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The Estimates (comprising Volumes I and II) set out the estimated revenue and expenditure of the General Revenue Account and the nine purpose-specific funds established under section 29 of Public Finance Ordinance (Cap. 2) (the Ordinance), viz., Capital Works Reserve Fund, Capital Investment Fund, Civil Service Pension Reserve Fund, Disaster Relief Fund, Innovation and Technology Fund, Land Fund, Loan Fund, Lotteries Fund and Bond Fund. The General Revenue Account is the Government's main account and acts as the central funding device with resources transferred as appropriate to and from the funds.

2 Volume I provides an introduction followed by the revenue and expenditure analysis of the General Revenue Account. The expenditure analysis for all Heads of Expenditure includes Controlling Officers' Report, Details of Expenditure by Subhead and Commitments. Volume I also contains various summaries. Volume II provides the statutory background, purposes and details of the nine purpose-specific funds.

General Revenue Account—Expenditure

3 The greater part of Government's expenditure is met directly from the General Revenue Account. There are 84 Heads of Expenditure. A head usually corresponds to a government bureau, a branch of a bureau or a department. Hereunder, reference to a department is taken to mean a bureau, branch, department or any other unit with its own expenditure head.

Controlling Officers' Reports

4 Each Head of Expenditure is supported with a report by the controlling officer on the programmes on which resources are proposed to be spent and the results sought. The effectiveness or cost-effectiveness of the results is measured where possible in terms of unit cost or productivity indicators.

- 5 The report also shows the percentage changes in the provision for each programme by comparing—
- (a) the 2023–24 revised estimate against the 2023–24 original estimate; and
 - (b) the 2024–25 estimate against the 2023–24 original estimate and revised estimate.

Details of Expenditure by Subhead

6 The provision of each Head of Expenditure is typically broken down into the following expenditure components and standard subheads—

<i>Operating Account</i>	Recurrent and non-recurrent expenditure items are charged to the Operating Account.
Recurrent	Expenditure of a recurrent nature. The main subhead is <i>Subhead 000 Operational expenses</i> , the scope of which is elaborated in paragraphs 9 to 19.
Non-Recurrent	Expenditure on items of a one-off nature and costing more than \$200,000 each but not involving the acquisition or construction of a physical asset. A standard subhead is <i>Subhead 700 General non-recurrent</i> . Except for <i>Subhead 789 Additional commitments</i> under <i>Head 106 Miscellaneous Services</i> , all non-recurrent subheads have commitments.
<i>Capital Account</i>	Capital expenditure items costing more than \$200,000 each, together with provisions for minor capital works not in the Capital Works Programme, motor vehicles, dinghies and launches are charged to the Capital Account. Except for <i>Subhead 689 Additional commitments</i> under <i>Head 106 Miscellaneous Services</i> and subheads under <i>Head 184 Transfers to Funds</i> , all Capital Account subheads have commitments or annual block vote ceilings.
Plant, Equipment and Works	Capital expenditure on assets acquired or constructed with government funding but not funded from the Capital Works Reserve Fund. The standard subheads include— <i>603 Plant, vehicles and equipment</i> . The ambit covers expenditure on plant, specialised vehicles (i.e. vehicles which, in addition to carrying goods, have mounted on them ancillary equipment for the purpose of performing specific functions), dinghies and launches, and equipment each costing more than \$10 million.

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605 Minor capital works (block vote). The ambit covers minor capital works with the cost of individual projects above \$200,000 but not exceeding \$10 million and not funded from the Capital Works Reserve Fund.

661 Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote). The ambit covers minor capital expenditure on plant and equipment (except administrative computer systems) with the cost of individual items above \$200,000 but not exceeding \$10 million, specialised vehicles, dinghies and launches with unit cost of \$10 million or less.

Capital Subventions	Payments to external or subvented bodies for the purchase of plant, vehicles and equipment costing more than \$200,000 each, which is not consequential to building projects, and for capital works of a minor nature.
Transfers to Funds	Transfers in support of the various funds established under section 29 of the Ordinance.

The ambit for a subhead peculiar to a department's operation is set out under the relevant Head of Expenditure.

7 Where an expenditure item is described as approved, this means that it has been approved by the Legislative Council, by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council, or under delegated authority.

8 Controlling officers will provide explanations to variations in the estimated provision of individual subheads (other than those non-recurrent and capital account subheads for which there is a commitment) where there is an estimated increase or decrease of ten per cent or more against the 2023–24 revised estimate.

Subhead 000 Operational expenses

9 *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* covers all expenditure of a recurrent nature of a department, unless otherwise shown and described by means of separate subheads. The financial provision under this subhead operates as a one-line vote, such that the controlling officer is given autonomy and flexibility in deploying the funds amongst the various conventional subheads within *Subhead 000 Operational expenses*. To ensure transparency and accountability under the one-line vote, a further analysis of financial provision by nature is provided—

<i>Conventional subheads</i>	<i>Nature of expenditure</i>
Personal Emoluments	Staff salaries and allowances.
— Salaries	
— Allowances	
— Job-related allowances	
Personnel Related Expenses	Costs relating to the employment of staff other than pay and allowances e.g. Mandatory Provident Fund contribution, Civil Service Provident Fund contribution and disturbance allowance.
— Mandatory Provident Fund contribution	
— Civil Service Provident Fund contribution	
Departmental Expenses	The day-to-day operating expenses of departments e.g. fuel, travelling and maintenance expenses.
— General departmental expenses	
Other Charges	Expenditure peculiar to a particular department's operation.
Recurrent Subventions	Payments to external or subvented bodies in support of their ongoing expenses.

Personal Emoluments

10 The estimated establishment is given for each department as at 31 March 2024 and 31 March 2025.

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11 Under the established mechanism for the creation of posts introduced since 1 April 1980, controlling officers are authorised to create or delete posts in existing non-directorate ranks provided that the net additional notional annual mid-point salary value of the posts created does not cause the departmental establishment ceiling to be exceeded. In each department, a Departmental Establishment Committee (DEC) advises the controlling officer in the exercise of his delegated authority to create posts. With a few specified exceptions, posts may only be created by a controlling officer after obtaining the advice of the DEC, but the controlling officer may authorise the temporary redeployment of non-directorate posts for periods not exceeding 12 months on each occasion without reference to the DEC.

12 The departmental establishment ceiling for 2024–25, as shown in the text accompanying each expenditure head, is expressed in terms of a notional annual mid-point salary value, calculated on the basis of pay scales in force on 31 December 2023. Any changes to the departmental establishment ceiling during the year will require the approval of the Finance Committee.

13 Where civil servants work in the Housing Authority, the Hospital Authority, the Vocational Training Council, or, in certain cases, in subvented organisations or other public bodies, expenditure on their salaries and allowances is shown under *Subhead 003 Recoverable salaries and allowances (General)* or under specific subheads as indicated in the Estimates (e.g. *Subhead 006 Recoverable salaries and allowances (Companies Registry Trading Fund)*). Recoveries in respect of these salaries and allowances are credited to the same subhead but on-costs are credited to General Revenue.

14 In respect of *Salaries*, the estimated provision under individual Heads of Expenditure takes into account changes in requirements due to salary increments, changes in establishment, filling of vacancies, pre-retirement leave of staff, etc. For certain Heads of Expenditure, the provision covers non-accountable entertainment allowance for eligible officers.

15 In respect of *Allowances*, the scope covers various allowances payable to staff relating to the performance of duty other than job-related allowances, such as Acting Allowance, Overtime and related allowances, etc.

16 In respect of *Job-related allowances*, the scope covers various job-related allowances payable to staff, including Extraneous Duties Allowances (for civilian staff), Extra Duties Allowances (for disciplined services staff), Hardship Allowances, Shift Duty Allowance, Typhoon Allowance and Rainstorm Black Warning Allowance, etc.

Personnel Related Expenses

17 The scope of *Mandatory Provident Fund contribution* covers the Government's contributions to the Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme for staff on agreement terms and those appointed under the new probationary terms.

18 The scope of *Civil Service Provident Fund contribution* covers the Government's contributions to the Civil Service Provident Fund Scheme for civil servants appointed under the new civil service entry terms and are confirmed to the permanent establishment.

Departmental Expenses

19 The scope of *General departmental expenses* covers expenses that are directly related to the day-to-day running of the department and may include the following—

Administration—for expenditure on subsistence allowances (other than hotel subsistence allowance), telephone rentals, telephone call charges, private communication lines, duty visits (including travel costs), official entertainment, postage, photocopying and reproduction, advertisement, printing costs, write-offs, refunds of revenue and incidental administration expenses not elsewhere specified;

Contract maintenance—for expenditure on all maintenance work on capital assets that is carried out under contract;

Expenses of visiting advisers—for expenses on experts visiting Hong Kong at the invitation of the Government;

Fuel and lubricating oil—for expenditure on fuel and lubricants for aircraft, vessels, furnaces, generators and other plant;

Hire of services and professional fees—for payment of fees to accountants, lawyers, consultants, witnesses, artists, performers and other non-government professionals and for expenditure on the hire of cleansing services, security services, laundry services, flight calibration and inspection services, plant and vehicles (other than those required for travel and transport), computer services and other hired services not specifically covered elsewhere;

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Honoraria for members of committees—for payment of honoraria to members of committees (other than official members);

Information and communications technology rentals and maintenance—for expenditure on rentals, maintenance and excess usage of computer hardware, software and data preparation facilities; and on the rental of communication terminals, lines and modems;

Light and power—for payment of gas and electricity bills;

Maintenance materials—for expenditure on materials for the maintenance of capital assets;

Office rents and rates—for payment of office rents and rates including associated car park and management charges on leased office accommodation;

Provisions for institutions—for expenditure on institutional diets (e.g. in prisons and hospitals);

Recruiting expenses—for expenditure on advertisement, publicity campaigns, first appointment passage and other associated expenses arising from recruiting exercises;

Remuneration for special appointments—for payment of remuneration and the Government's contributions to the Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme in respect of officers on special appointments;

Rewards and special services—for expenditure on services of a confidential nature;

Specialist supplies and equipment—for expenditure on supplies and equipment of a specialist nature peculiar to the department concerned;

Staff motivation scheme—for expenditure on staff motivation activities, including educational programmes, publicity and awards in kind, for sustaining the commitment of staff to the performance pledge programmes and to a general improvement in service;

Staff suggestions scheme—for expenditure on awards in cash or kind to eligible officers for suggestions for improving the efficiency of the civil service;

Staff welfare fund—for expenditure on sports, social, welfare and recreational activities of eligible officers, including provision for the purchase and maintenance of sports and recreational equipment;

Stores and equipment—for expenditure on clothing and uniforms, cleaning materials, paper, office stationery, general publications, periodicals and journals, office furniture, information and communications technology equipment, office equipment (including the rental of equipment) and workshop tools and equipment costing not more than \$200,000 per item;

Temporary staff—for employment of casual labour, post-secondary students and temporary staff and the Government's contributions to the Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme in respect of such temporary staff;

Trading Fund services—for expenses in relation to services provided by Trading Funds;

Training expenses—for expenditure on training fees, learning and development projects, study grant, training-related travel costs, publications, equipment and teaching aids and other minor expenses related to training;

Transport and travelling—for expenditure on petrol and oil for vehicles used for travel and transport, the hire of vehicles for travel and transport, duty mileage allowance and duty travelling; and

Workshop services—for expenses in relation to services provided by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund.

Subheads with Commitments

20 Expenditure items under these subheads are controlled by both the approved commitment of the item and the current year provision for each subhead. The approved commitment of an expenditure item represents the total cost of the project, which may straddle several years. Not all approved commitment items require spending in 2024–25. For those that do, details of their approved commitments are included in the Commitments page of the relevant Heads of Expenditure. Any new commitment that is not yet approved is included in the Commitments page of the relevant Head of Expenditure and marked with a footnote specifying that it is a new item, funding for which is sought in the context of the Appropriation Bill 2024.

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21 In the Commitments page, the approved commitment is shown in the first column, accumulated expenditure to 31 March 2023 in the second column, the revised estimate of expenditure for 2023–24 in the third column and the balance of the commitment in the last column. Figures for subhead totals in the third column may differ from those shown as revised estimate for 2023–24 on the subhead analysis page for the head because the Commitments page does not cover those commitments without cash requirement in 2024–25. The total balance shown in the last column of the Commitments page may exceed the provision shown under the same subhead on the subhead analysis page. This implies that one or more of the commitments under the subhead are not expected to be fully spent in 2024–25 and that the balances of some items will be carried forward to 2025–26. This does not stop departments from becoming committed contractually up to the level of the total unspent balance, provided that they are satisfied that actual expenditure incurred during 2024–25 will not exceed the provision for the respective subhead.

Block Vote Subheads

22 There is no approved commitment for items under capital account block vote subheads. Expenditure under these subheads is controlled by the approved provision only. The approved 2024–25 provision for each block vote subhead is limiting on both expenditure and commitments. As the approved provision is usually fully committed well before the close of the financial year, and yet will most likely be underspent because of delays beyond Government's control or lead time required for purchase or construction, the Finance Committee has approved a standard limit of over-commitment for all block votes of 50 per cent of the approved provision. Where this is inadequate, the Finance Committee will be approached for approval of a higher limit.