

Head 96 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: OVERSEAS ECONOMIC AND TRADE OFFICES

Controlling officer: the Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development will account for expenditure under this Head.

Estimate 2024–25 **\$601.5m**

Establishment ceiling 2024–25 (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 205 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2024 and as at 31 March 2025..... **\$142.7m**

In addition, there will be an estimated 23 directorate posts as at 31 March 2024 and as at 31 March 2025.

Controlling Officer's Report

Programmes

Programme (1) Commercial Relations
Programme (2) Public Relations
Programme (3) Investment Promotion

These programmes contribute to Policy Area 6: Commerce and Industry (Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development).

Detail

Programme (1): Commercial Relations

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	208.6	281.2	196.8 (–30.0%)	285.1 (+44.9%)
				(or +1.4% on 2023–24 Original)

Aim

2 The aim is to represent and promote Hong Kong's trading and commercial interests outside Hong Kong.

Brief Description

3 The overseas Economic and Trade Offices (ETOs) in Bangkok, Berlin, Brussels, Dubai, Geneva, Jakarta, London, New York, San Francisco, Singapore, Sydney, Tokyo, Toronto and Washington D.C. identify, develop and cultivate contacts with host governments, represent Hong Kong at international trade organisations, and maintain liaison with other governments and organisations in order to further Hong Kong's trade and economic interests. They monitor and report on developments which are likely to affect such interests, discuss with their host and other governments specific trade and economic issues, support senior officers' overseas visits, and promote the business opportunities arising from the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement, Hong Kong's participation in the Belt and Road Initiative and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area development.

4 The key performance measures in respect of commercial relations are:

Indicators

	2022 (Actual)#	2023 (Actual)#	2024 (Estimate)#
meetings on trade-related matters attended.....	2 755	3 524	3 540
visits to host governments and trade organisations.....	938	1 186	1 280
seminars, exhibitions and workshops			
organised	257	341	380
participated.....	932	1 133	1 175
public speeches given.....	332	463	470
media interviews/briefings given	312	491	550
circulars/newsletters/press releases issued.....	2 297	2 597	2 645

Figures also cover events in virtual form.

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Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

5 During 2024–25, the overseas ETOs will continue to promote Hong Kong’s trade and commercial interests, including countering protectionism in Hong Kong’s major markets, as well as representing Hong Kong and providing support to the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau and, as appropriate, other bureaux and departments on issues of special interests on the bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral fronts. The Dedicated Teams for Attracting Businesses and Talents set up under the ETOs will continue to provide support to the Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises and Hong Kong Talent Engage.

Programme (2): Public Relations

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	156.9	214.0	147.3 (–31.2%)	214.0 (+45.3%)
				(or same as 2023–24 Original)

Aim

6 The aim is to promote Hong Kong as a trusted trading partner and a premier location for doing business.

Brief Description

7 The overseas ETOs monitor and report on reactions to events in Hong Kong. They update overseas interlocutors on developments in Hong Kong, organise publicity and public relations activities for Hong Kong in the host countries or regions under their purview, liaise with Hong Kong enterprises and people, and provide a comprehensive information and enquiry service about Hong Kong.

8 The key performance measures in respect of public relations are:

Indicators

	2022 (Actual)#	2023 (Actual)#	2024 (Estimate)#
call on senior government officials/organisations.....	1 201	1 309	1 420
public relations functions/events (including cultural functions/events)			
organised	637	825	920
participated.....	1 236	1 533	1 570
newsletters, pamphlets, press releases issued	2 341	2 641	2 725
no. of visitors assisted	1 570	2 851Ψ	1 710
public speeches given.....	406	528	530
media interviews/briefings given	323	502	550
enquiries handled	13 102	14 380Ψ	13 460

Figures also cover events in virtual form.

Ψ In 2023, there was a significant increase in demands for assistance from London ETO regarding applications for Certificates of No Criminal Conviction.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

9 During 2024–25, the overseas ETOs will continue to step up publicity and public relations efforts and launch promotional campaigns to enhance Hong Kong’s international image, and strengthen collaboration with other Hong Kong overseas agencies in developing strategies for city branding and publicity.

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Programme (3): Investment Promotion

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	75.6	101.0	70.5 (–30.2%)	102.4 (+45.2%)
				(or +1.4% on 2023–24 Original)

Aim

10 The aim is to attract foreign direct investment to Hong Kong and to promote Hong Kong’s many advantages as a regional hub and the preferred business location in Asia.

Brief Description

11 In close collaboration with Invest Hong Kong, the overseas ETOs promote the attractiveness of Hong Kong as an international financial and business centre and provide assistance and support to overseas companies to establish or expand operations in Hong Kong.

12 The key performance measures in respect of investment promotion are:

Indicators

	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Estimate)
new projects generated ^λ	220	278	280
projects completed [¶]	91	124	140

^λ New projects with the potential of becoming completed projects in the coming 18 months. The figure reflects the investment promotion efforts in a particular year, discounting projects carried forward from previous years.

[¶] Investment projects each resulting in an overseas company setting up or undergoing a significant expansion in Hong Kong with the assistance of Invest Hong Kong.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

13 During 2024–25, the overseas ETOs (except the Geneva and Washington ETOs) and their Dedicated Teams for Attracting Businesses and Talents will work closely with Invest Hong Kong and the Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises to step up their efforts in attracting overseas companies, especially strategic enterprises, to set up and expand their operations in Hong Kong and access opportunities in the Mainland and elsewhere in Asia.

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ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

	2022–23 (Actual) (\$m)	2023–24 (Original) (\$m)	2023–24 (Revised) (\$m)	2024–25 (Estimate) (\$m)
Programme				
(1) Commercial Relations	208.6	281.2	196.8	285.1
(2) Public Relations	156.9	214.0	147.3	214.0
(3) Investment Promotion.....	75.6	101.0	70.5	102.4
	441.1	596.2	414.6 (–30.5%)	601.5 (+45.1%)
				(or +0.9% on 2023–24 Original)

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

Programme (1)

Provision for 2024–25 is \$88.3 million (44.9%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the increased provision for the new ETOs under planning, increased salary provision for filling vacancies and staff changes, and increased operating expenses.

Programme (2)

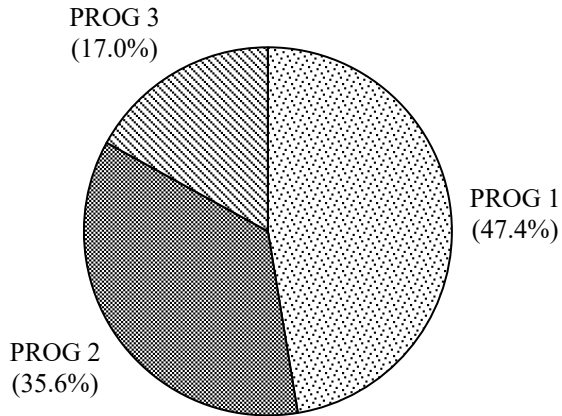
Provision for 2024–25 is \$66.7 million (45.3%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. The reasons for the increase under Programme (1) above also apply here.

Programme (3)

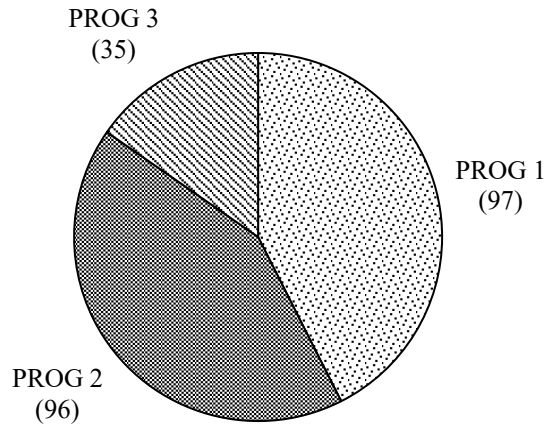
Provision for 2024–25 is \$31.9 million (45.2%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. The reasons for the increase under Programme (1) above also apply here.

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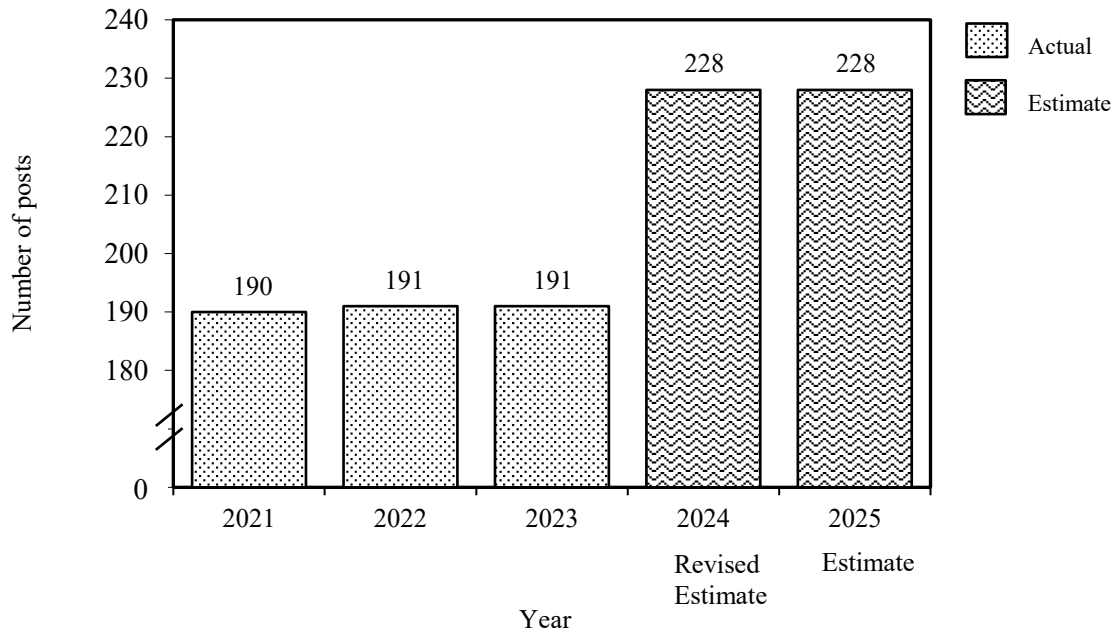
*Allocation of provision
to programmes
(2024-25)*



*Staff by programme
(as at 31 March 2025)*



*Changes in the size of the establishment
(as at 31 March)*



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Sub-head (Code)	Actual expenditure 2022–23	Approved estimate 2023–24	Revised estimate 2023–24	Estimate 2024–25	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
Operating Account					
Recurrent					
000	Operational expenses	440,377	595,607	414,111	601,537
	Total, Recurrent.....	440,377	595,607	414,111	601,537
	Total, Operating Account	440,377	595,607	414,111	601,537
Capital Account					
Plant, Equipment and Works					
	Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote).....	687	567	475	—
	Total, Plant, Equipment and Works.....	687	567	475	—
	Total, Capital Account.....	687	567	475	—
	Total Expenditure	441,064	596,174	414,586	601,537

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Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2024–25 for the salaries and expenses of the overseas Economic and Trade Offices (ETOs) is \$601,537,000. This represents an increase of \$186,951,000 over the revised estimate for 2023–24 and \$160,473,000 over the actual expenditure in 2022–23.

Operating Account

Recurrent

2 It is operationally necessary for the overseas ETOs to make certain payments in the currencies of their host economies. Expenditure in the following currencies will be charged to the appropriate subheads at the exchange rates set out below —

Australian Dollar	1=HK\$5.37160
Canadian Dollar	1=HK\$5.86313
Euro	1=HK\$8.58469
Japanese Yen	1=HK\$0.055204
Pound Sterling	1=HK\$9.87150
Singapore Dollar	1=HK\$5.88331
Swiss Franc	1=HK\$8.98900

Expenditure incurred in the US Dollar will be charged to the appropriate subheads at a fixed exchange rate of US\$1=HK\$7.8.

3 Provision of \$601,537,000 under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is for the salaries, allowances and other operating expenses of the overseas ETOs. The increase of \$187,426,000 (45.3%) over the revised estimate for 2023–24 is mainly due to the increased provision for the new ETOs under planning, the increased salary provision arising from filling of vacancies, staff changes and salary increment, as well as increased operating expenses.

4 The establishment as at 31 March 2024 will be 228 posts. No change in establishment is expected in 2024–25. Of these posts, 152 are filled by staff engaged locally by the overseas ETOs. Subject to certain conditions, the controlling officer may under delegated power create or delete non-directorate posts during 2024–25, but the notional annual mid-point salary value of all such posts must not exceed \$142,654,000.

5 An analysis of the financial provision under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is as follows:

	2022–23 (Actual) (\$'000)	2023–24 (Original) (\$'000)	2023–24 (Revised) (\$'000)	2024–25 (Estimate) (\$'000)
Personal Emoluments				
- Salaries	151,547	224,706	161,302	236,681
- Allowances	40,657	56,904	40,112	56,878
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Civil Service Provident Fund contribution	8,280	15,335	9,801	16,482
- Disturbance allowance.....	2,541	8,039	4,520	9,584
Departmental Expenses				
- General departmental expenses	126,372	160,772	128,906	160,452
Other Charges				
- Publicity.....	110,980	129,851	69,470	121,460
	440,377	595,607	414,111	601,537