

Press Release — For Immediate Release

Dah Sing Bank and Friends of the Earth (HK) Jointly Present Retail and E-Commerce ESG Forum for SMEs

Advocates Sustainable Business Model for SMEs
As Means to Gain Customers and Word-of-Mouth

(Hong Kong, 21 September 2022) The second industry forum (the "Forum") under the SME ESG Best Practices Recognition Programme ("the Programme") took place today under the joint auspices of Dah Sing Bank, Limited ("Dah Sing Bank") and Friends of the Earth (HK) ("FoE HK"). It gathered business and industry leaders to discuss how SMEs in retail and e-commerce sector can meet market needs and expand their businesses while practising sustainable development concepts, promoting diversification and inclusiveness, improving business operations, and working together to enhance environmental, social and governance ("ESG") standards for a better life together.

In recent years, the retail industry has to face various environmental and social challenges. The gradual change in seasonal shopping patterns as a result of environmental risks such as climate change command retailers to be more agile in operation to adapt to the changing sales seasons. Issues such as plastic wastes and more complex logistics are also among the challenges the industry is facing. As for social risks, with consumers' spending patterns changing, and the emphasis on healthy products and food safety growing, retailers need better understanding of customers' brand perception and preferences in order to retain and attract customers. In addition, technologies and their applications are changing the retail industry landscape. With fewer manpower needed at physical stores, employees need to be more capable of dealing with customers and managing changes. Practising ESG will help SMEs strengthen their ability to mitigate these potential risks.

In the opening speech, Mr Plato Yip, Chairperson of FoE HK, said, "In recent years, the epidemic has accelerated the pace of digital transformation of businesses, with online shopping becoming the new norm for Hong Kong consumers. To stand out in this highly competitive market, retailers must not only adapt to the new norm, but also interact more closely with consumers and build closer ties with them. The ability of the industry to position itself accurately, keep abreast of the latest trends, and prepare for the challenges ahead is crucial not only for the businesses themselves but also for the Hong Kong retail industry as a whole. As SMEs seek to accelerate their transformation and breakthrough, ESG is one of the most effective ways to help them save costs, win reputation, and improve their competitiveness in an adverse market."

Ms Phoebe Wong, Deputy Chief Executive, Senior Executive Director and Group Head of Personal

Banking of Dah Sing Bank, said, "The 'SME ESG Best Practices Recognition Programme' is a partnership between Dah Sing Bank and FoE HK to raise ESG awareness among SMEs in different industries, and our aim is to encourage them to implement ESG practices to save costs and gain customers and word-of-mouth in a competitive market. The retail industry contributes enormously to Hong Kong's economy, and e-commerce has also been growing rapidly in recent years. However, increasing consumer attention on eco-lifestyles and responsible consumption is presenting challenges and opportunities for both traditional retail and e-commerce operators. We hope that today's Forum will inspire and encourage SMEs to take their first step towards sustainable business practices."

The first half of the Forum was moderated by Mr Ryan Fung, ESG Analyst and Media Advisor, and Ms Freda Au, Head of Content at EDigest, NMG. Executives from large retailers and online shopping platforms shared how businesses can optimise resource management, promote social wellbeing, improve corporate governance, and encourage different stakeholders to promote sustainable development through various means like procurement, supplier selection and talent acquisition. Chaired by Mr Anthony Cheung, Vice-chairperson & Green Finance Convenor of FoE HK, the second panel of SME business representatives discussed the problems faced by SMEs in the retail and e-commerce sector when implementing ESG concepts, and provided advice on how to fulfil sustainability commitments while showcasing their products, services and brand image as well as enhancing their competitive advantages and maintaining business growth. The Forum attracted the participation of close to 100 business leaders, executives, and media representatives.

The Programme is the first sector-specific ESG recognition scheme for SMEs to encourage them to adopt ESG best practices to promote sustainable development in their industries. Using the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as a framework, it evaluates the sustainable development strategies and policies of SMEs and their ability to manage and drive sustainable development. SMEs are recognised for achieving a certain level of improvement within a specific period of time. The Programme is sponsored by Dah Sing Bank and participation is complimentary for SMEs. Additionally, Dah Sing Bank is offering further incentives in the form of fee discounts and cash rebates to all participating and/or recognised SMEs, and an exclusive cash award of HKD1,000 will be given to the recognised participants. SMEs in the retail and e-commerce industries can enrol in the Programme from now until 18 November 2022. Please refer to the attached fact sheet for details.

The team of professionals behind the Programme can be described as "ESG doctors" for enterprise development. Consultancy firms offering such services are plentiful and typically command fees of more than HKD100,000. SMEs taking part in the Programme will have access to similar support free of charge, helping them to identify areas for improvement in their business as early as possible and to plan ahead.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of Dah Sing Bank. A series of celebratory activities has been launched since June to engage local communities, SMEs and customers as well as to promote green lifestyles. Through these activities, the Bank hopes to thank and share its joy with the public and its customers, express its advocacy for sustainable lifestyles, and bring vitality to Hong Kong's communities and economy. For details, please visit the Bank's 75th anniversary webpage on <http://www.dahsing.com/75Anniv/en>.

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Photo 1: Mr. Plato Yip, Chairperson, Friends of the Earth (HK) delivering speech



Photo 2: Ms. Phoebe Wong, Deputy Chief Executive, Senior Executive Director, Group Head of Personal Banking, Dah Sing Bank delivering speech



Photo 3: Ms. Phoebe Wong, Deputy Chief Executive, Senior Executive Director, Group Head of Personal Banking, Dah Sing Bank (Right), Mr. Plato Yip, Chairperson, Friends of the Earth (HK) (Left)



Photo 4: The Forum - Topic 1: Dialogue with listed companies: ESG trends for the Retail & e-Commerce Sector – Opportunities and Challenges for SMEs



Photo 5: The Forum - Topic 2: Dialogue with SMEs: The ESG impacts for SMEs – How to get started?

About Dah Sing Bank

Dah Sing Bank, Limited ("Dah Sing Bank") is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Dah Sing Banking Group Limited (HKG: 2356) which is listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. Founded in Hong Kong 75 years ago, Dah Sing Bank has been providing quality banking products and services to our customers with a vision to be "The Local Bank with a Personal Touch". Over the years, Dah Sing Bank has been rigorous in delivering on our brand promise to grow with our customers in Hong Kong, the Greater Bay Area and beyond – "Together We Progress and Prosper". Building on our experience and solid foundation in the industry, Dah Sing Bank's scope of professional services now spans retail banking, private banking, business and commercial banking. Meanwhile, Dah Sing Bank is also making significant investments in our digital banking capabilities to stay abreast with smart banking developments in Hong Kong and to support financial inclusion at large.

In addition to its Hong Kong banking operations, Dah Sing Bank also has wholly-owned subsidiaries including Dah Sing Bank (China) Limited, Banco Comercial de Macau, S.A., and OK Finance Limited. It is also a strategic shareholder of Bank of Chongqing with a shareholding of about 13%. Dah Sing Bank and its subsidiaries now have around 70 operating locations in Hong Kong, Macau and Mainland China.

About Friends of the Earth (HK)

Friends of the Earth (HK), as a leading environmental advocate, focuses on protecting our local and regional environment, offers equitable solutions to help create environmentally sustainable public policies, business practices and community lifestyles and engages government, business and community to act responsibly. Friends of the Earth (HK) is dedicated to promote green finance and cultivate ESG talents to transition HK and Asia Pacific region into a carbon neutral economy. Friends of the Earth (HK) closely partners with SME associations in Hong Kong (with coverage >3,000 companies), as well as international associations (e.g., World Benchmarking Alliance), with strong access to ESG & green finance talents professionals in Hong Kong, through our CESGA alumni network.

Friends of the Earth (HK) launched the first Green Finance Roadmap of its kind in the APAC region in 2019. One of our key focus would be on building capacity for industry practitioners and general public towards green finance, and hence our events are centered around "Green Finance Connect Education Series". Examples include Sustainability Leadership Seminars, our Green Finance Symposium on ESG integration. We aim to work with all sectors of the community to build a sustainable society and environment.

Appendix

**Dah Sing Bank and Friends of the Earth (HK) Jointly Present:
The SME ESG Best Practices Recognition Programme**

Timetable		
	Industry #1 Property and Construction	Industry #2 Retail and E-Commerce
Kick-off Ceremony	8 June 2022	
Industry Forums Registration Begins	8 June 2022 to 24 June 2022	23 August 2022 to 18 September 2022
Industry Forums / Programme Application Opens	27 June 2022	21 September 2022
Programme Application Period	27 June 2022 to 31 August 2022	21 September 2022 to 18 November 2022
Programme Application Deadline	31 August 2022	18 November 2022
Online Questionnaire Completion & Supporting Documents Submission	Until 31 December 2022	Until 28 February 2023
Programme Result Announcement	Q1 2023	Q2 2023

Programme website

<https://bit.ly/3x7tSS4>



Dah Sing Bank offers exclusive Programme Incentives

<https://bit.ly/3OncS0l>



Appendix

The Roadmap to a Sustainable Retail & e-Commerce Sector - - Opportunities and Challenges for SMEs

Guest List

Theme: Dialogue with listed companies: ESG trends for the Retail & e-Commerce Sector – Opportunities and Challenges for SMEs	
Moderators	Mr. Ryan Fung ESG Analyst and Media Advisor
	Ms. Freda Au Head of Content, EDigest, NMG
Guest Speakers	Ms. Cerin Yip ESG Director, Alibaba Group
	Mr. Johnny Siu ESG Finance Manager, DFI
	Ms. June Lam Chief Executive Officer, HomePlus (Hong Kong) Limited

Theme: Dialogue with SMEs: The ESG impacts for SMEs- How to get started?	
Moderator	Ms. Serena Mak Board Governor, Friends of the Earth (HK)
Guest Speakers	Ms. Jane Tong Treasurer, SME Sustainability Society
	Mr. Thomas CC Wong Executive committee Member, The Chinese Manufacturers' Association of HK
	Ms. Pam Mak Life Honorary President, HK Small & Medium Enterprises Association
	Mr. Eric Yeung Vice President, HK General Chamber of Small and Medium Business