

For immediate release

**Dah Sing Bank and Hong Kong Small and Medium Enterprises Association
Jointly Launch SME ESG Charter 2024**

Enhances SME competitiveness in transition towards economic sustainability

(Hong Kong, 18 April 2024) Dah Sing Bank, Limited ("Dah Sing Bank" or "the Bank") and the Hong Kong Small and Medium Enterprises Association ("HKSMEA") today jointly launched the **SME ESG Charter 2024** ("the ESG Charter 2024"), an initiative that aims to promote the understanding and early adoption of environmental, social and governance ("ESG") principles by local small and medium enterprises ("SMEs"). The ESG Charter 2024 encourages SMEs to embrace ESG principles in their day-to-day operations and business governance, and helps to strengthen their operational efficiency and business competitiveness as they embark on their future sustainable development.

Climate change has had serious impacts on mankind and ecosystems globally in recent years. Apart from environmental damages, it also poses risks and threats to the real economy, business operations and financial performances. Meanwhile, as more and more multinationals and large corporations use ESG standards as one of the key criteria for selecting partners and suppliers, SMEs must adapt accordingly in order to continue their business growth.

HKSMEA piloted the "ESG Charter for SME Support" initiative last year which met with favourable responses. In order to help more SMEs strengthen their business competitiveness amidst the growing urgency of ESG, Dah Sing Bank is sponsoring HKSMEA in the launch of the ESG Charter 2024, enabling up to 30 chartered qualified SMEs to benefit from free independent assessment and certification.

"SMEs are one of our most important customer segments and a key ESG strategic stakeholder for Dah Sing Bank. HKSMEA shares the same ESG vision as our Bank in its commitment towards enhancing SMEs' understanding of ESG and encouraging SMEs in their transition towards economic sustainability. We hope that our sponsorship of the ESG Charter 2024 will enable more SMEs to receive free professional guidance and assistance and help them attain quasi-ESG certification status," said Ms. Phoebe Wong, Deputy Chief Executive, Senior Executive Director and Group Head of Personal Banking of Dah Sing Bank.

The ESG Charter 2024 is a not-for-profit assessment framework that references the sections of the ESG Reporting Guide in Appendix C2 of the HKEX Listing Rules that are applicable to SMEs. Participating SMEs will be assessed by and will receive an assessment report from a third party professional consultancy. SMEs who have successfully attained the ESG Charter 2024 status will be placed in the SME ESG Register by HKSMEA, and will enjoy priority when large corporations supporting the charter consider their products and services.

Mr. Andrew Kwok, President of the HKSMEA, said, "SMEs participating in the ESG Charter 2024 will undergo independent assessment and certification by a third-party independent consultant, showcasing their commitment to support sustainable development. This not only enhances public recognition of those SMEs, but also fosters an ESG culture within their organisations, resulting in a greater sense of pride and morale amongst its employees. The ESG Charter for SME Support pilot scheme was very well received last year. With Dah Sing Bank's support this year, we believe that the SME sector will be able to achieve its sustainable development goals even sooner. We encourage large corporations to join the charter as supporting organisations and demonstrate their commitment to supporting SMEs in their ESG development."

Dah Sing Bank and HKSMEA will provide comprehensive support to SMEs participating in the ESG Charter 2024, including publicity, workshops, technical advice, rating, public education and business liaison. SMEs can apply to join the charter between 18 April 2024 and 30 September 2024.

To engage more SMEs in their transition towards economic sustainability and to underline its recognition of their dedication and efforts, Dah Sing Bank will be offering a full waiver of account opening fees to SMEs that received the 2023 ESG Charter for SME Support certificate and those who will gain accreditation to the ESG Charter 2024.¹

At the launch event held today, HKSMEA also presented certificates to 13 SMEs that have attained accreditation in the 2023 ESG Charter for SME Support. The event also featured a number of ESG experts and SME representatives in a discussion forum to share their views on the benefits of ESG for SMEs, covering topics such as key ESG issues, the general trend of engaging in transition towards economic sustainability as well as best practices in ESG implementation.

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Photo caption: Guests and representatives from co-organiser and assisting organisations participated in the SME ESG Charter 2024 Launching Ceremony to encourage SMEs to raise their ESG standards and contribute to Hong Kong's sustainable economic transformation. Ms. Ho Wing-yin, Winnie, JP, Secretary for Housing of the HKSAR (sixth right), Ms. Phoebe Wong, Deputy Chief Executive, Senior Executive Director and Group Head of Personal Banking of Dah Sing Bank (seventh right), Mr. Andrew Kwok, President of HKSMEA (seventh left), Member of HKSMEA ESG Committee and Legislative Council member Hon Elizabeth Quat, SBS, JP (fifth right), Legislative Council member Hon Benson Luk Hon-man (fourth right), Ms. Pamela Mak Mei Yee, Chairlady of HKSMEA ESG Committee (sixth left), and Mr. Calvin Cheng Chung Pong, Chairman of HKSMEA (first right).

¹ The waiver of account opening fees is only applicable to SMEs who obtained the ESG Charter for SME Support in 2023 or the SME ESG Charter in 2024 within a period of 12 months. Terms and conditions apply.

About Hong Kong Small and Medium Enterprises Association

Founded in 1996, Hong Kong Small and Medium Enterprises Association was one of the most important SMEs chamber of commerce in Hong Kong. As a non-profit making organization, we have been working for the development of SMEs from manufacturing, food & beverage industry, professional service sectors, marketing and allied industrial / business sectors for almost three decades.

Our main mission is to serve as a bridge of communication between SMEs and HKSAR Government, increasing the competitiveness and productivity of SMEs, assisting them in upgrading, restructuring, entering GBA market and developing globally.

About Dah Sing Bank Limited

Dah Sing Bank, Limited (the "Bank") is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Dah Sing Banking Group (HKG:2356). Founded in Hong Kong over 75 years ago, the Bank has been providing quality banking products and services to its customers with a vision to be "The Local Bank with a Personal Touch". Over the years, the Bank has been rigorous in delivering on its brand tagline to grow with its 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, our scope of professional services now spans retail banking, private banking, business and commercial banking. Meanwhile, the Bank is also making significant investments in its 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, the Bank 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 64 operating locations in Hong Kong, Macau and Mainland China.