

## Head 96 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: OVERSEAS ECONOMIC AND TRADE OFFICES

**Controlling officer:** the Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development will account for expenditure under this Head.

**Estimate 2025–26** ..... **\$600.2m**

**Establishment ceiling 2025–26** (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 205 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2025 and as at 31 March 2026..... **\$154.2m**

In addition, there will be an estimated 23 directorate posts as at 31 March 2025 and as at 31 March 2026.

### Controlling Officer's Report

#### Programmes

**Programme (1) Commercial Relations**  
**Programme (2) Public Relations**  
**Programme (3) Investment Promotion**

These programmes contribute to Policy Area 6: Commerce and Industry (Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development).

#### Detail

##### Programme (1): Commercial Relations

	2023–24 (Actual)	2024–25 (Original)	2024–25 (Revised)	2025–26 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	196.5	285.1	210.6 (–26.1%)	285.2 (+35.4%)

(or comparable to  
2024–25 Original)

#### Aim

- 2 The aim is to represent and promote Hong Kong's trading and commercial interests outside Hong Kong.

#### Brief Description

3 The overseas Economic and Trade Offices (ETOs) in Bangkok, Berlin, Brussels, Dubai, Geneva, Jakarta, London, New York, San Francisco, Singapore, Sydney, Tokyo, Toronto and Washington D.C. identify, develop and cultivate contacts with host governments, represent Hong Kong at international trade organisations, and maintain liaison with other governments and organisations in order to further Hong Kong's trade and economic interests. They monitor and report on developments which are likely to affect such interests, discuss with their host and other governments specific trade and economic issues, support senior officers' overseas visits, and promote the business opportunities including those arising from the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement, Hong Kong's participation in the Belt and Road Initiative and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area development.

- 4 The key performance measures in respect of commercial relations are:

#### Indicators

	2023 (Actual)#	2024 (Actual)#	2025 (Estimate)#
meetings on trade-related matters attended.....	3 524	3 641	3 640
visits to host governments and trade organisations.....	1 186	1 285	1 290
seminars, exhibitions and workshops			
organised .....	341	384	385
participated.....	1 133	1 184	1 185
public speeches given.....	463	474	475
media interviews/briefings given.....	491	556	555
circulars/newsletters/press releases issued.....	2 597	2 647	2 650

# Figures also cover events in virtual form.

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### *Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025–26*

5 During 2025–26, the overseas ETOs will continue to promote Hong Kong’s trade and commercial interests, including countering protectionism in Hong Kong’s major markets, as well as representing Hong Kong and providing support to the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau and, as appropriate, other bureaux and departments on issues of special interests on the bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral fronts. The Dedicated Teams for Attracting Businesses and Talents set up under the ETOs will continue to provide support to the Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises and Hong Kong Talent Engage.

#### **Programme (2): Public Relations**

	2023–24 (Actual)	2024–25 (Original)	2024–25 (Revised)	<b>2025–26 (Estimate)</b>
Financial provision (\$m)	147.0	214.0	157.8 (–26.3%)	<b>213.0</b> (+35.0%)
				(or –0.5% on 2024–25 Original)

#### *Aim*

6 The aim is to promote Hong Kong as a trusted trading partner and a premier location for doing business.

#### *Brief Description*

7 The overseas ETOs monitor and report on reactions to events in Hong Kong. They update overseas interlocutors on developments in Hong Kong, organise publicity and public relations activities for Hong Kong in the host countries or regions under their purview, liaise with Hong Kong enterprises and people, and provide a comprehensive information and enquiry service about Hong Kong.

8 The key performance measures in respect of public relations are:

#### *Indicators*

	2023 (Actual)#	2024 (Actual)#	<b>2025 (Estimate)#</b>
call on senior government officials/organisations.....	1 309	1 426	<b>1 425</b>
public relations functions/events (including cultural functions/events)			
organised .....	825	921	<b>925</b>
participated.....	1 533	1 583	<b>1 585</b>
newsletters, pamphlets, press releases issued .....	2 641	2 733	<b>2 735</b>
no. of visitors assisted .....	2 851	3 100	<b>2 800</b>
public speeches given.....	528	534	<b>535</b>
media interviews/briefings given .....	502	557	<b>555</b>
enquiries handled .....	14 380	14 240	<b>13 585</b>

# Figures also cover events in virtual form.

### *Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025–26*

9 During 2025–26, the overseas ETOs will continue to step up publicity and public relations efforts and launch promotional campaigns to enhance Hong Kong’s international image, and strengthen collaboration with other Hong Kong overseas agencies in developing strategies for city branding and publicity.

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**Programme (3): Investment Promotion**

	2023–24 (Actual)	2024–25 (Original)	2024–25 (Revised)	<b>2025–26 (Estimate)</b>
Financial provision (\$m)	70.4	102.4	75.7 (–26.1%)	<b>102.0</b> (+34.7%)
				(or –0.4% on 2024–25 Original)

***Aim***

**10** The aim is to attract foreign direct investment to Hong Kong and to promote Hong Kong’s many advantages as a regional hub and the preferred business location in Asia.

***Brief Description***

**11** In close collaboration with Invest Hong Kong, the overseas ETOs promote the attractiveness of Hong Kong as an international financial and business centre and provide assistance and support to overseas companies to establish or expand operations in Hong Kong.

**12** The key performance measures in respect of investment promotion are:

***Indicators***

	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Actual)	<b>2025 (Estimate)</b>
new projects generated <sup>λ</sup> .....	278	272	<b>305</b>
projects completed <sup>¶</sup> .....	124	127	<b>170</b>

<sup>λ</sup> New projects with the potential of becoming completed projects in the coming 18 months. The figure reflects the investment promotion efforts in a particular year, discounting projects carried forward from previous years.

<sup>¶</sup> Investment projects each resulting in an overseas company setting up or undergoing a significant expansion in Hong Kong with the assistance of Invest Hong Kong.

***Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025–26***

**13** During 2025–26, the overseas ETOs concerned and their Dedicated Teams for Attracting Businesses and Talents will continue to work closely with Invest Hong Kong and the Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises to step up their efforts in attracting overseas companies, especially strategic enterprises, to set up and expand their operations in Hong Kong and access business opportunities on the Mainland and elsewhere in Asia.

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**ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION**

	2023–24 (Actual) (\$m)	2024–25 (Original) (\$m)	2024–25 (Revised) (\$m)	2025–26 (Estimate) (\$m)
<b>Programme</b>				
(1) Commercial Relations .....	196.5	285.1	210.6	285.2
(2) Public Relations .....	147.0	214.0	157.8	213.0
(3) Investment Promotion.....	70.4	102.4	75.7	102.0
	413.9	601.5	444.1 (–26.2%)	600.2 (+35.1%)
				<b>(or –0.2% on 2024–25 Original)</b>

**Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision**

**Programme (1)**

Provision for 2025–26 is \$74.6 million (35.4%) higher than the revised estimate for 2024–25. This is mainly due to the increased provision for the new ETOs under planning, increased salary provision for filling vacancies and staff changes, and increased operating expenses.

**Programme (2)**

Provision for 2025–26 is \$55.2 million (35.0%) higher than the revised estimate for 2024–25. The reasons for the increase under Programme (1) above also apply here.

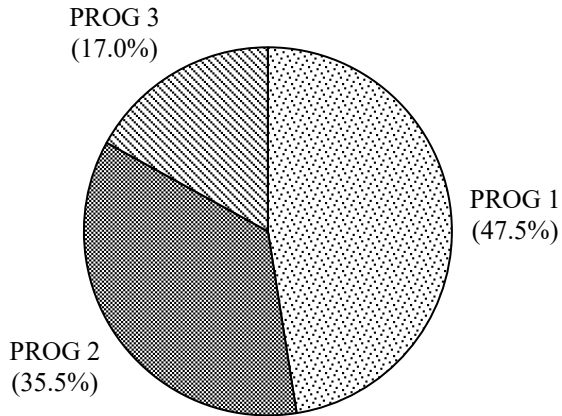
**Programme (3)**

Provision for 2025–26 is \$26.3 million (34.7%) higher than the revised estimate for 2024–25. The reasons for the increase under Programme (1) above also apply here.

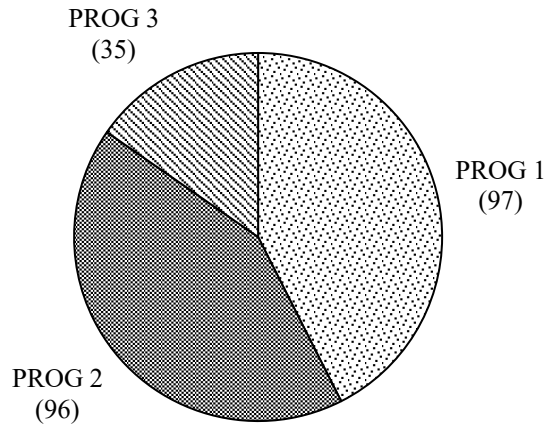
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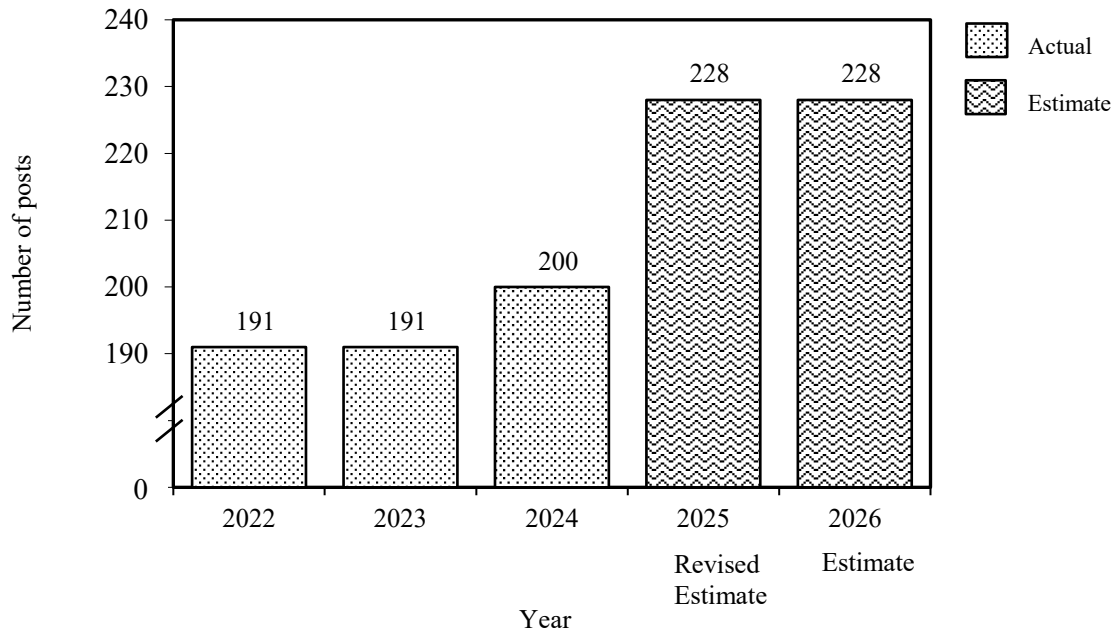
*Allocation of provision  
to programmes  
(2025-26)*



*Staff by programme  
(as at 31 March 2026)*



*Changes in the size of the establishment  
(as at 31 March)*



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Sub-head (Code)	Actual expenditure 2023–24	Approved estimate 2024–25	Revised estimate 2024–25	<b>Estimate 2025–26</b>	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	<b>\$'000</b>	
<b>Operating Account</b>					
Recurrent					
000	Operational expenses .....	412,777	601,537	444,072	<b>599,670</b>
	Total, Recurrent.....	412,777	601,537	444,072	<b>599,670</b>
	Total, Operating Account .....	412,777	601,537	444,072	<b>599,670</b>
<b>Capital Account</b>					
Plant, Equipment and Works					
661	Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote).....	1,107	—	—	<b>480</b>
	Total, Plant, Equipment and Works.....	1,107	—	—	<b>480</b>
	Total, Capital Account.....	1,107	—	—	<b>480</b>
	Total Expenditure .....	413,884	601,537	444,072	<b>600,150</b>

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### Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2025–26 for the salaries and expenses of the overseas Economic and Trade Offices (ETOs) is \$600,150,000. This represents an increase of \$156,078,000 over the revised estimate for 2024–25 and \$186,266,000 over the actual expenditure in 2023–24.

#### *Operating Account*

##### Recurrent

2 It is operationally necessary for the overseas ETOs to make certain payments in the currencies of their host economies. Expenditure in the following currencies will be charged to the appropriate subheads at the exchange rates set out below —

Australian Dollar	1=HK\$5.06012
Canadian Dollar	1=HK\$5.40900
Euro	1=HK\$8.09234
Japanese Yen	1=HK\$0.049482
Pound Sterling	1=HK\$9.71296
Singapore Dollar	1=HK\$5.71142
Swiss Franc	1=HK\$8.54651

Expenditure incurred in the US Dollar will be charged to the appropriate subheads at a fixed exchange rate of US\$1=HK\$7.8.

3 Provision of \$599,670,000 under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is for the salaries, allowances and other operating expenses of the overseas ETOs. The increase of \$155,598,000 (35.0%) over the revised estimate for 2024–25 is mainly due to the increased provision for the new ETOs under planning, increased salary provision arising from filling of vacancies, staff changes and salary increment, as well as increased operating expenses.

4 The establishment as at 31 March 2025 will be 228 posts. No change in establishment is expected in 2025–26. Of these posts, 152 are filled by staff engaged locally by the overseas ETOs. Subject to certain conditions, the controlling officer may under delegated power create or delete non-directorate posts during 2025–26, but the notional annual mid-point salary value of all such posts must not exceed \$154,187,000.

5 An analysis of the financial provision under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is as follows:

	2023–24 (Actual) (\$'000)	2024–25 (Original) (\$'000)	2024–25 (Revised) (\$'000)	2025–26 (Estimate) (\$'000)
Personal Emoluments				
- Salaries .....	163,897	236,681	168,202	247,220
- Allowances .....	38,714	56,878	43,686	58,248
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Civil Service Provident Fund contribution .....	9,508	16,482	10,223	17,379
- Disturbance allowance.....	2,775	9,584	3,839	9,019
Departmental Expenses				
- General departmental expenses .....	129,507	160,452	144,323	169,770
Other Charges				
- Publicity.....	68,376	121,460	73,799	98,034
	412,777	601,537	444,072	599,670

#### *Capital Account*

##### Plant, Equipment and Works

6 Provision of \$480,000 under *Subhead 661 Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote)* is for purchase of an office car for Sydney ETO in 2025–26.