

[HKMA and SFC consult on annual updates to Financial Services Providers list under OTC derivatives regulatory regime](#)

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) and Securities and Futures Commission (SFC) today (April 19) issued a [joint consultation](#) on the annual update to the list of Financial Services Providers (FSP) under the over-the-counter (OTC) derivatives clearing regime (Note).

The concept of FSP has been introduced to the clearing regime to identify major OTC derivatives dealers outside Hong Kong. Central clearing is required for certain transactions conducted between an FSP and a prescribed person (i.e., an authorized institution, an approved money broker or a licensed corporation).

Proposed changes to the list include adding one entity and updating the name of another.

Interested parties are invited to submit comments to the HKMA or SFC by May 17, 2024. The joint consultation paper can be downloaded from the websites of the [HKMA](#) or [SFC](#).

Note: The list includes entities that meet the following two criteria:

- (i) They belong to a group of companies that appears on either the list of global systemically important banks published by the Financial Stability Board, or the list of dealer groups which undertook to the OTC Derivatives Supervisors Group to work collaboratively with central counterparties, infrastructure providers and global supervisors to continue to make structural improvements to the global OTC derivatives markets; and
- (ii) They are clearing members of the largest central counterparties offering clearing for interest rate swaps in the United States, Europe, Japan and Hong Kong.

[Hong Kong Customs detects smuggling case involving about \\$1.8 million](#)

[suspected scheduled dried shark fins by river trade vessel \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs on April 16 mounted an anti-smuggling operation in the western waters of Hong Kong and detected a suspected smuggling case involving a river trade vessel in the waters off Fan Lau. About 360 kilograms of suspected scheduled dried shark fins of endangered species with an estimated market value of about \$1.8 million were seized.

During an anti-smuggling operation conducted in the above-mentioned waters on that day, Customs intercepted a river trade vessel heading towards Macao. After inspection, Customs officers found the batch of suspected scheduled dried shark fins of endangered species on board the vessel.

An investigation is ongoing and the likelihood of arrests is not ruled out.

Under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting an endangered species without a licence is liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/).



[SLW's speaking notes on labour, manpower development and retirement protection policy areas tabled at](#)

LegCo Finance Committee special meeting

Following are the speaking notes of the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, on labour, manpower development and retirement protection policy areas tabled at the special meeting of the Legislative Council Finance Committee today (April 19):

Chairman and Honourable Members,

Recurrent government spending on labour and manpower development in 2024-25 is estimated to be \$3,350 million, representing an increase of \$540 million (about 19.4 per cent) over the revised estimate of \$2,810 million last year. It accounts for 0.6 per cent of the total recurrent government expenditure. I will highlight the key areas of work in respect of the relevant areas in the coming year.

Re-employment Allowance Pilot Scheme

To encourage the elderly and middle-aged to join the workforce, the Labour Department (LD) will launch a three-year Re-employment Allowance Pilot Scheme. The Scheme will provide a re-employment allowance to persons aged 40 or above who have not been at paid employment for three consecutive months or more to incentivise them to rejoin the workforce. Each eligible person will receive a maximum re-employment allowance of \$20,000 during the implementation of the Scheme. The estimated expenditure for the re-employment allowance is approximately \$120 million, which is expected to benefit some 6 000 persons.

"Continuous contract" requirement

The Labour Advisory Board has reached a consensus on the review of the "continuous contract" requirement (commonly referred to as the "418" requirement) under the Employment Ordinance. Such a requirement will be relaxed by using the aggregate working hours of four weeks as a counting unit and setting the four-week working hour threshold at 68 hours. The Government has reported the review outcome to the Panel on Manpower of the Legislative Council and commenced the relevant legislative amendment work.

Abolition of Mandatory Provident Fund offsetting arrangement

To tie in with the implementation of the abolition of the Mandatory Provident Fund offsetting arrangement on May 1 next year, the Government is pressing ahead with the preparatory work, including developing an information technology system for the Government Subsidy Scheme and formulating its operational details.

Collecting information on working situation of digital platform workers

The LD has commissioned the Census and Statistics Department to conduct a Thematic Household Survey to collect information on the working situation of local digital platform workers (DPWs) and plans to collect the views of DPWs for the formulation of strategies for protecting DPWs.

Enhancing occupational safety and health

The LD is highly concerned about the recent fatal work accidents. Apart from commencing immediate on-site investigations, issuing suspension notices to the relevant duty holders and ascertaining the legal liability of the duty holders concerned, the LD has launched a series of follow-up actions having regard to the nature of the accidents, such as conducting targeted special enforcement operations and setting up Special Task Forces to combat unsafe work activities.

The LD has also revised the Code of Practice (CoP) for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety, which involves enhancing the stability of bamboo scaffolds and requiring bamboo scaffolders to possess valid safety training certificates before carrying out the relevant work. The newly revised CoP has been gazetted today.

On the other hand, to enhance the safety and health protection for workers in confined spaces, the LD will revise the relevant CoP following stakeholder consultations. It is expected to complete the revision exercise in the first half of this year.

Pilot Rehabilitation Programme for Employees Injured at Work

The LD is going to extend the Pilot Programme to cover the "catering and hotel industry" and the "transportation and logistics industry" starting from next month, with the aim of benefiting more injured employees.

Talent attraction

In the face of the labour shortage for various industries, on top of ongoing promotion of local training, the Government has also implemented various talent attraction measures including the launch of the Top Talent Pass Scheme (TTPS) since the end of 2022.

As at end-March this year, around 110 000 talents have arrived in Hong Kong through various talent admission schemes. Of these, we received over 77 000 applications under the TTPS and approved nearly 62 000. While there is no requirement for the TTPS entrants to be employed in the first two years, many of them have already been working in Hong Kong.

We understand from last November's follow-up surveys with the TTPS entrants having arrived in Hong Kong for more than six months that 54 per cent of the talents arrived in Hong Kong had been in employment, taking up primarily managerial and professional posts with median monthly employment earnings of about \$50,000. Around 25 per cent of the talents had monthly

employment earnings of \$100,000 or above. These are obviously higher than the local median monthly employment earnings of \$20,000. In addition, 16 per cent of the incoming talents' spouses had already taken up employment and most of them were engaged in high-skilled jobs. These survey findings illustrate that the arrival of the TTPS entrants and their spouses brings about direct economic contribution to Hong Kong. Besides, more than half of them were aged under 40 and many of them settled in Hong Kong with their young children. They will add new impetus to the local labour force and bring about positive impact on Hong Kong's demographic structure.

We will review the TTPS and other enhanced arrangements of talent admission in the middle of this year to ensure the competitiveness of the measures and their effectiveness in addressing local manpower demands.

To alleviate the manpower shortage in skilled trades, the Government decided to launch the Vocational Professionals Admission Scheme. Starting from the 2024/25 admission cohort, non-local students of designated full-time professional Higher Diploma programmes of the Vocational Training Council (VTC) can apply for staying in Hong Kong for one year after graduation under the Scheme to seek jobs relevant to their disciplines. This Scheme will be piloted for two years. The VTC is now conducting publicity and student recruitment.

Hong Kong Talent Engage, established at the end of October last year, provides support and organises activities for incoming talent to proactively attract global talent with diverse backgrounds to come and settle in Hong Kong. We will organise the Global Talent Summit · Hong Kong on May 7 and 8 to promote Hong Kong's unique advantages as an international talent hub and enhance talent mobility and co-operation among cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. We have issued invitations to Honourable Members to welcome you all to join the Summit.

Efforts on training

On training, the maximum monthly retraining allowance has increased to \$8,000 in February this year so as to encourage more unemployed and job-seekers to enrol in training and enter the employment market. The Employees Retraining Board (ERB) has also launched the "One-stop Training and Employment Scheme" in February, and is actively promoting the Scheme to employers and recruiting trainees. The ERB is conducting a comprehensive review on its service targets, scope, etc, and will submit a report to the Government in the third quarter of this year.

To encourage more young people to participate in the Apprenticeship Scheme and join the relevant trades, each registered apprentice, for a period of three years starting from 2024-25, will be provided with an additional training allowance of \$1,000 per month, and graduated apprentices will be subsidised to undertake upskilling courses of relevant trades. Meanwhile, the VTC receives subvention to organise short in-service training courses with a view to meeting the market demand.

Enhancement to Manpower Projection

The Labour and Welfare Bureau is conducting the Manpower Projection (MP) to assess the manpower requirements and shortages for key industries driving Hong Kong's economic growth, and essential services supporting the city's operation in 2028. Sectoral consultations for the MP exercise have largely been completed. We are consolidating data and information from various sources. Key findings of the exercise are expected to be available in the third quarter of this year, with a view to promulgating a detailed report early next year.

Chairman, this concludes my opening remarks. Members are welcome to raise questions.

[FS concludes visit to Hangzhou and Suzhou \(with photos/video\)](#)

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, concluded his visit to Suzhou and returned to Hong Kong today (April 19).

In the morning, Mr Chan visited an enterprise engaging in hydrogen power technology, and toured its factory of fuel cell system and product assembly and testing. Mr Chan also met with representatives of the enterprise to learn about its plans to expand research and development (R&D) and international business. The enterprise has submitted its listing application in Hong Kong. Mr Chan encouraged the enterprise to expand their business planning in Hong Kong, including setting up R&D facilities and even international headquarters, and make good use of Hong Kong's fund-raising services to strengthen their business and internationalisation. The Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises, Invest Hong Kong, etc, will provide one-stop services and facilitate their settling in Hong Kong.

In concluding his visit to Hangzhou and Suzhou, Mr Chan said, "Hangzhou and Suzhou are both fast-developing and highly advanced cities in the Yangtze River Delta Economic Zone, with an energetic digital economy, a strong foundation for advanced manufacturing, vibrant development of private enterprises, robust innovation and technology capacities, and a rich cultural and creative atmosphere. They are enhancing the development of new quality productive forces with innovation to promote high-quality development. Hong Kong has close economic, trade, and cultural exchanges with the two cities. Hong Kong possesses advantages including its connectivity with international capital, alignment with international standards, provision of high-quality professional services, ability to attract international talent, and access to international markets. In addition, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government is continuously promoting the development of innovation and

technology in Hong Kong. Hong Kong can join hands with Hangzhou and Suzhou to assist their enterprises in developing their international businesses, and in managing cross-border industry and supply chains, as well as off-shore trade financing. During this visit, I met with leaders of both cities to discuss strengthening co-operation. I also visited various enterprises engaging in artificial intelligence, big data, biomedical technology, new materials, and new energy. I firmly believe in the enormous potential and scope for future collaboration between Hong Kong and the Yangtze River Delta region."



[Draft Fanling/Sheung Shui Outline Zoning Plan approved](#)

The Chief Executive in Council has approved the draft Fanling/Sheung Shui Outline Zoning Plan (OZP).

"The approved OZP provides a statutory land use planning framework to guide the development and redevelopment within the Fanling/Sheung Shui New Town", a spokesman for the Town Planning Board said today (April 19).

The planning scheme area, about 667 hectares, is located in the river plains associated with the Ng Tung (Indus), Shek Sheung (Sutlej), Sheung Yue (Beas) and Ma Wat Rivers, which generally coincides with the existing area for the New Town. The main features delineating the New Town boundary are Tin Ping Shan and Ma Sik Road to the north, Ma Wat River to the east, and the foothills of Wo Hop Shek Cemetery and a golf course to the south and west.

The approved OZP has incorporated amendments shown on the draft Fanling/Sheung Shui OZP No. S/FSS/27, which involve (i) rezoning a site at Ma Sik Road and Fan Leng Lau Road from "Village Type Development" to "Residential (Group A)12", and (ii) revision to the plot ratio and building height restrictions of the "Comprehensive Development Area" zone.

The Notes and Explanatory Statement of the OZP are amended to take into account the above amendments. Opportunity is also taken to update the general

information of various land use zones and the planning circumstances, where appropriate.

The approved Fanling/Sheung Shui OZP No. S/FSS/28 is available for public inspection during office hours at (i) the Secretariat of the Town Planning Board, (ii) the Planning Enquiry Counters, (iii) the Fanling, Sheung Shui and Yuen Long East District Planning Office, (iv) the North District Office, (v) the Fanling District Rural Committee and (vi) the Sheung Shui District Rural Committee.

Copies of the approved OZP are available for sale at the Map Publications Centres in North Point and Yau Ma Tei. The electronic version of the OZP can be viewed at the Town Planning Board's website (www.tpb.gov.hk).