

Granting of virtual banking licences

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (May 9) that the Monetary Authority has granted banking licences under the Banking Ordinance to Ant SME Services (Hong Kong) Limited, Infinium Limited, Insight Fintech HK Limited and Ping An OneConnect Company Limited for them to operate in the form of a virtual bank. The granting of these banking licences takes effect today. According to their business plans, these four newly licenced virtual banks intend to launch their services in around six to nine months.

The Chief Executive of the HKMA, Mr Norman Chan, said, "We are pleased to grant four more virtual banking licences today. The HKMA is now working closely with the eight virtual bank licensees to prepare for the launch of their business operations in accordance with their plans."

"The launch of virtual banks in Hong Kong, which is a key component of the Smart Banking Initiatives, will certainly facilitate financial innovation, enhanced customer experience and financial inclusion," he said.

The HKMA will closely monitor the operations of virtual banks after they have commenced business, including customers' reactions to the new modes of delivery of financial services as well as the impact, if any, of these virtual banks on the banking sector in general. The HKMA expects to be able to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the situation about one year after the first virtual bank has launched its service.

After the granting of the above banking licences, the number of licensed banks in Hong Kong increases to 160.