

Head 152 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

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

Estimate 2024–25 **\$7,069.1m**

Establishment ceiling 2024–25 (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 202 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2024 reducing by two posts to 200 posts as at 31 March 2025 **\$157.5m**

In addition, there will be an estimated 19 directorate posts as at 31 March 2024 and as at 31 March 2025.

Commitment balance..... **\$278,420.7m**

Controlling Officer's Report

Programmes

Programme (1) Director of Bureau's Office	This programme contributes to Policy Area 27: Intra-Governmental Services (Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development).
Programme (2) Commerce and Industry	This programme contributes to Policy Area 6: Commerce and Industry (Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development).
Programme (3) Telecommunications Programme (4) Broadcasting	These programmes contribute to Policy Area 17: Information Technology and Broadcasting (Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development).
Programme (5) Posts, Competition Policy and Consumer Protection	This programme contributes to Policy Area 4: Posts, Competition Policy and Consumer Protection (Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development).
Programme (6) Subvention: Hong Kong Trade Development Council	This programme contributes to Policy Area 6: Commerce and Industry (Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development).
Programme (7) Subvention: Consumer Council	These programmes contribute to Policy Area 4: Posts, Competition Policy and Consumer Protection (Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development).
Programme (8) Subvention: Competition Commission	

Detail

Programme (1): Director of Bureau's Office

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	15.2	16.1	15.9 (–1.2%)	16.1 (+1.3%)
				(or same as 2023–24 Original)

Aim

2 The aim is to ensure the smooth operation of the Office of the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development.

Brief Description

3 The Office of the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development is responsible for providing support to the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development in undertaking political work. This includes the support provided by the Under Secretary and the Political Assistant. The office is also responsible for providing administrative support to the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development in carrying out his duties. The work includes the planning, co-ordination and implementation of all arrangements for the Secretary's public, media and community functions.

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Programme (2): Commerce and Industry

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	271.6	567.3	3,724.0 (+556.4%)	5,834.1 (+56.7%)
				(or +928.4% on 2023–24 Original)

Aim

4 The aim is to enhance Hong Kong's role as an international trade centre under the National 14th Five-Year Plan. The Bureau seeks to encourage Hong Kong's trading partners, through multilateral, regional and bilateral means, to remove barriers to trade and investment; to promote Hong Kong's strengths so as to maintain international business confidence in Hong Kong; to develop Hong Kong as a competitive and knowledge-based economy by increasing the added value and productivity of Hong Kong's industries and enhancing the long-term competitiveness of small and medium enterprises (SMEs); to foster our trading and investment ties with the Mainland and support our businesses in seizing the opportunities created by the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA), particularly in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area), and the Belt and Road Initiative (B&RI); to attract external direct investment into Hong Kong and to foster economic and trade exchanges and co-operation with Taiwan; and to maintain a modern and comprehensive intellectual property (IP) regime which complies fully with international standards and develop Hong Kong into a regional IP trading centre in accordance with the National 14th Five-Year Plan.

Brief Description

5 The Bureau's main responsibilities under this programme are to:

- formulate policies on promotion of trade in goods and services;
- formulate policies to attract more external direct investment into Hong Kong;
- institute measures and arrangements to facilitate international trade and gain market access for Hong Kong's goods, services and investment, including through forging free trade agreements (FTAs) and investment promotion and protection agreements (IPPAs);
- oversee the policy work related to the overseas Economic and Trade Offices (ETOs), including enhancing their functions and expanding the ETO network;
- enhance economic co-operation with trading partners and foster friendship and understanding between the business communities of Hong Kong and our major markets;
- promote and safeguard market access of Hong Kong's goods and services through overseeing Hong Kong's active participation in the multilateral trading system, including seeking further trade liberalisations under the World Trade Organization (WTO);
- foster greater regional co-operation in the Asia-Pacific region through overseeing Hong Kong's active participation in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC);
- enhance mutually beneficial economic relationship between Hong Kong and the Mainland through CEPA;
- provide support to local businesses in developing overseas and Mainland domestic sales markets;
- formulate policies to support SMEs;
- lead and co-ordinate the work on the B&RI, including strategy formulation and implementation of programmes and measures with a view to seeking out Belt and Road (B&R)-related business opportunities;
- formulate policies on protection of IP rights and the development of Hong Kong into a regional IP trading centre;
- formulate policies and implementation proposals on the development of a trade single window (TSW) in Hong Kong; and
- support the further development of wine-related businesses in Hong Kong.

6 During 2023–24, the Bureau:

- continued to collaborate with various departments, agencies and stakeholders in conducting external promotion work to enhance Hong Kong's image as an international trade centre and investment hub through the Bureau's network of overseas ETOs;
- continued to strengthen policy work related to overseas ETOs, including enhancing their functions in support of the work of the Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises led by the Financial Secretary and Hong Kong Talent Engage under the Labour and Welfare Bureau;

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- oversaw the work of Invest Hong Kong in stepping up efforts to attract more overseas and Mainland enterprises to set up and expand their businesses in Hong Kong;
- continued to closely monitor the bilateral trade relations between Mainland China and the United States (US) as well as trade actions of the US Government against Hong Kong and their impact on Hong Kong's economy; and maintained close communication with the trade;
- continued to pursue and monitor the developments under the WTO Dispute Settlement Mechanism concerning the case against the US' revised origin marking requirement on imported products originating from Hong Kong; and maintained close communication with the trade;
- oversaw participation in the work of the WTO, including preparations for Hong Kong's acceptance of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies in August 2023, participation in the WTO trade policy review of Hong Kong in December 2023, attendance at the Thirteenth WTO Ministerial Conference (MC13) in February 2024, safeguarding Hong Kong's rights through contributing to the ongoing negotiations and discussions at the WTO, and monitoring and responding to trade restrictive measures which impacted on Hong Kong's trade interests and posed systemic risks to the multilateral trading system;
- oversaw participation in the APEC for strengthening regional economic integration, promoting free and open trade and investment, as well as sustainability in the region and implementing the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040, including through the Aotearoa Plan of Action;
- oversaw FTA negotiations with Peru, engagement with members of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) to consolidate support for Hong Kong's early accession, and IPPA negotiations/signing with, among others, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye;
- worked with the Trade and Industry Department (TID) in enhancing the Dedicated Fund on Branding, Upgrading and Domestic Sales (BUD Fund), including launching "Easy BUD", a simplified application track for expeditious processing of applications for smaller projects in June 2023;
- worked with TID in enhancing the SME Export Marketing Fund (EMF), including implementing the special measure to expand the funding scope of the EMF to 30 June 2026 to continue to cover exhibitions targeting the local market and online exhibitions, and to relax the eligibility criteria to cover non-SMEs;
- established the E-commerce Development Task Force to implement policies that assist SMEs in developing electronic commerce (e-commerce) business on the Mainland;
- worked with HKMC Insurance Limited, the administrator of the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme (SFGS) to enhance the SFGS, including extending the application period and introducing an additional partial principal repayment option to enable more flexible repayment by SMEs;
- continued to work with the Hong Kong Export Credit Insurance Corporation (HKECIC) to enhance export credit insurance coverage for exporters through measures including the "risk-sharing arrangement on domestic sales in the Mainland", "Export Credit Guarantee Programme", "EC-Reach 2.0" and other support measures;
- continued to implement the Professional Services Advancement Support Scheme (PASS) to provide funding support for non-profit-making industry-led projects aimed at increasing exchanges and co-operation of Hong Kong's professional services with their counterparts in external markets, promoting relevant publicity activities, and enhancing the standards and external competitiveness of Hong Kong's professional services, including implementing the Professionals Participation Subsidy Programme (PSP) under PASS to subsidise major professional bodies to participate in relevant activities for stepping up promotion of Hong Kong's professional services to the Mainland and overseas markets after the pandemic has stabilised;
- pursued actively the B&RI by organising business and professional missions led by the Chief Executive (CE) to a total of five B&R countries in the Middle East and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in February and July 2023 respectively; organising the second Policy Exchange and Capacity Building Programme with the National Development and Reform Commission and relevant Mainland ministries in June 2023; furthering policy co-ordination with the Central Authorities through the sixth Joint Conference on Advancing Hong Kong's Full Participation in and Contribution to the Belt and Road Initiative (Joint Conference) held in July 2023; organising the second Mainland Enterprises Partnership Exchange and Interface Session in July 2023; organising the eighth Belt and Road Summit in September 2023 which attracted nearly 6 000 senior government officials, business leaders and representatives of enterprises, a record high over past editions; organising a near-70-strong high-level delegation led by CE to proactively participate in the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation held in Beijing in October 2023 to show to the international audience in all ten events of the Forum the unique strengths of Hong Kong under the B&RI; organising the inaugural B&R visit to the Greater Bay Area for overseas enterprises in December 2023; and organising a series of exchange and sharing sessions/seminars to promote partnership and project interfacing amongst local professional services sector, chambers of commerce, and enterprises from the Mainland, overseas and Hong Kong;
- oversaw the organisation of activities to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the signing of CEPA, supervised discussions with the Mainland on further market liberalisation and facilitation of trade and investment through CEPA, and on ensuring smooth implementation of the measures announced;

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- collaborated with the Mainland authorities and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) to help Hong Kong enterprises develop the Mainland domestic sales market, including through the support of HKTDC's one-stop platform "GoGBA" and its network of "GoGBA Business Support Centres" which has been expanded to cover all nine Mainland cities in the Greater Bay Area;
- co-ordinated through HKTDC the participation of the Hong Kong enterprises in the sixth China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai to promote Hong Kong products and services to the Mainland market, and to introduce Hong Kong's role as a gateway under the national "dual circulation" strategy;
- continued to oversee the implementation of a series of initiatives to develop Hong Kong into a regional IP trading centre;
- continued to oversee the implementation of the Original Grant Patent (OGP) system;
- continued to oversee the preparatory work for the implementation of the international trade mark registration system under the Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks (Madrid Protocol) in Hong Kong, including preparing the related subsidiary legislation and completing the set up of the required information technology (IT) system;
- brought the Copyright (Amendment) Bill 2022 into operation to update Hong Kong's copyright regime and strengthen copyright protection in the digital environment;
- continued to oversee efforts to promote awareness of and respect for IP rights in the community and the business sector;
- conducted trade consultation on the "patent box" tax arrangements, with a view to introducing the proposed legislative amendments into the Legislative Council (LegCo) in the first half of 2024;
- tabled the amendments to subsidiary legislation in the LegCo to reduce the fees chargeable by the Designs Registry by ten per cent to 70 per cent with effect from 1 March 2024;
- continued to work on the planning for new convention and exhibition facilities to maintain and consolidate the international status of Hong Kong's convention and exhibition industry;
- continued to implement the Convention and Exhibition Industry Subsidy Scheme under the Anti-epidemic Fund and introduced the Incentive Scheme for Recurrent Exhibitions in July 2023 with a view to reinvigorating the convention and exhibition industry;
- continued to take forward the development of TSW, including completing the roll-out of Phase 2 services as well as conducting the tender for the development of the Phase 3 IT system;
- continued to monitor the operation of the Government Electronic Trading Services (GETS) and extended the contracts with the three existing service providers to end of 2027;
- continued to oversee measures taken by the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) to enhance cargo clearance efficiency and expedite cross-boundary cargo flow, including the Single E-lock Scheme and the Hong Kong Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Programme; and
- continued to implement measures to underpin the further development of wine-related businesses in Hong Kong, including wine trade promotion and the facilitation scheme for wine re-exports to the Mainland.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

7 In 2024–25, the Bureau will:

- continue to step up global promotion of Hong Kong's business advantages, strengthen outreach to investors and attract multinational companies to set up regional or global operations in Hong Kong so as to capitalise on the opportunities arising from the National 14th Five-Year Plan, the Greater Bay Area development and B&RI;
- continue to collaborate with various departments, agencies and stakeholders in conducting external promotion work to enhance Hong Kong's international image in trade and investment, and to strengthen cultural promotion work in support of the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau through the Bureau's network of overseas ETOs;
- continue to strengthen policy work related to overseas ETOs, including enhancing their functions and expanding the ETO network;
- continue to monitor developments on various regional economic integration initiatives and explore opportunities for Hong Kong's participation, including seeking early accession to RCEP;
- continue to oversee discussions or negotiations with trading partners on enhancement of economic co-operation, including FTA negotiations with Peru and IPPA negotiations/signing with, among others, Bahrain, Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia;
- continue to oversee collaboration among agencies responsible for promoting trade and inward investment;

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- continue to closely monitor the bilateral trade relations between Mainland China and the US as well as trade actions of the US Government related to Hong Kong, and assess their impact on Hong Kong's economy; and maintain close communication with the trade;
- continue to monitor the developments under the WTO Dispute Settlement Mechanism concerning the case against the US' revised origin marking requirement on imported products originating from Hong Kong; and continue to maintain close communication with the trade;
- continue to oversee participation in the work of the WTO, including taking forward any outcomes arising from MC13, safeguarding Hong Kong's rights through contributing to the ongoing negotiations and discussions at the WTO, and monitoring and responding to trade restrictive measures which impacted on Hong Kong's trade interests and posed systemic risks to the multilateral trading system;
- continue to oversee participation in the work of the APEC;
- continue to step up promotion of government funding schemes and strengthen support to SMEs in capacity building, with a view to enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs;
- continue to work with TID and the Hong Kong Productivity Council to implement the enhanced BUD Fund to support Hong Kong enterprises in developing their brands, upgrading and restructuring their operations and promoting sales on the Mainland and other FTA and/or IPPA markets, and taking forward e-commerce projects on the Mainland under the new "E-commerce Easy";
- continue to work with TID to implement the enhanced EMF to support Hong Kong enterprises in exploring the Mainland, overseas and local markets;
- work with HKTDC to launch Hong Kong Shopping Festivals on e-commerce platforms to promote the awareness of Hong Kong brands for developing the national domestic sales market;
- continue to work with HKMC Insurance Limited to implement the SFGS, including increasing the Government's loan guarantee commitment and extending the application period of the 80% and 90% Guarantee Products to 31 March 2026 to continue to help ease the cash flow problem of SMEs;
- continue to work with HKECIC to enhance export credit insurance coverage for exporters through various support measures;
- continue to implement PASS to provide funding support for non-profit-making projects undertaken by non-profit distributing organisations, including implementing the PSP to subsidise major professional bodies to participate in relevant activities;
- continue to proactively consolidate Hong Kong's unique advantages and positioning as the functional platform for the B&RI through reinforcing co-operation with relevant Mainland authorities and maintaining ties with other stakeholders and governments along the B&R, including convening the seventh Joint Conference with the Central Authorities; organising the ninth Belt and Road Summit and seeking to expand the breadth and depth of the Summit; organising a series of government-level promotion events, exchange and sharing sessions/seminars, project-matching meetings, etc., for local professional services sector, chambers of commerce and enterprises; organising more outbound missions for Hong Kong and Mainland enterprises to promote Hong Kong's professional services and jointly explore business opportunities in B&R-related countries and regions; and organising B&R visits to the Greater Bay Area for overseas enterprises to promote Hong Kong as the service base for tapping into the Mainland market opportunities;
- step up promotional and publicity efforts through diverse channels to actively enhance the community's awareness of the B&RI, including promoting the participation of Hong Kong's professional services and youths in the B&RI;
- continue to oversee efforts for seeking better market access and facilitation of trade and investment on the Mainland through CEPA, especially in strategic locations such as the Greater Bay Area and Hainan;
- continue to collaborate with the Mainland authorities and HKTDC to help Hong Kong enterprises promote their products and services to the Mainland market;
- continue to co-ordinate Hong Kong's participation in CIIE;
- continue to oversee the implementation of a series of initiatives to develop Hong Kong into a regional IP trading centre;
- continue to oversee the implementation of the OGP system and enhancement of the substantive examination capability of patent examiners under the system;
- continue to oversee efforts to promote awareness of and respect for IP rights in the community and the business sector;
- continue to forge ahead with the preparatory work for implementing the Madrid Protocol in Hong Kong and strive for the implementation of the international trade mark registration system as soon as possible;

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- conduct consultation within 2024 to explore further enhancement to the Copyright Ordinance (Cap. 528) regarding protection for artificial intelligence technology development;
- launch a review of the registered designs regime within 2024 with a view to commencing consultation in 2025 on the way forward in updating the regime;
- introduce a bill into the LegCo in the first half of 2024 for implementing the “patent box” tax incentive to reduce the tax rate for qualifying profits derived from patents from the existing 16.5 per cent to five per cent;
- oversee the work of the Intellectual Property Department (IPD) in leading the discussions with stakeholders to plan for the introduction of regulatory arrangements for local patent agent services;
- oversee IPD in making preparations for establishing a Technology and Innovation Support Centre in relation to IP in Hong Kong under a dedicated programme run by the World Intellectual Property Organization, to provide innovators, SMEs, entrepreneurs and businesses with high-quality IP-related technology information and related services, thereby helping them create, protect, and manage IP rights for commercial exploitation and IP trading, and facilitate Hong Kong’s integration into the overall development of our country;
- continue to plan for new convention and exhibition facilities to maintain and consolidate the international status of Hong Kong’s convention and exhibition industry;
- continue to support the convention and exhibition industry through the Incentive Scheme for Recurrent Exhibitions;
- conduct in-depth research and make recommendations for the development of silver economy;
- continue to take forward the development of TSW Phase 3 IT system;
- continue to monitor the operation of GETS;
- continue to oversee the work of C&ED in promoting the Single E-lock Scheme and the Hong Kong AEO Programme to the trade, and in further extending Hong Kong’s network of AEO mutual recognition arrangement with other economies; and
- continue to support the further development of wine-related businesses in Hong Kong.

Programme (3): Telecommunications

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	94.3#	334.2	272.7 (–18.4%)	307.0 (+12.6%)
				(or –8.1% on 2023–24 Original)

For comparison purpose, the figure includes relevant provision for telecommunications which has been transferred from the former Head 55 — Government Secretariat: Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (Communications and Creative Industries Branch) due to the re-organisation of the Government Secretariat with effect from 1 July 2022.

Aim

8 The aim is to facilitate the development of the telecommunications industry and enhance Hong Kong’s position as a telecommunication hub.

Brief Description

9 The Bureau’s main responsibility under this programme is to formulate telecommunications policies and programmes to facilitate effective competition, enhance consumer choice and promote investments in the development of a competitive, advanced and high bandwidth infrastructure accessible by the consumers through wireline or wireless means. This will enhance Hong Kong’s position as a world-class telecommunications centre.

10 During 2023–24, the Bureau:

- worked with the Communications Authority (CA) to review and release radio spectrum in various frequency bands for the provision of public mobile services including the fifth generation mobile (5G) services;
- worked with the CA to facilitate wider deployment of frequency spectrum in the 3.5 GHz band for the provision of 5G services;
- worked with the CA and decided on the arrangements for re-assignment of 20 MHz of frequency spectrum in the 850/900 MHz and 90 MHz of frequency spectrum in the 2.3 GHz bands and related spectrum utilization fee upon the expiry of the existing assignments in 2026 and 2027 respectively;

- worked with the CA to conduct a public consultation and decide on the arrangements for assignment of 400 MHz of frequency spectrum in the 6/7 GHz band and related spectrum utilization fee;
- worked with the CA to make arrangement for assignment of available spectrum in the 26/28 GHz bands;
- worked with the Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA) to facilitate mobile network operators (MNOs)' applications for installation of radio base stations in suitable government premises, major public event venues and public facilities with a view to supporting the rollout of 5G infrastructure;
- introduced into the LegCo the Telecommunications (Amendment) Bill 2023 to provide the legal basis for the CA to grant authorised access for MNOs to install and maintain mobile communications facilities in reserved space in specified new buildings, with a view to enhancing coverage of 5G networks in preparation for future development of more advanced mobile communications technology;
- introduced into the LegCo the Inland Revenue (Amendment) (Tax Deductions for Spectrum Utilization Fees) Bill 2023 to provide for tax deductions for spectrum utilization fees to be paid by future assignees of radio spectrum, with a view to encouraging MNOs to invest more actively in telecommunications infrastructure for providing better communications services to enterprises and the general public;
- worked with OFCA to implement a subsidy scheme to encourage the extension of optical fibre networks to villages in rural and remote areas so as to further enhance the higher speed fixed broadband network coverage;
- worked with OFCA to proactively co-ordinate with MNOs and explore the feasibility of providing subsidies to enhance the mobile network coverage in rural and remote areas in accordance with the 2023 Policy Address;
- monitored the effectiveness of measures for safeguarding consumers' interests;
- monitored the implementation and effectiveness of the legislation in facilitating market competition and the fair trading practices of telecommunications and broadcasting licensees;
- oversaw the implementation of the Real-name Registration Programme for Subscriber Identification Module (SIM) Cards and launched assistance and publicity measures;
- worked with OFCA to combat scam calls and messages jointly with law enforcement agencies through a multi-pronged approach so as to safeguard the integrity of telecommunications services and the security of communications networks; and
- worked with OFCA to roll out a registration scheme for SMS senders to various trades/industries to assist the public in ascertaining the authenticity of SMS sender addresses.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

11 During 2024–25, the Bureau will continue to:

- work with the CA to implement the assignment of radio spectrum and to facilitate wider deployment of frequency spectrum in the 3.5 GHz band for the provision of 5G services;
- work with the CA to conduct public consultation on the arrangements for re-assignment of 50 MHz of frequency spectrum in the 2.5/2.6 GHz band and related spectrum utilization fee upon the expiry of the existing assignments in 2028;
- work with the CA to conduct the auctions for the re-assignment of 20 MHz of frequency spectrum in the 850/900 MHz band and 90 MHz of frequency spectrum in the 2.3 GHz band and assignment of 400 MHz of frequency spectrum in the 6/7 GHz band;
- work with the CA to arrange for the administrative assignment of available spectrum in the 26/28 GHz bands;
- work with OFCA to facilitate MNOs' applications for installation of radio base stations in suitable government premises, major public event venues and public facilities with a view to supporting the extension of 5G infrastructure;
- facilitate LegCo's scrutiny of the Telecommunications (Amendment) Bill 2023 and upon passage of the Bill by the LegCo, oversee the implementation of the amended Telecommunications Ordinance (Cap. 106) including introduction of a Code of Practice for the Provision of Mobile Access Facilities in Specified Buildings for the Provision of Public Mobile Radiocommunications Services and amendments to other relevant guidelines to ensure that appropriate space is made available in new buildings for installation of mobile communications facilities;
- work with OFCA to implement a subsidy scheme to encourage the extension of optical fibre networks to villages in rural and remote areas so as to further enhance the higher speed fixed broadband network coverage;
- work with OFCA to introduce a scheme to provide subsidies to enhance the mobile network coverage in rural and remote areas in accordance with the 2023 Policy Address;
- monitor the effectiveness of measures for safeguarding consumers' interests;

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- monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the legislation in facilitating market competition and the fair trading practices of the telecommunications and broadcasting licensees;
- monitor the implementation of the Real-name Registration Programme for SIM Cards;
- work with OFCA to combat scam calls and messages jointly with law enforcement agencies through a multi-pronged approach so as to safeguard the integrity of telecommunications services and the security of communications networks; and
- review the effectiveness of the implementation of the registration scheme for SMS senders and consider the way forward.

Programme (4): Broadcasting

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	40.6#	17.4	17.3 (–0.6%)	8.5 (–50.9%)
				(or –51.1% on 2023–24 Original)

For comparison purpose, the figure includes relevant provision for broadcasting which has been transferred from the former Head 55 — Government Secretariat: Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (Communications and Creative Industries Branch) due to the re-organisation of the Government Secretariat with effect from 1 July 2022.

Aim

12 The aim is to promote the development of broadcasting and enhance Hong Kong's position as a broadcasting capital.

Brief Description

13 The Bureau's main responsibilities under this programme are to formulate policies on broadcasting, control of obscene and indecent articles, and film censorship; and to promote the development of the broadcasting industry.

14 The key performance is measured by the extent to which the policy objectives have been achieved and the progress made in implementing the various policy commitments. It is also reflected by the extent to which the executive departments have accomplished their programmes efficiently and cost-effectively.

15 During 2023–24, the Bureau:

- assisted in the licensing and regulatory matters in relation to the domestic free television programme services, domestic pay television programme services and sound broadcasting services; and
- continued to oversee Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) in fulfilling its mission as a public service broadcaster.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

16 During 2024–25, the Bureau will continue to:

- assist in the licensing and regulatory matters in relation to domestic free television programme services, domestic pay television programme services and sound broadcasting services; and
- oversee RTHK in fulfilling its mission as a public service broadcaster.

Programme (5): Posts, Competition Policy and Consumer Protection

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	10.1	10.2	10.1 (–1.0%)	20.1 (+99.0%)
				(or +97.1% on 2023–24 Original)

Aim

17 The aims are to promote economic efficiency in the delivery of postal services; to promote competition; and to protect consumer interests.

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Brief Description

18 The Bureau's main responsibilities under this programme are to formulate policies and programmes in relation to postal services, the promotion of economic efficiency and free market through competition, and the protection of consumer interests.

19 During 2023–24, the Bureau:

- monitored the implementation of the Competition Ordinance (Cap. 619) (CO);
- published the annual report of the Competition Policy Advisory Group (COMPAG) for the year 2022 on the COMPAG website, and continued to co-ordinate the work of government bureaux and departments in promoting competition;
- monitored the implementation of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (Cap. 362) in tackling unfair trade practices that may be deployed in consumer transactions;
- monitored the operation of the Post Office Trading Fund (POTF) and worked with Hongkong Post (HKP) on measures to improve POTF's financial position; and
- monitored the projects to re-provision the HKP's Headquarters and redevelop the Air Mail Centre (AMC).

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

20 During 2024–25, the Bureau will continue to:

- monitor the implementation of the CO in tackling anti-competitive conduct in different sectors;
- support the work of COMPAG;
- review the way forward of the legislative proposal to stipulate a statutory cooling-off period for certain consumer contracts, having regard to the prevailing economic situation and consumption sentiment;
- monitor the implementation of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance in tackling unfair trade practices that may be deployed in consumer transactions;
- monitor the operation of POTF and work with HKP on measures to improve POTF's financial position; and
- monitor the project to redevelop the AMC.

Programme (6): Subvention: Hong Kong Trade Development Council

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	600.2	640.2	640.2 (—)	551.4 (–13.9%)
				(or –13.9% on 2023–24 Original)

Aim

21 The aim is to help HKTDC perform its statutory functions, i.e. to promote, assist and develop Hong Kong's trade with places outside Hong Kong, with particular reference to exports; and to make recommendations to the Government as it sees fit in relation to any measures which it considers would achieve an increase in Hong Kong's trade.

Brief Description

22 Established in 1966, HKTDC is a statutory body to promote Hong Kong's external trade in goods and services, and to promote the city's role as an international business hub. With 50 offices globally, including 13 on the Mainland, the HKTDC:

- promotes Hong Kong as a platform for doing business with the Mainland and worldwide, as a commercial hub for the B&RI, and as a two-way platform for the Greater Bay Area and a facilitation hub for ASEAN and RCEP;
- organises international trade fairs and industry conferences, international trade promotion events and business missions to help Hong Kong companies seize opportunities on the Mainland and around the world, as well as operates a virtual event platform and a sourcing platform to complement its physical events;
- provides market information through hktcdc.com, research reports and its research portal, and a market intelligence website "Hong Kong Means Business" and a one-stop platform "GoGBA" that gives business wide-ranging support to help tap into Greater Bay Area opportunities;

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- runs support programmes to help start-ups and SMEs enhance their capabilities and market expansion; and
- reinforces Hong Kong as a global marketplace in the Asia-Pacific region through corporate relations and business promotion activities around the world, including support for six bilateral committees and 48 Hong Kong business associations in 37 countries and regions.

23 The key performance measures in respect of promoting Hong Kong's external trade are:

Indicators

	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Estimate)
trade and services promotion			
events	698	634	650
companies participating	53 065	69 397	76 540
local fairs			
no. of Mainland and overseas buyers	291 386	318 156	353 680
no. of fairs	31	39	37
business-matching enquiries worldwide			
no. of business enquiries handled	3 468 248	3 553 253	3 560 000
no. of business connections made	20 251 895	21 173 280	21 700 000
trade portal (hktcdc.com)			
no. of new registered users	113 692	430 565Φ	250 000Φ
no. of visits to online sourcing platform	12 893 611	13 822 622	14 000 000
no. of advertisers	18 081	22 776	28 280

Φ The significant surge in the number of new registered users in 2023 is mainly due to the increase in the number of buyers and HKTDC's introduction of the e-Badge service system upon the resumption of physical fairs after the pandemic. As users are only required to register on the system once for continued access to a full range of HKTDC's services, a slower growth rate in the number of new registered users is expected in 2024.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

24 In 2024–25, HKTDC will:

- help Hong Kong and international businesses capitalise on the promising opportunities offered by the National 14th Five-Year Plan with the Greater Bay Area development as a central theme;
- launch Hong Kong Shopping Festivals on e-commerce platforms to promote awareness of Hong Kong brands for developing the national domestic sales market;
- position Hong Kong as the ideal two-way business hub for the Greater Bay Area, ASEAN and the wider RCEP with the rest of the world;
- support SMEs and start-ups to grow and transform amid the world's new digital and sustainability agenda;
- promote Hong Kong as a multifaceted investment, trade and innovation hub to the international audience;
- reinforce Hong Kong's position as the business and deal-making hub in Asia with a focus on new sectors such as healthcare and sustainability to facilitate opportunities; and
- offer an enriched fair and conference experience, enhance the sourcing journey and facilitate business matching and deal-making with digital technologies.

Programme (7): Subvention: Consumer Council

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	142.2	145.3	151.5 (+4.3%)	149.5 (–1.3%)
				(or +2.9% on 2023–24 Original)

Aim

25 The aim is to protect and promote the interests of consumers of goods and services.

Head 152 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

Brief Description

26 The Consumer Council (the Council) is an independent body established under the Consumer Council Ordinance (Cap. 216). The Council discharges its functions by:

- collecting, receiving and disseminating information concerning goods, services and immovable property;
- examining complaints and giving advice to consumers;
- tendering advice to the Government on ways to enhance consumer protection;
- conducting product tests and research;
- encouraging business and professional associations to establish codes of practice to regulate the activities of their members;
- monitoring trade practices;
- facilitating consumers to seek redress through the use of the Consumer Legal Action Fund; and
- empowering consumers through education and publicity campaigns.

27 The key performance measures in respect of protection and promotion of consumer interests are:

Targets

	Target	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Plan)
handling consumer enquiries				
telephone calls answered within three minutes (%)	80	67¶	94	80
waiting time for over-the-counter enquiry service not to exceed ten minutes (%).....	100	100	100	100
issuing reply in writing within ten working days (%).....	100	96	98	100
handling consumer complaints				
telephone calls answered within three minutes (%)	80	66¶	95	80
in writing				
issuing preliminary reply within five working days (%).....	100	98	98	100
notifying complainants of results/progress within nine working days (%).....	100	99	99	100
publications of “CHOICE” and release of product testing, research and survey results once per month (%).....	100	100	100	100

¶ The actual percentage achieved was lower than the target owing to the special work arrangements and isolation / quarantine requirements during the COVID-19 epidemic, resulting in a stretch in manpower to receive calls.

Indicators

	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Estimate)
consumer complaints.....	30 764	34 155	37 000
consumer enquiries.....	58 848	57 645	58 500
product tests^	44	41	41
consumer surveys^.....	27	29	28
in-depth studies^	14	15	16
studies of general interest^	67μ	72μ	48μ
response to consultation from the Government and other public bodiesΘ	12	17	14

Head 152 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Estimate)
consumer education programmes.....	252	285@	240@
circulation of publications.....	244 700	219 550	219 550

- ^ Each year, the Council conducts product tests, consumer surveys, in-depth studies and studies of general interest. Manpower and resources are deployed in accordance with the respective resource demands of researches and studies scheduled for the year. The figures for the indicators are estimated having regard to a broad range of factors such as the time required by the laboratories to complete the product tests and the complexity of the subject matters.
- μ Before July 2022, studies of general interest referred to the articles posted on the Shoptmart website. Since July 2022, studies of general interest referred to the articles posted on the Council's WeChat account (launched in July 2022) on a weekly basis, which are bite-sized social media posts on consumer protection tips and advice.
- ⊖ The number of responses to consultation depends on the number of consultations conducted by the Government and other public bodies during the year. The figure for the coming year is an indicative forecast only.
- @ The increase in the actual number of education programmes in 2023 is attributed to two main reasons: (i) increased number of activities and workshops required for the new education programme for secondary schools and the new virtual reality simulation for persons with special needs; and (ii) the unforeseen surge in demand for support activities and workshops from schools/non-governmental organisations after the resumption of normalcy starting from early 2023. The number of education programmes for 2024 is estimated based on the expected training needs in 2024.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

28 During 2024–25, the Council will:

- roll out commemorative activities for the Council's 50th Anniversary to further educate and publicise the importance of consumer rights;
- complete the revamp of the Council's Complaint Case Management System which involves hardware and software upgrade; and
- replace and upgrade the Council's network infrastructure and cybersecurity systems.

Programme (8): Subvention: Competition Commission

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	144.4	150.3	137.1 (–8.8%)	182.4 (+33.0%)
				(or +21.4% on 2023–24 Original)

Aim

29 The aim is to help the Competition Commission (the Commission) to implement the CO.

Brief Description

30 The Commission is an independent statutory body established under the CO in 2013. The Commission's statutory functions are to:

- investigate conduct that may contravene the competition rules and enforce the provisions of the CO;
- promote public understanding of the value of competition and how the CO promotes competition;
- promote the adoption by undertakings carrying on business in Hong Kong of appropriate internal controls and risk management systems, to ensure their compliance with the CO;
- advise the Government on competition matters in Hong Kong and outside Hong Kong;
- conduct market studies into matters affecting competition in markets in Hong Kong; and
- promote research into and the development of skills in relation to the legal, economic and policy aspects of competition law in Hong Kong.

Head 152 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

31 The key performance measures are:

Targets

	Target	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Plan)
handling enquiries and complaints				
acknowledge enquiries or complaints within two working days of receipt (%)	95	100	100	95
reply to enquiries or complaints on the result or progress within 28 working days of receipt (%)	95	100	100	95
handling applications for Decisions and Block Exemption Orders				
acknowledge applications within two working days of receipt (%)	95	N.A.	N.A.	95
respond to requests for fee waiver or reduction within seven working days of receipt (%).....	95	N.A.	N.A.	95
handling requests for seminars and presentations				
acknowledge requests within two working days of receipt (%)	95	100	99	95
respond to requests within ten working days of receipt (%)	95	100	99	95

Indicators

	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Estimate)
enforcement			
enquiries received	258	422	350
complaints received.....	252	311	300
initial assessments commencedΨ.....	5	17	—^
cases escalated to in-depth investigationΔ	4	3	—^
cases brought to the Competition Tribunal	3	3	—^
cases resolved by Commitments, issuing of Infringement Notices and Warning Notices.....	1	1	—^
applications for Decisions and Block Exemption Orders received.....	0	0	—^
major market study launched	0	0	1§
publicity and advocacy			
major publicity or education campaigns launched.....	1	2	2
events, seminars, conferences and exhibitions conducted.....	47	55	55λ
major international events, seminars and conferences participated in	8	8	8
newsletters published	3	3	3
outreach on online platforms.....	174	170	174λ

Ψ The Commission considers all complaints it receives and escalates those that merit further assessment into the initial assessment phase. Enquiries which present merit for further assessment will also be escalated into the initial assessment phase. Pursuant to the CO, the Commission does not investigate complaints that are misconceived, lacking in substance, trivial, frivolous or vexatious.

^ Not possible to estimate.

Δ Where following initial assessment the Commission has reasonable cause to suspect a contravention of a competition rule under the CO, the Commission will commence an in-depth investigation.

§ Subject to accessibility of sufficient data/information.

λ The numbers are indicative only and are subject to any necessary adjustments of the publicity and advocacy strategy to tally with the enforcement activities, enforcement/litigation outcomes and other ad hoc initiatives during the year.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

32 During 2024–25, the Commission will:

- continue to handle complaints of and conduct investigations into cases alleging to contravene a competition rule and to escalate suitable cases to in-depth investigation;
- continue the in-depth investigation with the aim to settling suitable cases by issuing commitments, infringement notices or warning notices, or bringing cases to the Competition Tribunal;
- continue the litigation processes for cases already brought to the Competition Tribunal;
- continue to promote understanding and compliance of the CO by businesses and the public through campaigns, education programmes, outreach activities, publications, seminars, presentations and online platforms;
- continue to consider applications for Decisions whether or not an agreement or conduct is excluded or exempt from the First or Second Conduct Rules and for Block Exemption Orders; and
- continue to advise the Government and public bodies on competition matters.

Head 152 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

Programme	2022–23 (Actual) (\$m)	2023–24 (Original) (\$m)	2023–24 (Revised) (\$m)	2024–25 (Estimate) (\$m)
(1) Director of Bureau's Office	15.2	16.1	15.9	16.1
(2) Commerce and Industry	271.6	567.3	3,724.0	5,834.1
(3) Telecommunications	94.3	334.2	272.7	307.0
(4) Broadcasting	40.6	17.4	17.3	8.5
(5) Posts, Competition Policy and Consumer Protection	10.1	10.2	10.1	20.1
(6) Subvention: Hong Kong Trade Development Council	600.2	640.2	640.2	551.4
(7) Subvention: Consumer Council	142.2	145.3	151.5	149.5
(8) Subvention: Competition Commission..	144.4	150.3	137.1	182.4
	1,318.6‡	1,881.0	4,968.8 (+164.2%)	7,069.1 (+42.3%)

**(or +275.8% on
2023–24 Original)**

‡ For comparison purpose, the figure has been adjusted to reflect the provisions for the relevant programmes under this Head due to the re-organisation of the Government Secretariat with effect from 1 July 2022. In addition, the figure also excludes the relevant provisions for the tourism and public safety (Hong Kong Observatory) portfolios which have been transferred to Head 132 — Government Secretariat: Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau and Head 137 — Government Secretariat: Environment and Ecology Bureau (Environment Branch) respectively due to the aforementioned Government re-organisation.

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

Programme (1)

Provision for 2024–25 is \$0.2 million (1.3%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the increased provision for operational expenses.

Programme (2)

Provision for 2024–25 is \$2,110.1 million (56.7%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the increased cash flow requirement for the SFGS – Guarantee Products. Besides, there will be a net decrease of two posts under this Programme in 2024–25.

Programme (3)

Provision for 2024–25 is \$34.3 million (12.6%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the increased cash flow requirement for the Subsidy Scheme to Extend Fibre-based Networks to Villages in Remote Areas.

Programme (4)

Provision for 2024–25 is \$8.8 million (50.9%) lower than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the lapse of a one-off provision to RTHK in 2023–24 for enhancement of its mission as the public service broadcaster of Hong Kong.

Programme (5)

Provision for 2024–25 is \$10.0 million (99.0%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to an injection of \$10 million into the Consumer Legal Action Fund.

Programme (6)

Provision for 2024–25 is \$88.8 million (13.9%) lower than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the lapse of time-limited subvention to the HKTDC for development of virtual event platform.

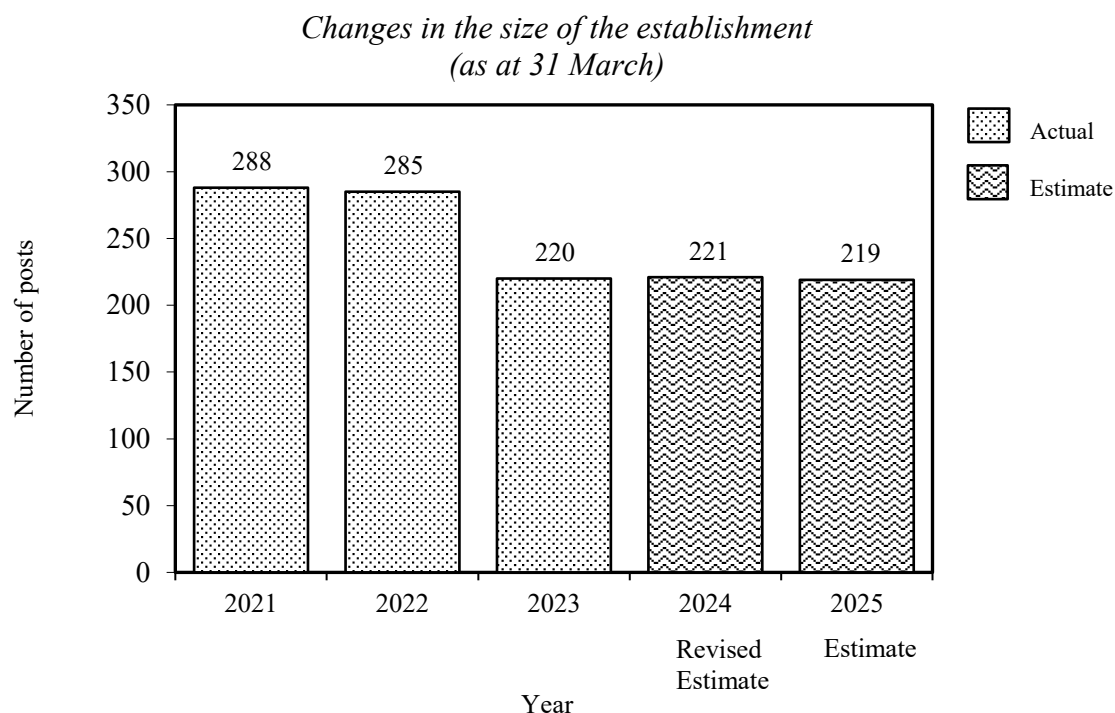
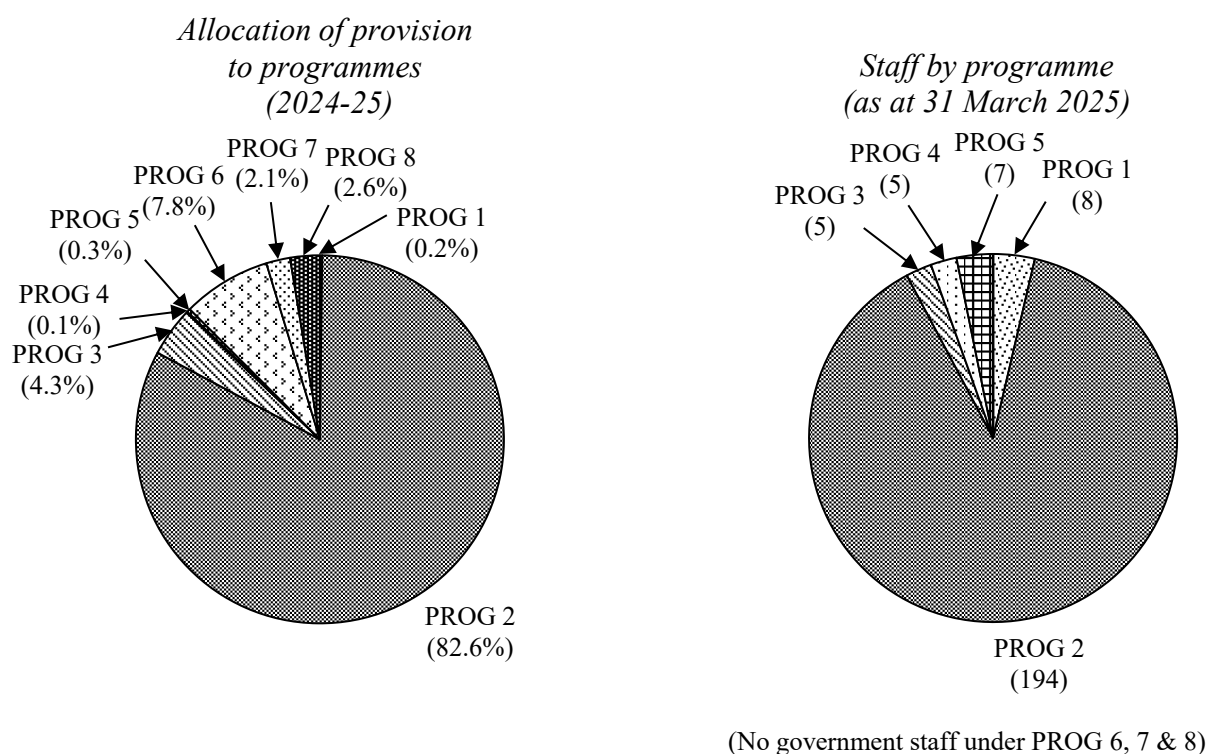
Head 152 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

Programme (7)

Provision for 2024–25 is \$2.0 million (1.3%) lower than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the lapse of a one-off additional provision to the Council in 2023–24 for supporting the activities of the Council's 50th Anniversary.

Programme (8)

Provision for 2024–25 is \$45.3 million (33.0%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the increased provision for supporting the litigation work of the Commission.



Head 152 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

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	1,323,684	1,201,585	1,197,028	1,228,235
	Total, Recurrent	1,323,684	1,201,585	1,197,028	1,228,235
	Non-Recurrent				
700	General non-recurrent	325,097	567,886	3,660,240	5,828,427
	Total, Non-Recurrent	325,097	567,886	3,660,240	5,828,427
	Total, Operating Account	1,648,781	1,769,471	4,857,268	7,056,662
Capital Account					
	Plant, Equipment and Works				
	Minor capital works (block vote)	4,855	—	—	—
	Total, Plant, Equipment and Works	4,855	—	—	—
	Subventions				
955	Consumer Council	7,440	6,603	6,603	6,061
970	Consumer Council (block vote)	3,833	4,913	4,913	6,363
	Hong Kong Trade Development Council	100,000	100,000	100,000	—
	Total, Subventions	111,273	111,516	111,516	12,424
	Total, Capital Account	116,128	111,516	111,516	12,424
	Total Expenditure	1,764,909	1,880,987	4,968,784	7,069,086

Head 152 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2024–25 for the salaries and expenses of the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau is \$7,069,086,000. This represents an increase of \$2,100,302,000 over the revised estimate for 2023–24 and \$5,304,177,000 over the actual expenditure in 2022–23.

Operating Account

Recurrent

2 Provision of \$1,228,235,000 under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is for the salaries, allowances and other operating expenses of the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau.

3 The establishment as at 31 March 2024 will be 221 posts including three supernumerary posts. It is expected that there will be a net decrease of two posts in 2024–25. 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 \$157,518,000.

4 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.....	192,694	200,863	186,754	207,356
- Allowances.....	8,035	7,877	6,033	5,668
- Job-related allowances.....	86	4	13	4
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Mandatory Provident Fund contribution.....	449	225	347	184
- Civil Service Provident Fund contribution.....	11,599	14,911	13,164	18,336
- Disturbance allowance.....	—	201	—	—
Departmental Expenses				
- General departmental expenses	121,515	129,445	137,157	127,993
Other Charges				
- Subscription to the World Trade Organization	46,997	50,641	46,432	54,074
Subventions				
- Consumer Council	130,912	133,756	139,975	137,071
- Hong Kong Tourism Board	187,735#	—	—	—
- Hong Kong Trade Development Council.....	500,242	540,242	540,242	551,390
- Competition Commission	123,420	123,420	126,911	126,159
	<u>1,323,684</u>	<u>1,201,585</u>	<u>1,197,028</u>	<u>1,228,235</u>

Includes three months' provision up to 30 June 2022. Remaining nine months' provision has been transferred to Head 132 — Government Secretariat: Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau with effect from 1 July 2022.

Capital Account

Subventions

5 Provision of \$6,061,000 under *Subhead 955 Consumer Council* is for the revamp of the Complaint Case Management System of the Council.

6 Provision of \$6,363,000 under *Subhead 970 Consumer Council (block vote)* is for the procurement of plant, vehicles and equipment each costing above \$200,000 but not exceeding \$10 million. The increase of \$1,450,000 (29.5%) over the revised estimate for 2023–24 is mainly due to the increased cash flow requirement for the implementation of information technology projects for the Council.

Head 152 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

Commitments

Sub-head (Code)	Item (Code)	Ambit	Approved commitment \$'000	Accumulated expenditure to 31.3.2023 \$'000	Revised estimated expenditure for 2023–24 \$'000	Balance \$'000
Operating Account						
700		<i>General non-recurrent</i>				
	801	Professional Services Advancement Support Scheme	200,000	52,555	9,200	138,245
	804	Funding for Competition Commission's litigation work.....	238,346	78,000	10,140	150,206
	814	Subsidy Scheme to Extend Fibre-based Networks to Villages in Remote Areas	774,400	121,466	260,900	392,034
	815	Incentive Scheme for Recurrent Exhibitions.....	1,400,000	—	240,000	1,160,000
	816	Injection into the Consumer Legal Action Fund	10,000	—	—	10,000
	833	SME Financing Guarantee Scheme – Guarantee Products#.....	290,000,000#	10,300,100	3,140,000	276,559,900
			<u>292,622,746</u>	<u>10,552,121</u>	<u>3,660,240</u>	<u>278,410,385</u>
Capital Account						
955		<i>Consumer Council</i>				
	813	Revamp of the Complaint Case Management System of the Consumer Council	24,335	7,440	6,603	10,292
			<u>24,335</u>	<u>7,440</u>	<u>6,603</u>	<u>10,292</u>
	Total		<u>292,647,081</u>	<u>10,559,561</u>	<u>3,666,843</u>	<u>278,420,677</u>

The approved commitment for the item was \$280 billion. An increase in commitment of \$10 billion is sought in the context of the Appropriation Bill 2024. This will result in an increase in the expected maximum expenditure by \$1,830 million.