

Corporate Social Responsibility

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

Governance

As a regulator in an international financial centre, we are committed to acting as a socially responsible organisation and incorporating corporate social responsibility (CSR) principles into our daily operational decisions and practices.

Reporting directly to the SFC's Executive Committee, the CSR Committee plans and coordinates our CSR efforts. It is chaired by the Chief Financial Officer and Senior Director of Corporate Affairs and its members include representatives 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.



Donation to Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council



Red packet recycling

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CSR working groups and themes

	Focus	2020/21	2021/22
Commission Volunteers Group 	Community	Spread love and joy	Make a difference
Green Working Group 	Environment	Go the extra mile for a green lifestyle	Build a greener SFC
Wellness Group 	People	Better health, better self	Stay healthy, stay happy

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 has named us a "Caring Organisation" since 2006 and awarded us the "15 Consecutive Years Logo" this year.



Marketplace support

As a regulator of Hong Kong's financial markets, we adopt measures to enhance industry-wide operational efficiency and minimise resource consumption for both the SFC and industry participants. We also promote environmentally responsible practices.

Sustainable finance

Supporting Hong Kong's development as a regional green and sustainable finance hub is a key priority for the SFC. We drive and coordinate efforts locally and internationally, including through the Green and Sustainable Finance Cross-Agency Steering Group we

co-chair with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority. We collaborate with stakeholders to promote sustainable finance initiatives and investor awareness of them.¹

Industry-wide operational efficiency

To reduce the industry's compliance burden and paper consumption, we ceased to issue printed licences² 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.

From October 2020 onwards, documents on display under the Takeovers Code are required to be submitted electronically on WINGS³, a one-stop platform for making electronic submissions to the SFC. To increase efficiency and be more environmentally friendly, submissions using a recordable CD or DVD are no longer required. In addition, an online system is available to streamline the submission and posting of Rule 22⁴ dealing disclosures.

In December 2020, new functions were introduced to WINGS to facilitate more straight-through processing and pave the way for a fully-digitalised licensing process which we plan to launch later this year⁵.

¹ See Green and sustainable finance on pages 60-62.

² 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.

³ Web-based INteGrated Service.

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

⁵ See Intermediaries on pages 46-53.

Professional competence and financial literacy

Our continuous professional training (CPT) requirements⁶ help to enhance the competence of licensees. This year, our executives delivered 35 hours of CPT-eligible training.

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, despite the impact of COVID-19 and social distancing measures, 20 staff spent a total of 40 hours volunteering to help the underprivileged and elderly during this difficult time.

Our staff also support community services through donations and participating in fundraising events. During the year, we raised a total of \$47,739 through three Community Chest events: Love Teeth Day, Dress Casual Day and Skip Lunch Day.

Donating used items to charities enables us to help people in need and reduce waste. This year, we gave a large quantity of electrical appliances and office furniture a second life by donating them to the Crossroads Foundation and the New Sight Eye Care following our office relocation.

Volunteering events

Month	Activity	Purpose	Outcome
May 2020	Donate to support Food Angel	To provide for the everyday needs of the less privileged during critical times	Over 100 packs of rice and other food items and protective supplies were donated
June 2020	Office furniture donation	To give away items made available due to office relocation to those in need	Office chairs, refrigerators and microwave ovens donated to Crossroads Foundation and New Sight Eye Care
October 2020 – March 2021	Phone call support to the elderly	To provide emotional support and care to the elderly during the pandemic	20 volunteers had weekly phone chats with the elderly over one-month periods
December 2020	Support to Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council	To offer care and help to the underprivileged during challenging times	Staff collected more than 100 boxes of face masks and other protective supplies for donation

Contributions

	2020/2021	2019/20	2018/19
Number of staff participating in volunteering activities	20	74	120
Total volunteering hours	40	263	465
Funds raised for community causes	\$47,739	\$82,246	\$150,787

⁶ 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.

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Environment

We strive to manage our consumption and minimise our carbon footprint. An internal protocol, *A Guide to Working "Green" at the SFC*, sets out guidance for staff to protect the environment at the workplace.

Energy-conserving features were introduced in our new office including motion and daylight sensor lighting. The office layout was designed to allow more natural sunlight. Recycling bins are conveniently available at multiple locations across the office.

To reduce paper consumption, we use electronic processes for internal procedures. 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:

- reducing electricity usage at our data centres;
- automatically turning off desktop computers every weekend; and
- setting black and white printing as the default for all staff.



No Air Con Night poster

We organise activities for our staff and their family members to raise environmental awareness. This year, we arranged online workshops on making eco-enzyme cleaners and promoting an eco-friendly lifestyle during the pandemic. We recycled used red packets in support of Greeners Action's campaign and encouraged staff's participation in Green Sense's No Air Con Night.

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 2021: We took part in this annual energy conservation event for the eleventh year. We encouraged staff to switch off lights for one hour and made a pledge as a corporate supporter.

Consumption and recycling

	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
Consumption			
Paper (pieces/head)	7,321	8,712	9,977
Electricity (kWh)	3,055,590	4,188,211	4,095,518
Recycling			
Paper (kg)	66,464	35,897	31,251
Toner and printer ink cartridges	897	949	1,151

Workplace

We attach high importance to staff’s wellbeing and strive to maintain both their physical and mental health.

Height adjustable desks are installed at all regular workstations for improved ergonomics. To cater to the needs of working mothers, well-equipped wellness rooms are designed specifically for lactation.

We also organised activities to encourage healthier lifestyles and promote health awareness during the year:

- online class on stretching exercises and meditation techniques;
- webinar on keeping fit with smart eating habits;
- talk to help better understand attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder; and
- optical health talk.

We are a founding member of the City Mental Health Alliance Hong Kong (CMHA HK). Through our active participation in its activities, we are dedicated to creating positive mental health for our staff and the wider community and promoting best practices for corporate policies.

We have been participating in the CMHA HK Mental Health in the Workplace Surveys to help better address and support mental health and wellbeing in the business community.

Recognising the challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, we stepped up our mental wellbeing strategy to provide more support for our staff and their families (see sidebar on page 100 for details).



Support to Food Angel



Online eco-enzyme workshop

Message from Chairman and CEO

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More accessible mental care

The COVID-19 pandemic presents challenges for managing mental health issues. These issues may be subtle, making them hard to identify. As part of our commitment to providing a healthy working environment, we offered our employees as well as their immediate family members 24-hour confidential and professional counselling support services through a more comprehensive Employee Assistance Programme.



CEO Mr Ashley Alder at the Mental Health Philanthropy Symposium

We also provided additional resources to our staff to raise their awareness of mental health. As aids to navigate the pandemic's new normal both at work and at home, we organised webinars on physical and emotional wellbeing and provided more reference materials on

a dedicated mental health section of our intranet. An e-newsletter was published to mark the World Mental Health Day which gave staff access to virtual events lined up by the World Health Organization featuring speakers and artists from different countries.

This year, we supported the Mental Health Philanthropy Symposium hosted by Mind Hong Kong to raise awareness of the need for resources to support local mental health charities.