga Havasi

Economic research trainee

kinga.havasi@ing.com

Marten van Garderen

Consumer Economist, Netherlands

marten.van.garderen@ing.com

David Havrlant

Chief Economist, Czech Republic
420 770 321 486
david.havrlant@ing.com

Sander Burgers
Senior Economist, Dutch Housing
sander.burgers@ing.com

Lynn Song
Chief Economist, Greater China
lynn.song@asia.ing.com

Michiel Tukker
Senior European Rates Strategist
michiel.tukker@ing.com

Michal Rubaszek
Senior Economist, Poland
michal.rubaszek@ing.pl

This is a test author

Stefan Posea
Economist, Romania
tiberiu-stefan.posea@ing.com

Marine Leleux
Sector Strategist, Financials
marine.leleux2@ing.com

Jesse Norcross
Senior Sector Strategist, Real Estate
jesse.norcross@ing.com

Teise Stellema
Research Assistant, Energy Transition
teise.stellema@ing.com

Diederik Stadig
Sector Economist, TMT & Healthcare
diederik.stadig@ing.com

Diogo Gouveia
Sector Economist
diogo.duarte.vieira.de.gouveia@ing.com

Marine Leleux

Sector Strategist, Financials
marine.leleux2@ing.com

Ewa Manthey
Commodities Strategist
ewa.manthey@ing.com

ING Analysts

James Wilson
EM Sovereign Strategist
James.wilson@ing.com

Sophie Smith
Digital Editor
sophie.smith@ing.com

Frantisek Taborsky
EMEA FX & FI Strategist
frantisek.taborsky@ing.com

Adam Antoniak
Senior Economist, Poland
adam.antoniak@ing.pl

Min Joo Kang
Senior Economist, South Korea and Japan
min.joo.kang@asia.ing.com

Coco Zhang
ESG Research
coco.zhang@ing.com

Jan Frederik Slijkerman
Senior Sector Strategist, TMT
jan.frederik.slijkerman@ing.com

Katinka Jongkind
Senior Economist, Services and Leisure
Katinka.Jongkind@ing.com

Marina Le Blanc
Sector Strategist, Financials
Marina.Le.Blanc@ing.com

Samuel Abettan
Junior Economist

samuel.abettan@ing.com

Franziska Biehl

Senior Economist, Germany

Franziska.Marie.Biehl@ing.de

Rebecca Byrne

Senior Editor and Supervisory Analyst

rebecca.byrne@ing.com

Mirjam Bani

Sector Economist, Commercial Real Estate & Public Sector (Netherlands)

mirjam.bani@ing.com

Timothy Rahill

Credit Strategist

timothy.rahill@ing.com

Leszek Kasek

Senior Economist, Poland

leszek.kasek@ing.pl

Oleksiy Soroka, CFA

Senior High Yield Credit Strategist

oleksiy.soroka@ing.com

Antoine Bouvet

Head of European Rates Strategy

antoine.bouvet@ing.com

Jeroen van den Broek

Global Head of Sector Research

jeroen.van.den.broek@ing.com

Edse Dantuma

Senior Sector Economist, Industry and Healthcare

edse.dantuma@ing.com

Francesco Pesole

FX Strategist

francesco.pesole@ing.com

Rico Luman

Senior Sector Economist, Transport and Logistics

Rico.Luman@ing.com

Jurjen Witteveen

Sector Economist

jurjen.witteveen@ing.com

Dmitry Dolgin

Chief Economist, CIS

dmitry.dolgin@ing.de

Nicholas Mapa

Senior Economist, Philippines

nicholas.antonio.mapa@asia.ing.com

Egor Fedorov

Senior Credit Analyst

egor.fedorov@ing.com

Sebastian Franke

Consumer Economist

sebastian.franke@ing.de

Gerben Hieminga

Senior Sector Economist, Energy

gerben.hieminga@ing.com

Nadège Tillier

Head of Corporates Sector Strategy

nadege.tillier@ing.com

Charlotte de Montpellier

Senior Economist, France and Switzerland

charlotte.de.montpellier@ing.com

Laura Straeter

Behavioural Scientist

+31(0)611172684

laura.Straeter@ing.com

Valentin Tataru

Chief Economist, Romania

valentin.tataru@ing.com

James Smith

Developed Markets Economist, UK

james.smith@ing.com

Suvi Platerink Kosonen

Senior Sector Strategist, Financials

suvi.platerink-kosonen@ing.com

Thijs Geijer

Senior Sector Economist, Food & Agri
thijs.geijer@ing.com

Maurice van Sante
Senior Economist Construction & Team Lead Sectors
maurice.van.sante@ing.com

Marcel Klok
Senior Economist, Netherlands
marcel.klok@ing.com

Piotr Poplawski
Senior Economist, Poland
piotr.poplawski@ing.pl

Paolo Pizzoli
Senior Economist, Italy, Greece
paolo.pizzoli@ing.com

Marieke Blom
Chief Economist and Global Head of Research
marieke.blom@ing.com

Raoul Leering
Senior Macro Economist
raoul.leering@ing.com

Maarten Leen
Head of Global IFRS9 ME Scenarios
maarten.leen@ing.com

Maureen Schuller
Head of Financials Sector Strategy
Maureen.Schuller@ing.com

Warren Patterson
Head of Commodities Strategy
Warren.Patterson@asia.ing.com

Rafal Benecki
Chief Economist, Poland
rafal.benecki@ing.pl

Philippe Ledent
Senior Economist, Belgium, Luxembourg
philippe.ledent@ing.com

Peter Virovacz

Senior Economist, Hungary
peter.virovacz@ing.com

Inga Fechner
Senior Economist, Germany, Global Trade
inga.fechner@ing.de

Dimitry Fleming
Senior Data Analyst, Netherlands
Dimitry.Fleming@ing.com

Ciprian Dascalu
Chief Economist, Romania
+40 31 406 8990
ciprian.dascalu@ing.com

Muhammet Mercan
Chief Economist, Turkey
muhammet.mercan@ingbank.com.tr

Iris Pang
Chief Economist, Greater China
iris.pang@asia.ing.com

Sophie Freeman
Writer, Group Research
+44 20 7767 6209
Sophie.Freeman@uk.ing.com

Padhraic Garvey, CFA
Regional Head of Research, Americas
padhraic.garvey@ing.com

James Knightley
Chief International Economist, US
james.knightley@ing.com

Tim Condon
Asia Chief Economist
+65 6232-6020

Martin van Vliet
Senior Interest Rate Strategist
+31 20 563 8801
martin.van.vliet@ing.com

Karol Pogorzelski
Senior Economist, Poland

Karol.Pogorzelski@ing.pl

Carsten Brzeski

Global Head of Macro

carsten.brzeski@ing.de

Viraj Patel

Foreign Exchange Strategist

+44 20 7767 6405

viraj.patel@ing.com

Owen Thomas

Global Head of Editorial Content

+44 (0) 207 767 5331

owen.thomas@ing.com

Bert Colijn

Chief Economist, Netherlands

bert.colijn@ing.com

Peter Vanden Houte

Chief Economist, Belgium, Luxembourg, Eurozone

peter.vandenhoute@ing.com

Benjamin Schroeder

Senior Rates Strategist

benjamin.schroeder@ing.com

Chris Turner

Global Head of Markets and Regional Head of Research for UK & CEE

chris.turner@ing.com

Gustavo Rangel

Chief Economist, LATAM

+1 646 424 6464

gustavo.rangel@ing.com

Carlo Cocuzzo

Economist, Digital Finance

+44 20 7767 5306

carlo.cocuzzo@ing.com