

Corporate Social Responsibility

Our corporate social responsibility initiatives focus on promoting sustainability, caring for the community, protecting the environment and promoting staff wellness.



Governance

As a socially responsible organisation, we strive to incorporate corporate social responsibility (CSR) principles into our daily operational decisions and practices.

The CSR Committee coordinates all our CSR efforts. It reports directly to the SFC’s Executive Committee and is chaired by the Chief Financial Officer and Senior Director of Corporate Affairs (see sidebar on page 92). It includes members from different units across the organisation.

The committee is responsible for:

- formulating and developing our CSR vision, principles, framework and policies;
- organising and promoting CSR activities; and
- setting objectives, targets and key performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of our CSR efforts.

The CSR Committee has three working groups: the Commission Volunteers Group, Green Working Group and Wellness Group. Each is charged with planning and implementing initiatives under a specific theme.

We explain our CSR goals, principles and activities on our corporate website and intranet, and circulate a quarterly e-newsletter to update staff about our

CSR initiatives. The newsletter is also a platform for participants to share first-hand accounts of our CSR activities and for staff to provide feedback.

Our CSR efforts were recognised by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service which named us a “Caring Organisation” for the fourteenth consecutive year.

Marketplace support

As a regulator, we consider the impact of our work on Hong Kong’s financial markets. We adopt measures to enhance industry-wide operational efficiency, minimise resource consumption and reduce paperwork for both the SFC and industry participants. We also encourage the industry to adopt environmentally-responsible behaviour.

Supporting sustainable finance

During the year, we made progress on a number of initiatives under our strategic framework to help develop Hong Kong as a leading centre for green finance and connect green finance flows between the Mainland and the rest of the world¹. Our strategy is in line with global market and regulatory developments in sustainable finance. We collaborate with stakeholders as well as local and international regulators to promote sustainable finance initiatives and investor awareness of them.

CSR working groups and themes

	Focus	2019/20	2020/21
Commission Volunteers Group 	Community	Sharing and caring	Spread love and joy
Green Working Group 	Environment	Live green, save green	Go the extra mile for a green lifestyle
Wellness Group 	People	Fitter, healthier, happier	Better health, better self

¹ See Green and sustainable finance on pages 58-59.

Fostering a sustainability mindset

Mr Andrew Wan, Chief Financial Officer and Senior Director, Corporate Affairs, chairs our CSR Committee. Here he talks about our corporate sustainability efforts.

The CSR Committee's overall objective is to foster a caring culture within the organisation as well as in the community, Mr Wan said. Staff from across the organisation take an active role in our meetings and our working groups.



Mr Andrew Wan, Chief Financial Officer and Senior Director, Corporate Affairs

The importance of adopting greener working practices and protecting the environment has grown significantly over the past few years and many staff members are especially passionate about these issues, he explained.

Within the organisation we have taken steps to cut energy consumption, use less water and reduce waste, and the CSR Committee has worked hard to foster awareness of the need for everyone to take an active part in these initiatives.

All sectors of society need to contribute to efforts to achieve more sustainable development, but the SFC has a special responsibility as a market regulator and a public body, Mr Wan emphasised. We not only need to do our part as we go about our daily work, we also have to set an example for the industry we regulate and the public at large.

At the end of the day, success will depend on having the right mindset.

Enhancing industry-wide operational efficiency

Our online portal, WINGS², is a one-stop platform for making electronic submissions to the SFC. All functions and submission services available on the existing SFC Online Portal and other SFC systems will be migrated to WINGS in phases.

To reduce the industry's compliance burden and paper consumption, we ceased to issue printed licences³ to licensed individuals in 2015. Details of licensed individuals are now only available on our online Public Register of Licensed Persons and Registered Institutions. Extending the mandatory online

submission of annual returns and notifications to cover all intermediaries starting April 2019 also saves paper. In addition, an online system is available to streamline the submission and posting of Rule 22⁴ dealing disclosures.

Promoting professional competence and financial literacy

Our continuous professional training (CPT) requirements⁵ help to enhance the competence of licensees. This year, our executives delivered 28 hours of CPT-eligible training.

2 Web-based INteGrated Service.

3 We continue to issue printed licences for licensed corporations and certificates of registration for registered institutions, and these must be exhibited prominently at their places of business.

4 Required disclosures during an offer period under the Code on Takeovers and Mergers.

5 Under the SFC's Guidelines on Continuous Professional Training, licensees are required to complete a minimum of five CPT hours per calendar year for each type of regulated activity.

We provide funding to the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) Foundation⁶ to support its work. We also fund the Investor and Financial Education Council which is dedicated to improving financial literacy in Hong Kong.

Community

We provide our staff with volunteering and engagement opportunities to make a positive change in the community. Volunteering leave is offered to encourage staff participation in community service.

This year, 74 staff spent a total of 263 hours volunteering. They were involved in environmental conservation, animal care and helping the underprivileged.

Our staff also support community services through donations and participating in fundraising events. This year, we raised a total of \$82,246 through Pedal Power 9, the Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon⁷, our Christmas charity sale⁸, and three Community Chest events: Love Teeth Day, Dress Casual Day and Green Day.

Donating used items to charities enables us to help people in need and reduce waste. This year, we donated second-hand electrical appliances, clothes, books and toys to The Salvation Army.

Volunteering events

Month	Activity	Purpose	Outcome
May 2019	Beach clean-up at Wu Kai Sha Beach	To promote understanding of the impact of plastic pollution on our oceans	26 volunteers helped clean Wu Kai Sha Beach.
June 2019	Suicide Prevention Services – Solicit for Support: Flag Day 2019	To raise awareness about suicide prevention	11 volunteers took part in a fund-raising event.
Aug 2019	SPCA Care for Animals Workshop	To learn about caring for animals in shelters	20 volunteers interacted with the animals and recycled items to make toys for them.
Sep 2019	Volunteering at Mai Po	To raise awareness of environmental conservation through volunteering	17 volunteers helped remove harmful invasive species.
Dec 2019	Christmas Sale and Gift Collection	To raise funds and spread joy to the underprivileged	Proceeds supported participating charities. Our staff also donated second-hand items to The Salvation Army.

Contributions

	2019/2020	2018/19	2017/18
Number of staff participating in volunteering activities	74	120	134
Total volunteering hours	263	465	458
Funds raised for community causes	\$82,246	\$150,787	\$104,509
Corporate sponsorships for community causes [^]	\$31,535	\$17,000	\$13,000

[^] Including donations in lieu of corporate gifts made in the names of guest speakers invited to our in-house training seminars.

⁶ The IFRS Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation established to develop, promote and facilitate the adoption of the IFRS.

⁷ Although the marathon was cancelled, the organiser accepted pledged donations.

⁸ We cooperated with New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association, Fu Hong Society and Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation to sell groceries and hand-made items at our Christmas charity sale, with the funds raised supporting their operations.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Environment

We are dedicated to managing and reducing our impact on the environment. Staff are encouraged to reduce, reuse, repair and recycle through our internal protocol, *A guide to working "Green" at the SFC*.

To reduce paper consumption, we use electronic processes for internal matters including training course enrollments, conference room bookings, expense claims, overseas travel records, pay slips, leave applications and appraisals. Meeting materials are shared on tablet computers and paperless diaries are available.

Other green practices adopted in our workplace to use resources more efficiently include:

- adjusting indoor lighting after office hours using auto timers and encouraging colleagues to turn off lights every day;
- reducing electricity usage at our data centres;
- automatically turning off desktop computers every weekend;
- providing recycling bins for newspapers;
- sorting cans and bottles for recycling;

- using e-cards instead of paper holiday greeting cards; and
- recycling used red packets in support of Greeners Action's campaign.

Our staff and their family members participate in activities we organise to raise environmental awareness. In the past year, we arranged a beach clean-up at Wu Kai Sha Beach to promote understanding of the impact of plastic pollution on the oceans as well as a coral research tour to learn about the importance of marine biodiversity. We also arranged a workshop on low-carbon diets to promote an eco-friendly lifestyle.

We support the World Wide Fund for Nature's global warming prevention and environmental conservation causes.

- No Shark Fins Policy: We have in place an organisation-wide policy pledging not to serve shark fins at any SFC event.
- Earth Hour 2020: We took part in this annual energy conservation event for the tenth year. We encouraged staff to switch off lights for one hour and made a pledge as a corporate supporter.



Red packet recycling



Low-carbon diet workshop



- ◀ Coral research boat tour
- ▼ Beach cleanup



- ▶ Taking care of animals
- ▼ Removing harmful species at Mai Po



- ◀ Thai boxing class
- ▼ Trampoline class



Consumption and recycling

	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Consumption			
Paper (pieces/head)	8,712	9,977	9,563
Electricity (kWh)	4,188,211	4,095,518	4,018,442
Recycling			
Paper (kg)	35,897	31,251	37,815
Toner and printer ink cartridges	949	1,151	1,106

Workplace

The wellbeing of our staff is crucial to us. During the year, we organised activities to promote health awareness and encourage healthier lifestyles:

- classes to demonstrate stretching and yoga exercise techniques;
- free on-site influenza vaccinations and health screenings with individual consultations;
- Thai boxing and trampoline classes and bowling night to promote a healthy lifestyle;
- a low-carbon diet workshop to learn how our food choices have an impact on the planet; and
- a massage week to improve physical wellbeing.

As a founding member of the City Mental Health Alliance Hong Kong (CMHA HK), we are dedicated to promoting and raising awareness of mental health both in the workplace and the wider community. Our Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director, Intermediaries, Ms Julia Leung, is a member of CMHA HK's Advisory Board. The SFC actively participates in CMHA HK events, workshops and discussion panels to raise awareness about mental health and promote best practices for corporate mental health policies.

Clinical psychology services are offered as part of our Employee Assistance Programme and counselling is also available for staff as well as their immediate family members. This year, we organised Stress Awareness Month for our staff and took part in World Mental Health Day. To provide useful information and updates on our intranet, we launched a mental health and wellbeing page and a COVID-19 information portal.