

Corporate Social Responsibility

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

A socially responsible organisation

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges to society. More than ever, it is essential for both the public and private sectors to contribute positively to the community, the environment and the public interest. As a regulator in an international financial centre, we are committed to acting as a socially responsible organisation and incorporating 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 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 three working groups under the CSR Committee—the Commission Volunteers Group, Green Working Group and Wellness Group—are charged with planning and implementing initiatives under specific themes.

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 last year awarded us the “15 Consecutive Years Logo”.

Marketplace support

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

Industry-wide operational efficiency

To reduce the industry’s compliance burden and paper consumption, we ceased to issue printed licences¹ to licensed individuals in 2015. Details of licensed individuals are only available on our online Public Register of Licensed Persons and Registered

CSR working groups and themes

	Focus	2021/22	2022/23
Commission Volunteers Group 	Community	Make a difference	Spread the kindness
Green Working Group 	Environment	Build a greener SFC	Make the world a better place
Wellness Group 	People	Stay healthy, stay happy	Stay well, do everything well

¹ 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.



Mid-autumn volunteering with Po Leung Kuk



Hiking trail clean-up

Institutions. Extending the mandatory online submission of annual returns and notifications to cover all intermediaries starting April 2019 also saves paper.

Our new, fully-digitalised licensing platform² has replaced all paper-based processes and will provide greater efficiency for the industry. New functions were also introduced on WINGS³, a one-stop platform for making electronic submissions to the SFC, to facilitate more straight-through processing. Documents on display under the Takeovers Code are now required to be submitted electronically on WINGS, and an online system is available to streamline the submission and posting of Rule 22⁴ dealing disclosures.

Sustainable finance

Supporting Hong Kong's development as a green and sustainable finance hub within the Greater Bay Area and internationally is a key priority for the SFC. We drive and coordinate green efforts locally and internationally, including through the Green and Sustainable Finance Cross-Agency Steering Group, which we co-chair with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, and the International Organization of Securities Commissions, whose board we chair. We also collaborate with stakeholders to promote sustainable finance initiatives and investor awareness of them⁵.

Professional competence and financial literacy

Our continuous professional training (CPT) requirements⁶ help enhance the competence of licensees. We upgraded the CPT requirements in January 2022 to align with market developments and the rapidly evolving regulatory landscape. For instance, environmental, social and governance (ESG) is now included as a relevant topic for CPT purposes. In addition, we announced special extensions to allow more flexibility for SFC licensees to meet the CPT requirements during the pandemic.

We provide funding to the IFRS Foundation⁷ to support its work. We also fund our subsidiary, 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 and offer volunteering leave to encourage staff participation in community service. This year, 39 SFC staff spent a total of 120 hours volunteering to help the underprivileged and elderly.

² See Intermediaries on pages 61-67.

³ Web-based INteGrated Service.

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

⁵ See Green and Sustainable Finance on pages 36-39.

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.

⁷ The IFRS Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation established to develop, promote and facilitate the adoption of the International Financial Reporting Standards.

Corporate Social Responsibility



Christmas charity sale

Our staff support community services through donations and participating in fundraising events. This year, we raised a total of \$86,922 through our Christmas charity sale, donations for rapid test kits and four Community Chest events: Green Low Carbon Day, Dress Casual Day, Love Teeth Day and Skip Lunch Day.

Donating used items to charities helps people in need and reduces waste. This year, we donated used monitor arms and unused gifts to the Salvation Army's recycling programme. To share the festive spirit with needy families, we encouraged staff to join the Mooncake Sharing Programme in partnership with Food Angel.

We partnered with Po Leung Kuk to prepare and distribute gift packs with daily and anti-epidemic

supplies for grassroots families and elderly persons who live alone. We also engaged with Fu Hong Society and the Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation to sell groceries and items made by their members at our in-house Christmas charity sale, where additional funds were raised from the sale of items made by our staff.

During the year, a record surge in the number of COVID-19 infections led to a huge demand for early detection. In March 2022, we partnered with the Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council to prepare for emergency distribution of rapid test kits to help ease the burden and worries of the elderly. Within three days, we collected donations of \$33,700 from 95 staff and distributed 1,124 rapid test kits to the homes of the elderly.



Donations to the Salvation Army and Feeding Hong Kong

Volunteering in the time of COVID-19

Social distancing measures and pandemic restrictions have changed the way our staff participate in volunteering efforts. We continue to organise volunteering activities as part of our commitment to the community, but some events have shifted from face-to-face engagement to virtual or phone interaction to keep our volunteers and those they engage with safe.

For instance, we collaborated with the Po Leung Kuk Vicwood K.T Chong Neighbourhood Elderly Centre to host an online event in June 2021. Our staff and the elderly interacted virtually in a games session and did simple stretching exercises together. The event helped offer emotional support and showed our care to the elderly during the pandemic, which has been a cause of considerable stress for them.



During the year, we also organised a phone call support programme in collaboration with Hong Kong Christian Service. Fifteen colleagues were each paired with an elderly person and checked in on them over the phone at least once a week for over a month. Some of the elderly persons had no access to smartphones or lived alone, and the programme provided opportunities for interaction.

Volunteering events

Month	Activity	Purpose	Outcome
June 2021	Online volunteering with Po Leung Kuk	To provide emotional support to and social interaction with the elderly during the pandemic	Seven staff volunteers interacted virtually with the elderly, playing games and doing stretching exercises
September 2021	Office furniture donation	To donate office furniture to those in need	250 monitor arms were donated to the Salvation Army Recycling Programme
September 2021	Mid-autumn volunteering with Po Leung Kuk	To connect with grassroots families and the elderly who live alone	17 staff volunteers prepared and distributed gift packs with anti-pandemic and daily supplies at Po Leung Kuk Tin Ka Ping Harmony Land for Families
October 2021	Donation of food and anti-pandemic supplies	To help people living in poverty who struggle to afford nutritious meals	Staff donated items to Feeding Hong Kong
December 2021	Hike and clean-up Hong Kong trail	To help rid trails of increasing pollution and waste	15 volunteers gathered at Devil's Peak to clean up the hiking trail and deliver the message of "leave no trace" to hikers
December 2021	Christmas charity series	To raise funds and spread Christmas joy to the underprivileged	Donated seven boxes of unused gifts to the Salvation Army and raised funds from the sale of items prepared by Fu Hong Society and the Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation's members and our staff volunteers
March 2022	Fundraising for rapid test kits distribution	To ease the burden and worries of the elderly during the epidemic	Collected \$33,700 from 95 staff and distributed 1,124 rapid test kits to the elderly

Contributions

	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Number of staff participating in volunteering activities	39	20	74
Total volunteering hours	120	40	263
Funds raised for community causes	\$86,922	\$47,739	\$82,246
Corporate sponsorships for community causes [^]	\$2,000	N/A	\$31,535

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

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 light. Recycling bins are conveniently available at multiple locations across the office.

We joined Swire Properties' Green Performance Pledge (GPP), its landlord-tenant sustainable development programme. Swire will perform an energy audit of the SFC's office premises at One Island East to understand our energy usage and provide suggestions for reducing energy consumption.

Following our relocation to the new office, some furniture and fixtures from our old office were sold to staff to recycle. The proceeds were donated to our Commission Volunteers Group fund.

To reduce paper consumption, we use electronic processes for internal procedures. Meeting materials are shared on tablet computers and paperless diaries are available. For the first time, this year's annual report was only published as a digital version online to save paper.

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

- sharing recycling tips and information with staff;
- recycling coffee grounds;
- reusing stationery by providing stationery refills;
- automatically turning off desktop computers every weekend; and
- setting black and white printing as the default for all staff.



Staff are provided with tips on using our office recycling bins (Source: Environmental Protection Department)



Screensaver created by our CSR committee

We organise activities for our staff and their family members to raise environmental awareness. To promote an eco-friendly lifestyle, we arranged webinars on climate change and organised green hikes during the year. In collaboration with Po Leung Kuk, we introduced Green@Community—a community recycling network launched by the Environmental Protection Department—via a webinar and encouraged staff to make good use of the recycling facilities in our offices. We arranged a hiking trail clean-up at Devil’s Peak to promote the concept of “leave no trace”. We also recycled used red packets in support of Greeners Action’s campaign and encouraged staff to donate mooncake boxes and old books to help protect the environment.

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 2022: We took part in this annual energy conservation event for the twelfth year. We encouraged staff to switch off lights for one hour and made a pledge as a corporate supporter.

To raise awareness of global warming and promote wise use of air conditioning, we supported Green Sense’s No Air Con Night, which called on households to switch off their air conditioning for 12 hours.

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 in our new office 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:

- staff were encouraged to submit healthy lifestyle tips and the best five entries were shared with all staff;
- a tea therapy talk introduced the therapeutic benefits of tea and a webinar discussed healthy eating;
- a crystal singing bowl meditation session demonstrated how to calm the body and mind through sound vibration;
- a yoga session was held virtually for colleagues to do exercise at home;
- an anger management talk highlighted ways to deal with emotions;



Earth Hour 2022



No Air Con Night

Consumption and recycling

	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Consumption			
Paper (pieces/head)	5,421	7,321	8,712
Electricity (kWh)	3,323,495	3,055,590	4,188,211
Recycling			
Paper (kg)	19,669	66,464	35,897
Toner and printer ink cartridges	715	897	949

- stretching and resistance band workshops were presented by a registered physiotherapist; and
- a nutrition talk shared tips and recipes for an easy and healthy diet.

We are dedicated to creating positive mental health for our staff and the wider community as well as promoting best practices for corporate policies. Clinical psychology and counselling services are offered as part of our Employee Assistance Programme for staff and their immediate family members. As a founding member of the City Mental Health Alliance Hong Kong (CMHA HK), we actively participate in its activities.

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

This year, we supported and organised an event for C-suite executives hosted by CMHA HK titled “Mental Health as a Key Element of Operational Resiliency in the Hong Kong Finance Industry”. The event brought together industry leaders and a counsellor to share personal mental health stories. The panellists also discussed practical ways organisations are addressing mental health-related challenges in the workplace.



Stretching and resistance band workshop

Supporting mental health at work

To address mental health issues and provide a healthier working environment under the current pandemic, the SFC has stepped up its mental wellbeing strategy to provide more support for staff.

During the year, we shared free webinars and articles provided by CMHA HK and Mind Hong Kong and held meditation sessions to provide staff with more resources for maintaining good mental health and work-life balance. We also organised a talk about anger management with the Mental Health Association of Hong Kong.

To support World Mental Health Day, World Suicide Prevention Day, and the “Move it for Mental Health” campaign^a organised by Mind Hong Kong, we promoted related events via email and shared useful links and information.

To raise mental health awareness, we circulated four weekly articles on the themes of depression, anxiety and the use of online social media platforms, bipolar disorder and substance abuse and the fear of missing out. A total of 77 staff



(Photo: Mind Hong Kong)

members participated in our weekly quizzes to test their knowledge of mental health issues.

In April 2021, Ms Julia Leung, our Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of Intermediaries, joined the Wellbeing at Work Asia Summit, a virtual senior leader panel organised by CMHA HK. Ms Leung acknowledged that coping with stress both at work and at home was tough for many, and senior management should prioritise work to focus on critical functions during difficult times to relieve anxiety on the part of staff.

^a The campaign aims to highlight the importance of exercising regularly to maintain mental and physical health. Participants were encouraged to complete 280,000 or more steps in February 2022.