

Hong Kong Police Force launches Anti-Deception Alliance today (with photos)

The Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) held the inauguration ceremony for the Anti-Deception Alliance today (November 24).

In response to the escalating trend of deception, the HKPF, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) and the banking industry, conducted a sharing session in April this year and devised multiple measures to strengthen the efforts to combat deception. One of the key initiatives was the establishment of a new joint platform, where representatives from 10 major banks will be assigned to work alongside officers of the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC) under the purview of the Commercial Crime Bureau of the HKPF to provide real-time assistance to Police in addressing fraudulent activities. With the invaluable support and collective endeavours of the HKMA, the Hong Kong Association of Banks (HKAB) and the 10 participating banks, the Anti-Deception Alliance is officially established today, paving the way for a new chapter of public-private partnership between the HKPF and the banking industry.

The establishment of the Anti-Deception Alliance signifies the shared vision and unwavering commitment of the HKPF, the HKMA and the banking industry to combat deception, safeguard the financial interests of Hong Kong citizens and uphold the reputation of Hong Kong as an international financial hub. By implementing an instant, direct and effective communication mechanism between the HKPF and the banks, the Anti-Deception Alliance is dedicated to enhancing the capabilities and efficacy of both parties in the relentless fight against deception. The primary objectives and charters of the Anti-Deception Alliance include:

1. Expediting the processing of handling stop-payment requests to improve the efficacy of the mechanism.
2. Strengthening co-operation and co-ordination between the HKPF and the banks in the implementation of "Upstream Scam Intervention" mechanism, which entails promptly and proactively identifying and alerting potential victims of deception in an effort to intervene ongoing deception cases at the earliest stage and prevent the victims from suffering further financial losses.
3. Enhancing strategic intelligence exchange between the HKPF and the banks to more effectively identify emerging fraudulent activities and their associated risks in order to facilitate the formulation and implementation of corresponding countermeasures to mitigate such risks.
4. Providing an interactive platform for the participating banks to facilitate the sharing of best practices in anti-deception strategies to establish a safer and more reliable financial environment.

The inauguration ceremony was officiated by the Commissioner of Police, Mr Siu Chak-ye; Executive Director (Enforcement and AML) of the HKMA, Ms Carmen Chu; Acting Chairman of the HKAB, Mr Stephen Chan, and the representatives of the 10 participating banks (see Annex).

In his address at the ceremony, Mr Siu emphasised the significant impact of rapid economic development and extensive application of technologies on the global rise in deception cases and financial losses. Hong Kong, as an international city, faces similar challenges. He stressed that the battle to effectively curb deception requires a collective effort from various stakeholders, as no single entity can tackle it alone. Mr Siu called upon all sectors of the society to embrace their social responsibilities, leverage their expertise and resources, strengthen co-operation, and jointly develop more strategic, proactive, and innovative measures. Such collaborative efforts would yield synergistic effects and enhance the overall effectiveness of anti-scam endeavours. He expressed his sincere hope for continuous collaboration with stakeholders across sectors, working together to prevent and combat deception, safeguard the financial interests of Hong Kong citizens, and uphold the esteemed reputation of Hong Kong as an international financial centre.

Mr Siu also recognised the pivotal role played by the banking industry as an essential partner of the HKPF to prevent and combat deception. From the establishment of the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre in July 2017 to October 31 this year, a total of 864 deception cases identified by bank staff were successfully intervened, 700 fraudsters were arrested and illicit funds worth over \$12.3 billion were intercepted as a result of the close collaboration with the banking industry. In addition, the HKPF has joined forces with the banking industry to implement "Upstream Scam Intervention" mechanism since May this year. By analysing suspicious bank accounts, proactively identifying potential victims of deception, and co-ordinating among the HKPF and the banks, potential victims are promptly contacted via phone calls, text messages, or the deployment of police officers to provide them with anti-deception advice. Since its implementation, a total of 320 ongoing deception cases were successfully intervened as of October 31.

Mr Siu believed that, with the commencement of the Anti-Deception Alliance, robust partnerships and strong co-operation with the banking industry will be established. This, in turn, will further enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of stop-payment processing, facilitate timely scam intervention and accelerate intelligence exchange to reinforce the efficacy of enforcement actions.

