

Exchange Fund Bills tender results

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

Exchange Fund Bills tender results:

Tender date	: February 20, 2024
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Q2408
Issue date	: February 21, 2024
Maturity date	: May 22, 2024
Amount applied	: HK\$117,324 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$61,123 MN
Average yield accepted	: 4.09 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 4.17 PCT
Pro rata ratio*	: About 88 PCT
Average tender yield	: 4.21 PCT

Tender date	: February 20, 2024
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: H2437
Issue date	: February 21, 2024
Maturity date	: August 21, 2024
Amount applied	: HK\$38,165 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$13,000 MN
Average yield accepted	: 4.01 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 4.08 PCT
Pro rata ratio*	: About 32 PCT
Average tender yield	: 4.12 PCT

*"Pro rata ratio" refers to the average percentage of allotment with respect to each tender participant's tendered amount at the "highest yield accepted" level.

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tenders to be held in the week beginning February 26, 2024:

Tender date	: February 27, 2024
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Q2409
Issue date	: February 28, 2024

Maturity date : May 29, 2024
Tenor : 91 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$61,385 MN

Tender date : February 27, 2024
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : H2438
Issue date : February 28, 2024
Maturity date : August 28, 2024
Tenor : 182 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$14,000 MN

[Applications invited for Equal Opportunities \(Sexual Orientation\) Funding Scheme](#)

The Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (CMAB) invites applications under the Equal Opportunities (Sexual Orientation) Funding Scheme 2024-25 as from today (February 20).

"The Government is committed to fostering the culture and values of inclusiveness, mutual respect and non-discrimination, and promoting equal opportunities for people of different sexual orientations and transgender persons. The funding scheme provides funding support to worthwhile community projects which aim at promoting equal opportunities on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, or seek to provide support services for the sexual minorities," a spokesman for the CMAB said.

Information on making applications is available on the CMAB website (www.cmab.gov.hk/en/issues/equalsofs_sex.htm). The deadline for applications is April 2, 2024.

An online briefing session will be held on March 1, 2024, to brief interested parties on the scope and operation of the funding scheme.

For enquiries, please contact the Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Unit of the CMAB at 2810 3205.

Applications invited for Constitution and Basic Law Promotion Activity and Research Sponsorship Scheme

The Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau is inviting a new round of applications under the Constitution and Basic Law Promotion Activity and Research Sponsorship Scheme (Sponsorship Scheme).

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has been promoting the Constitution, the Basic Law and the National Security Law to members of the public through various channels. The Sponsorship Scheme aims to promote the Constitution, the Basic Law and the National Security Law among different sectors of the community and to encourage different groups or organisations to conduct research on the Constitution, the Basic Law and the National Security Law, with a view to enhancing public understanding of and support for the Constitution, the Basic Law, the National Security Law and the "one country, two systems" principle.

Application information can be downloaded from the Basic Law website (www.basiclaw.gov.hk/en/committee/sponsorship.html). The deadline for application is April 2, 2024.

For enquiries, please contact the Secretariat of the Sponsorship Scheme at 2810 2106.

EPD holds first briefing on MSW charging for Care Teams (with photo)

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) held the first briefing on municipal solid waste (MSW) charging for the District Services and Community Care Teams at Leighton Hill Community Hall today (February 20). At the briefing, the Director of Environmental Protection, Dr Samuel Chui, briefed Care Team members on the latest implementation arrangements of MSW charging and the implementation details of the first phase of regulating disposable plastic tableware and other plastic products.

During the briefing, Dr Chui also listened to Care Team members' opinions on the preparatory work on MSW charging and the relevant waste reduction and recycling measures. He said, "The Government hopes to encourage the community to cherish resources and promote waste reduction at source and clean recycling, in order to reduce the overall quantities of MSW being

disposed of; and this is the policy intent of MSW charging. It is definitely not our intention to generate additional revenue for the Government and we do not intend to punish the public by implementing MSW charging."

"To successfully implement this policy involving all sectors of Hong Kong, the support at the community level is essential. I appeal to all Care Team members to work with the District Council (DC) members and members of the local community to fully support and assist the EPD in promoting and explaining the policy of MSW charging in their community work, so as to help the general public to get prepared for the implementation of MSW charging," Dr Chui added.

The EPD will hold two more briefings for Care Team members in Kowloon and the New Territories to explain to them the arrangement and implementation details of MSW charging, in order to enable them to explain it to the public. The EPD has also delivered the promotional materials of MSW charging to District Offices for distribution to DC members and Care Team members for their use.



[Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo \(with video\)](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (February 20):

Reporter: Good morning. You talked about the visitor arrival figures, how do you assess these figures? Do you think the tourism sector has fully recovered? What's the Government doing to help sustain the growth apart from organising more mega events? Secondly, about the consultation period of (the legislation of the Basic Law) Article 23, because the period is ending in a week, can you tell us how much feedback you've received from the general public and also specific groups like chambers of commerce? Will the

Government summarise and publish these views? Do you have a rough estimate when you will be tabling the bill to the Legislative Council? Thank you.

Chief Executive: I have given you some factual statistics about the number of visitors to Hong Kong. I have explained that, first of all, the numbers of visitors from overseas and Mainland cities have been going up and some figures have actually come back to pre-COVID time. In some areas, actually, the figures are higher. I have previously mentioned that the incoming visitor figures from the Philippines or Thailand have actually gone over the pre-COVID figures. The last figure I just quoted regarding Mainland visitors, you can also see that the number of visitors have gone back to pre-COVID time, more or less. Then, do we have further growth in the tourist numbers? I think yes, because the capacity building is still being worked on by different industries, including the aviation industry. Shortage of labour, for example, has been addressed by various importation of labour measures. The Labour Department is busily processing applications so that the number of people working in Hong Kong can be sufficient to handle the bottlenecks. These bottlenecks, whether they are in the transportation sector, aviation sector, service sector or catering sector, will be addressed in due course. Of course, I want these figures to be up and coming in a fast speed so that we can have a quicker speed of recovery. But I am glad to see that my colleagues are working hard, and also industries are playing their part actively. I have confidence that 2024 will see a lot of strengthening of capacities in different areas. Some sectors have already indicated that they believe that there will be 100 per cent recovery towards the end of the year, but I still want the recovery speed to be faster.

The different promotion activities that we are doing, I think, is acting as a good magnet for all activities that take place in Hong Kong, and they are all attractions for people from different parts of the world to come to Hong Kong. We have just stepped into 2024, the Year of the Dragon as well, and you see all these positive signs showing up, and I have just earlier informed you of the rising figures in different areas, including our convention and exhibition sector. Some people even say that those 300-odd events will mean almost one event a day in the year of 2024, and altogether there will be a lot of events. Some big events are coming back to Hong Kong. Some of them have moved out of Hong Kong because of COVID; I have told you some examples of them coming back to Hong Kong. The Government is serious in promoting mega events, promoting different activities so that Hong Kong will be the brand for people to realise activities which will bring results and value. Hong Kong has strengths in many regards because this is the place where East meets West, and it is a cultural hub, and an arts hub as well.

All these events I have told you will add together, and I think the critical mass is being built up. When the critical mass is built up, I think the momentum will be self-reinforcing. But the Government will continue to work hard, and will take no complacency because I think there is never the best, only the better. That is what I want my colleagues to do, and also something I want Hong Kong people to be aware of and work together because we are in constant competition with other cities. All cities want to promote tourism and mega events, to promote their own attractions and

competitiveness. We must work hard, and we must double our efforts. We must unite together. Don't waste our time on internal dissipation of energy. Yes, if there are views and suggestions that will bring overall good, we will listen. But it is important that we know it is a complicated world, not just for economic reasons, sometimes things happen for political reasons. So we have to be up and keep our eyes open so that we know what are the things that we need to unite on. We do the work together, we reduce dissipation of energy and ensure that we are in a good form and good state to compete with our neighbours.

In regard to Article 23, yes, next week the consultation period will be completed. We have been receiving a lot of opinions. The majority of them support Article 23 enactment, and some of the opinions are also in response to the consultation document because we have been quite elaborate in presenting the different things that various jurisdictions and countries are doing. We also believe that because of what we went through in 2019 – the attempted “colour revolution” and the “dark violence”, the awareness has been very strong.

One important thing is that the general opinion gives me the impression that they are in support of the overall goal of enacting Article 23 to ensure that we protect ourselves when people want to cause damage to us. A lot of opinions subscribe to the idea that this is a piece of legislation that will ensure that when other people want to break into our house, cause harm or damage to us, the Article 23 enactment should be able to protect us from all these threats, attacks, break-ins and harms. We will of course report the overall result of the consultation in due course to the Legislative Council. The general consensus is that if we can do it one day earlier, we should do it one day earlier because the threat continues, and the threat actually has been mounting. So we must gear up our efforts to ensure that we will do it as soon as possible. And we will do it as soon as possible.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)