

Head 180 — OFFICE FOR FILM, NEWSPAPER AND ARTICLE ADMINISTRATION

Controlling officer: the Director of Film, Newspaper and Article Administration will account for expenditure under this Head.

Estimate 2025–26 **\$61.5m**

Establishment ceiling 2025–26 (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 64 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2025 and as at 31 March 2026 **\$34.5m**

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

Controlling Officer's Report

Programme

Film Classification, Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles and Newspaper Registration

This programme contributes to Policy Area 17: Information Technology and Broadcasting (Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development) and Policy Area 18: Recreation, Culture, Amenities and Entertainment Licensing (Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs).

Detail

	2023–24 (Actual)	2024–25 (Original)	2024–25 (Revised)	2025–26 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	55.7	60.6	60.2 (-0.7%)	61.5 (+2.2%)
				(or +1.5% on 2024–25 Original)

Aim

2 The aim is to enforce a system of film classification according to the Film Censorship Ordinance (Cap. 392) (FCO) through a censorship scheme which meets the needs and reflects the moral standards of the community; to control, together with the Police and the Customs and Excise Department, the publication of obscene and indecent articles by enforcing the Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance (Cap. 390) (COIAO); and to register local newspapers under the Registration of Local Newspapers Ordinance (Cap. 268) (RLNO).

Brief Description

3 On film classification, the Office for Film, Newspaper and Article Administration is responsible for the examination of films for public exhibition under the three-tier film classification system and the examination of advertising materials and packaging of films that fall within the statutory definition of Category III (for persons aged 18 or above only). The work of the Office involves:

- classifying films for public exhibition and publication, and granting exemption from classification;
- examining advertising materials and packaging of physical storage media of Category III films;
- inspecting cinemas to enforce the age restriction for audience admission and other provisions under the FCO;
- inspecting video shops and other retail outlets to regulate the publication of films;
- gauging public opinions on film classification standards;
- maintaining a panel of advisers to allow public participation in the film classification process; and
- promoting the three-tier film classification system to the public.

4 On the enforcement of the COIAO, the Office is responsible for:

- regulating the publication and public display of obscene and indecent articles under the COIAO through monitoring articles published in the media and inspecting newspaper stalls, video and computer shops and other retail outlets as well as websites and online platforms;
- taking appropriate enforcement and prosecution actions against violations of the COIAO;

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- liaising with Internet service providers and the Hong Kong Internet Service Providers Association on the regulation of obscene and indecent materials transmitted through the Internet;
- organising publicity and public education programmes to promote public awareness of the provisions of the COIAO; and
- processing complaints relating to the publication of obscene and indecent articles.

5 In 2024, the Office continued its efforts in promoting public awareness of the protection of the youth from indecent and obscene materials. Major activities organised are set out below:

- roving exhibitions were organised to promote the COIAO and to encourage children and young people to stay away from indecent and obscene materials on the Internet;
- the Meritorious Website Contest was held to promote safe and smart use of the Internet;
- the Healthy Apps Contest was organised to promote the use of healthy applications in mobile phones or tablet computers;
- district talks and workshops to promote the use of filtering software were conducted, with free filtering software distributed to parent participants;
- webinars for principals and representatives from primary and secondary schools were conducted to strengthen the collaboration with schools and enhance their understanding of the COIAO;
- 255 school talks for students/parents on safe and smart use of the Internet to protect children and young people from indecent and obscene materials were conducted;
- a student video contest was held to promote the healthy use of the Internet among children and young people;
- a student ambassador training scheme was implemented to recruit students to help promote the COIAO;
- a school drama tour programme was conducted to promote the COIAO to students of primary and secondary schools;
- a mobile app sticker design competition was conducted to encourage children and young people to stay away from unhealthy materials and electronic games;
- a public speaking competition was conducted to increase the awareness of students of objectionable materials and to promote the COIAO among children and young people;
- a slogan and colouring competition was conducted to promote the message of rejecting indecent and obscene materials on the Internet among students;
- a school drama contest was conducted to enhance the understanding of the COIAO among children and young people; and
- a four-frame photo contest was held to encourage students to stay away from unhealthy materials.

6 The Office is also responsible for newspaper registration and related matters under the RLNO.

7 The key performance measures in respect of film classification, control of obscene and indecent articles and newspaper registration are:

Targets

	Targets	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Plan)
<i>Film classification</i>				
assigning film viewing sessions for films submitted for classification within seven working days (%)	100	99.7	99.9	100
notifying applicants on decisions about film classification within eight working days (%).....	100	100	99.8	100
issuing Certificates of Exemption to applicants within three working days (%).....	100	100	100	100
issuing Certificates of Packaging to applicants within two working days (%).....	100	100	100	100
issuing Certificates of Advertising Materials to applicants within two working days (%).....	100	100	100	100

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	Targets	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Plan)
<i>COIAO</i>				
issuing interim replies to complainants within seven working days (%)	100	100	100	100
issuing substantive replies to complainants regarding investigation results on their complaints within 20 working days (%).....	100	100	100	100
<i>Newspaper Registration</i>				
new registration for local newspapers within seven working days (%)	100	100	100	100

Indicators

	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Estimate)
<i>Film classification</i>			
films classified	2 328	2 136¶	2 200
films exempted from classification	6 802	6 595¶	6 600
packaging examined.....	25	6¶	10
advertising materials of films examined	206	166¶	180
inspections conducted	1 300	1 300	1 300
<i>COIAO</i>			
articles scrutinised.....	295 889	296 268	296 000
inspections conducted	64 633	61 314@	61 000@
summonses issued	22	27§	27§
enforcement operations conducted.....	160	150@	150@
obscene and indecent articles seized	127	34§	34§
talks and seminars conducted.....	233	255	255
<i>Newspaper Registration</i>			
local newspapers and news-related publications registered.....	466	435	435
newspaper distributor licences issued	27	23	23

- ¶ The number of films or materials processed depends on the number of applications submitted by film exhibitors/publishers which varies due to changing market situation.
- @ The actual number of inspections and the actual number of enforcement operations conducted in 2024 have decreased due to the reduction in the number of relevant retail outlets like newspaper stalls and video shops. The estimated number in 2025 is expected to be similar to the actual figure of 2024.
- § The number is affected by factors such as the number of offences detected and the evidence warranting prosecution. The estimated number in 2025 is expected to be similar to the actual figure of 2024.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025–26

- 8** During 2025–26, the Office will:
- continue its enforcement of the FCO and the COIAO; and
 - continue to organise publicity and public education programmes to promote public awareness of the FCO and the COIAO.

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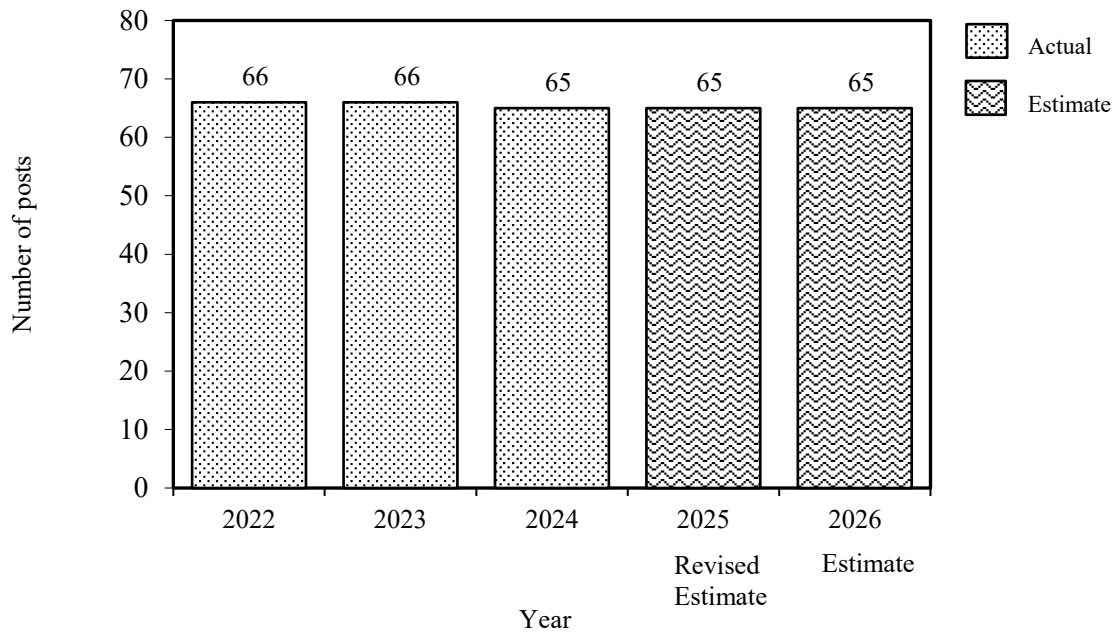
ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

	2023–24 (Actual) (\$m)	2024–25 (Original) (\$m)	2024–25 (Revised) (\$m)	2025–26 (Estimate) (\$m)
Programme				
Film Classification, Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles and Newspaper Registration.....	55.7	60.6	60.2 (-0.7%)	61.5 (+2.2%)
				(or +1.5% on 2024–25 Original)

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

Provision for 2025–26 is \$1.3 million (2.2%) higher than the revised estimate for 2024–25. This is mainly due to increased provision for personal emoluments and personnel related expenses.

*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	Estimate 2025–26	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
Operating Account					
Recurrent					
000	Operational expenses	55,640	60,569	60,222	61,493
	Total, Recurrent	55,640	60,569	60,222	61,493
	Total, Operating Account	55,640	60,569	60,222	61,493
Capital Account					
Plant, Equipment and Works					
	Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote).....	66	—	—	—
	Total, Plant, Equipment and Works.....	66	—	—	—
	Total, Capital Account.....	66	—	—	—
	Total Expenditure	55,706	60,569	60,222	61,493

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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 Office for Film, Newspaper and Article Administration (OFNAA) is \$61,493,000. This represents an increase of \$1,271,000 over the revised estimate for 2024–25 and \$5,787,000 over the actual expenditure in 2023–24.

Operating Account

Recurrent

2 Provision of \$61,493,000 under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is for the salaries, allowances and other operating expenses of OFNAA.

3 The establishment as at 31 March 2025 will be 65 posts. No change in establishment is expected in 2025–26. 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 \$34,542,000.

4 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	39,563	39,494	40,582	41,771
- Allowances	638	631	460	243
- Job-related allowances.....	—	2	4	2
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Mandatory Provident Fund contribution	48	43	61	79
- Civil Service Provident Fund contribution	3,079	3,394	3,405	3,924
Departmental Expenses				
- General departmental expenses	12,312	17,005	15,710	15,474
	55,640	60,569	60,222	61,493