

Statistics of payment cards issued in Hong Kong for first quarter 2024

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) published today (June 21) statistics of payment cards issued in Hong Kong for the first quarter of 2024.

The payment card statistics (see Annex) include quarterly data on credit and debit cards issued in Hong Kong under the credit and/or debit card schemes of the eight payment card scheme operators (Note 1). The HKMA began to publish the payment card statistics on a quarterly basis in June 2010 to enhance transparency of the payment card industry in Hong Kong, in line with international practice.

According to the quarterly statistics, the total number of credit cards in circulation (Note 2) was 19.98 million by the end of Q1/2024. The figure represents a 1.5 per cent increase from the previous quarter and a 1.5 per cent increase from the previous year. The number and value of credit card transactions (including retail sales and cash advances) (Note 3) are susceptible to seasonal factors and the general economic environment, making the trends more prone to fluctuation. The total number of credit card transactions was 302.34 million for Q1/2024, representing a 0.3 per cent decrease from the previous quarter and a 16.5 per cent increase from the same period in 2023. The total value of credit card transactions was HK\$252.8 billion for Q1/2024, representing a 3.2 per cent increase from the previous quarter and a 9.1 per cent increase from the same period in 2023. Of the total transaction value, HK\$185.2 billion (73.3 per cent) was related to retail spending in Hong Kong, HK\$58.3 billion (23.1 per cent) in retail spending overseas and HK\$9.3 billion (3.7 per cent) in cash advances.

The total number of debit cards in circulation is not available due to overlapping of debit card brands in a single card. Like the number and value of credit card transactions, the number and value of debit card transactions in relation to retail sales and bills payments (Note 4) are also affected by seasonal factors. On a quarterly basis, the total number of debit card transactions in relation to retail sales and bills payments decreased by 0.7 per cent to 48.30 million while the total value increased by 3.0 per cent to HK\$75.3 billion in Q1/2024. When compared to the same period in 2023, the total number increased by 3.9 per cent and the total value dropped by 5.0 per cent in Q1/2024.

Note 1: The payment card statistics are compiled from data on credit and debit cards issued in Hong Kong by both authorized institutions (AIs) and non-authorized institutions (non-AIs) under the credit and/or debit card schemes of the eight payment card scheme operators ("the card operators"). The card operators, in alphabetical order, are American Express

International, Inc., Discover Financial Services (Hong Kong) Limited, EPS Company (Hong Kong) Limited (EPSCO), JCB International (Asia) Ltd, Joint Electronic Teller Services Ltd. (JETCO), MasterCard Asia/Pacific Pte. Ltd., UnionPay International Co. Ltd and Visa Worldwide Pte. Limited.

Note 2: A credit card issued in Hong Kong only carries one credit card brand. The total number of credit cards in circulation refers to the total number of credit cards (i.e. cards with a credit function) issued in Hong Kong under the credit card schemes of card operators (but excluding EPSCO and JETCO, which do not operate a credit card scheme). Some of these credit cards carry debit card functions, i.e. the credit card can be used for making purchases/payments or cash withdrawal at ATMs through directly debiting cardholders' bank accounts.

Note 3: The total number/value of credit card transactions refer to the total number/value of transactions made via credit card accounts of credit cards issued in Hong Kong under the credit card schemes of card operators (excluding EPSCO and JETCO). Starting from March 2015, a Hong Kong/overseas spending breakdown of credit card retail sales transactions is provided.

Note 4: The total number/value of debit card transactions in relation to retail sales/bill payments refers to the total number/value of those transactions made via debiting cardholders' bank accounts. Some of the eight card operators do not operate a debit card scheme. Care should be exercised in combining the credit card retail sales figures and the debit card retail sales/bills payment figures because of the possibility of double counting.

Statistics of Stored Value Facilities Schemes issued by SVF Licensees

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) published today (June 21) statistics on Stored Value Facilities (SVF) schemes issued by SVF licensees for the first quarter of 2024.

The SVF scheme statistics (see Annex) include quarterly data on SVF schemes issued by the SVF licensees of the relevant periods.

According to the quarterly statistics, the total number of SVF accounts in use (Note 1) was 73.58 million by the end of Q1/2024, representing a 3.0 per cent increase from the previous quarter. The total number of SVF transactions was around 1.9 billion for Q1/2024, or 4.0 per cent lower than the previous quarter. The total value of SVF transactions was HK\$166.1 billion for Q1/2024, representing a 1.0 per cent increase from the previous

quarter. Of the total transaction value, HK\$42.8 billion was related to point-of-sale spending payment, HK\$25.2 billion in online spending payment, HK\$14.2 billion in P2P funds transfer and HK\$83.9 billion in add value. The total float and SVF deposit (Note 2) was HK\$17.5 billion at the end of Q1/2024, 1.4 per cent higher than the previous quarter.

As compared with the end of Q1/2023, the total number of SVF accounts in use at the end of Q1/2024 was up by 16.9 per cent, and the total float and SVF deposit was up by 9.7 per cent. The total number and value of SVF transactions during Q1/2024 were up by 5.5 per cent and 19.9 per cent respectively year-on-year.

Note 1: "Total number of SVF accounts in use" refers to the total number of SVF accounts that can be used as at the end of the reporting period.

Note 2: The terms "float" and "SVF deposit" follow their definitions in the Payment Systems and Stored Value Facilities Ordinance.

Enhancements to Code of Practice on Person-to-Person Marketing Calls

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) welcomes the launch of the revised Code of Practice on Person-to-Person Marketing Calls (the Code) by the Hong Kong Association of Banks (HKAB) and the DTC Association (DTCA) today (June 21).

The Code provides guidance to Authorized Institutions (AIs) in undertaking telemarketing activities with a view to promoting good banking practices. The latest revision sets a limit on the frequency of person-to-person marketing calls (Note 1) made to the same telephone number to no more than three calls in a calendar week. This will enhance telemarketing experience of the public. On top of this, the Code also provides guidance to AIs on other major areas to protect the public, for example, confining hours of making calls to 9am to 10pm; providing clear identity of the callers and purpose of calls to the called parties; handling requests for unsubscribing marketing calls; controls over collection of information from the called parties and arrangement for any subsequent meetings; and mechanism for handling of complaints.

The Code is jointly issued by the HKAB and the DTCA. The enhanced Code is effective from today (June 21, 2024). The HKMA expects all AIs to follow the enhanced guidance as soon as practicable in accordance with the implementation timeline prescribed in the Code.

Note 1: Excluding "warm calls" which broadly refer to calls whereby the AI is able to identify the called party with prior contact.

[Labour Department brings prosecutions regarding fatal work accident at construction site on Austin Road West](#)

Regarding a fatal work accident that occurred in September last year in an underground cooling main at a construction site on Austin Road West, the Labour Department (LD) has completed its investigation.

Having consulted the Department of Justice, the LD has initiated a total of 31 prosecutions against the relevant duty holders (including the relevant contractor, subcontractors and individuals) under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance (Cap. 59) and the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Confined Spaces) Regulation (Cap. 59AE). As the accident involved extremely serious occupational safety and health contraventions, the LD decided for the first time to take out part of the prosecutions against the duty holders concerned by way of indictment under the Occupational Safety and Occupational Health Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 2023, which came into effect last April. Upon conviction, the maximum penalty is a fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for two years.

A spokesperson for the LD said, "The LD will not tolerate illegal acts, and will strictly enforce the law and do its utmost to protect the occupational safety and health of employees."

To curb unsafe work practices and ensure the safety of workers, the LD last year conducted a two-week special inspection exercise targeting confined space work in construction sites. Moreover, the LD revised the Code of Practice for Safety and Health at Work in Confined Spaces (CoP) which was gazetted on May 31, 2024. The CoP will take effect on November 30, 2024, after a six-month transition period for the industry to get prepared for the revision.

The spokesperson said that the CoP provides proprietors, contractors, competent persons and certified workers with practical guidance and technical information to comply with the requirements set out in the occupational safety and health legislation regarding confined space work for safeguarding the safety and health of workers.

The LD takes this opportunity to remind contractors and employers once again that they should provide plant, systems of work as well as a working environment that are safe and without risk to health to safeguard the work

safety of construction workers. Employees should also co-operate with their employers, adopt all safety measures and use the provided personal protective equipment properly to avoid endangering their own work safety and that of other workers.

Consumer Price Indices for May 2024

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (June 21) the Consumer Price Index (CPI) figures for May 2024. According to the Composite CPI, overall consumer prices rose by 1.2% in May 2024 over the same month a year earlier, slightly larger than the corresponding increase (1.1%) in April 2024. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the year-on-year rate of increase in the Composite CPI (i.e. the underlying inflation rate) in May 2024 was 1.0%, also slightly larger than that in April 2024 (0.9%).

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the average monthly rate of change in the Composite CPI for the 3-month period ending May 2024 was -0.2%, the same as that for the 3-month period ending April 2024. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the corresponding rates of change were 0.1% and 0.0%.

Analysed by sub-index, the year-on-year rates of increase in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 1.2%, 1.1% and 1.2% respectively in May 2024, as compared to 1.1%, 1.0% and 1.1% respectively in April 2024. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the year-on-year rates of increase in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 0.9%, 1.1% and 1.2% respectively in May 2024, as compared to 0.8%, 1.0% and 1.1% respectively in April 2024.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, for the 3-month period ending May 2024, the average monthly rates of change in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were -0.3%, -0.2% and -0.1% respectively. The corresponding rates of change for the 3-month period ending April 2024 were -0.3%, -0.2% and 0.0% respectively. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the average monthly rates of change in the seasonally adjusted CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) for the 3-month period ending May 2024 were 0.2%, 0.1% and 0.0% respectively, and the corresponding rates of change for the 3-month period ending April 2024 were 0.1%, 0.0% and 0.1% respectively.

Amongst the various components of the Composite CPI, year-on-year increases in prices were recorded in May 2024 for alcoholic drinks and tobacco (20.1%), meals out and takeaway food (3.0%), transport (2.3%), miscellaneous services (2.2%), miscellaneous goods (1.2%), clothing and footwear (1.1%), and housing (1.1%).

On the other hand, year-on-year decreases in the components of the

Composite CPI were recorded in May 2024 for electricity, gas and water (-10.9%), and durable goods (-0.9%).

As for basic food, the Composite CPI in May 2024 remained unchanged over a year earlier.

Taking the first 5 months of 2024 together, the Composite CPI rose by 1.6% over a year earlier. The respective increases in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 1.8%, 1.5% and 1.5% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 1.0%, 0.7%, 1.0% and 1.2% respectively.

For the 3 months ending May 2024, the Composite CPI rose by 1.4% over a year earlier, while the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) rose by 1.6%, 1.3% and 1.3% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 1.0%, 0.8%, 1.0% and 1.2% respectively.

For the 12 months ending May 2024, the Composite CPI was on average 1.9% higher than that in the preceding 12-month period. The respective increases in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.2%, 1.8% and 1.8% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 1.3%, 1.2%, 1.3% and 1.5% respectively.

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that underlying consumer price inflation remained modest in May. Prices of meals out and takeaway food continued to increase at a relatively fast pace over a year earlier, while those of basic food were virtually unchanged. Prices of energy-related items decreased markedly further. Price pressures on other major components remained broadly in check.

Looking ahead, overall inflation should stay contained in the near term. Domestic cost pressures may increase as the Hong Kong economy continues to grow. External price pressures should continue to stay on a broad moderating trend, though geopolitical tensions may bring uncertainties. The Government will continue to monitor the situation.

Further information

The CPIs and year-on-year rates of change at section level for May 2024 are shown in Table 1. The time series on the year-on-year rates of change in the CPIs before and after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures are shown in Table 2. For discerning the latest trend in consumer prices, it is also useful to look at the changes in the seasonally adjusted CPIs. The time series on the average monthly rates of change during the latest 3 months for the seasonally adjusted CPIs are shown in Table 3. The rates of change in the original and the seasonally adjusted Composite CPI and the underlying inflation rate are presented graphically in Chart 1.

More detailed statistics are given in the "Monthly Report on the Consumer Price Index". Users can browse and download this publication at the

website of the C&SD

(www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1060001&scode=270).

For enquiries about the CPIs, please contact the Consumer Price Index Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7374 or email: cpi@censtatd.gov.hk).