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ECONOMY



Economy

Although Macao has a relatively small economy, it pursues an open economic policy. It is one of the two international free ports in China. Goods, capital, foreign exchange and people flow freely in and out of Macao. As a separate customs territory, it also has one of the lowest tax regimes in the region. Macao is integrated with the global economy and maintains traditional and special economic ties with the European Union (EU) and Portuguese-speaking countries. Consequently, Macao plays a relatively important role in the regional economies and is an important gateway and bridge linking mainland China with international markets.

Investment Incentives

Macao provides a level playing field for investors from around the world. At the same time, the series of measures that have been implemented to encourage investment – including the provision of various tax and financial incentives – have gradually made Macao an ideal place for investors.

Tax Incentives

According to Law No. 1/86/M on Tax Incentives under Industrial Policy, the Government aims to provide concessionary tax benefits to entrepreneurs whose investment projects can contribute to Macao industries, stimulating increased investment, promoting the growth and development of local industries, through boosting productivity and levels of technology, the manufacturing of new products, and other developments related to manufacturing.

Eligible applicants can enjoy all or some of the following benefits:

1. Exemption from urban real estate tax: The exemption period for properties on the Macao peninsula is up to 10 years, while the exemption period for those on the Islands District is up to 20 years. The above exemption is only applicable to rental income on industrial properties;
2. Exemption from business tax;
3. Deduction of 50 percent on corporate income tax;
4. For any transfer of industrial properties, a 50-100 percent reduction of stamp duty for property transfer may be available; and
5. Deduction of 50 percent on inheritance tax and gift tax for the above-mentioned property transfer.

Financial Incentives

The implementation of By-law No. 7/2021 – Subsidy Scheme for Encouraging Enterprise Upgrading – aims to encourage commercial enterprise owners to raise their competitiveness, foster adequate diversification and sustainable development of the economy and, especially, realise the goals of industrialisation, technological innovation, enterprise transformation, and

improved operational and production conditions. Eligible commercial business owners may apply for interest or rental subsidies for a maximum period of four years, when implementing investment projects in Macao by means of bank loans or financial leases that contribute to achieving the scheme's objectives.

The maximum annual subsidy rate and the maximum subsidy amount that can be granted each year under the Subsidy Scheme are determined by Executive Orders. In accordance with the Executive Order No. 39/2021, the maximum annual subsidy rate on bank loans is four percent; the total amount of a loan that can be subsidised is capped at 600 million patacas per year; and the maximum total of loans that can be subsidised for each beneficiary is capped at 10 million patacas per year. The maximum annual subsidy rate of the finance lease rental subsidy is four percent; the total amount of a finance lease rental subsidy is capped at 200 million patacas per year; and the annual total of finance lease rental subsidies for each beneficiary is capped at 10 million patacas.

Statistics on Beneficiary Industries in 2023 (as of Q4)

Type of industry	Percentage (%) ⁽¹⁾	Approved subsidies total (MOP)	Approved cases ⁽²⁾
Wholesale	20.41%	39,099,409.20	6
Construction and public works	19.51%	37,395,184.00	5
Services for companies	13.52%	25,905,144.60	5
Imports and exports	9.94%	19,040,000.00	3
Retail	9.25%	17,730,500.00	3
Food, beverage and tobacco products	7.28%	13,955,283.78	2
Metal products, machinery and transport equipment manufacturing	5.22%	10,000,000.00	1
Other processing industries	5.22%	10,000,000.00	1
Education, healthcare, and social welfare	3.13%	5,998,250.00	4
Personal services including automobile and motorcycle repair, hair salons and beauty salons	2.04%	3,900,000.00	1
Transportation and warehousing, travel agencies	2.02%	3,864,312.00	3

(Cont.)

Statistics on Beneficiary Industries in 2023 (as of Q4)			
Type of industry	Percentage (%)⁽¹⁾	Approved subsidies total (MOP)	Approved cases⁽²⁾
Chinese or western restaurants, and hotels	1.49%	2,859,761.18	1
Hygiene and cleaning services	0.97%	1,852,158.00	1
Total	100.00%	191,600,002.76	36

Notes: (1) As a percentage of the total approved subsidy amount;

(2) Subject to approval date.

Economic overview

Following the recent transformations of both internal and external economic environments, the contribution to Macao's GDP of the tourism and leisure industry has overtaken that of the manufacturing, financial services, construction, and real estate industries.

Gaming industry

On 1 January 2023, the new concession agreements for operating games of luck in casinos officially came into effect, marking a new milestone in the development of Macao's gaming industry. Concurrently, the relaxation of pandemic prevention measures at the beginning of the year revitalised the movements of people across regions, leading to a rapid rebound in numbers of visitors to Macao. Thus, the economy has steadily recovered. The annual gaming gross revenue was approximately 183.7 billion patacas, representing an increase of 328.8 percent compared to the same period in 2022; the gross revenue from games of luck was approximately 183.059 billion patacas.

Lawful gaming businesses in Macao currently include games of luck, interactive gaming, pari-mutuel and lotteries. Types of gaming are mainly categorised according to the Gaming Industry Regulatory Framework. Games of luck form the biggest sector of Macao's gaming industry. Gross revenues from these games accounted for 99.65 percent of the industry's gross takings in 2023.

There are now six gaming concessionaires in Macao, each of which enjoys the right to autonomously operate casino gaming businesses as an independent legal person. At the end of 2023, there were 30 casinos operating in Macao, 13 of which belonged to SJM Resorts Limited, five to the Venetian Macau Limited, four to Galaxy Casino S.A., two to Wynn Resorts (Macao) Limited, four to Melco Resorts and Entertainment Limited, and two to MGM Grand Paradise Limited.

According to Executive Order No. 161/2022, starting from 1 January 2023, the maximum number of gaming tables that can be operated by each concessionaire is 6,000, and the maximum

number of gaming machines is 12,000.

The steady economic recovery resulted in growing demand for human resources. At the end of 2023, there were 400 vacancies in the gaming industry, representing a year-on-year increase of 387 vacancies. There were 51,771 gaming industry employees, representing a year-on-year decrease of 403 employees. Regarding breakdown by job, there were 23,359 dealers, 362 less than in the previous year.

Regarding salaries (excluding incentive bonuses and rewards), the average monthly wage for full-time employees in the gaming industry at the end of 2023 was 25,290 patacas, 6.8 percent higher than in 2022. The average wage of dealers was 20,870 patacas, 5.4 percent higher than in 2022.

Legal regulations refined and junket commissions capped

Since 2001, the Government has formulated and promulgated a series of laws and regulations, including laws to regulate gaming promoters and gaming-related loan activities.

By-law No. 6/2002 on the Qualifications and Regulations for Casino Gaming Promoters is the main provision for regulating casino gaming promotion activities. In August 2009, after being amended by By-law No. 27/2009, it was renamed the By-law on the Regulation of Casino Gaming Promotion Activities. It includes detailed requirements for mandatory qualifications and the liabilities of promoters, licensing processes and registration of promoters with gaming concessionaires. The by-law strictly regulates the mandatory qualifications of gaming promoter licence applicants, as well as gaming promoters who serve a company or individual business owner. Under the by-law, only persons granted a gaming promoter's licence by the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) are permitted to engage in gaming promotion activities.

The Government has decided to set a cap on junket commissions, to maintain market order and effective regulation of the industry, as well as safeguard the healthy development of the gaming industry. In September 2009, the Secretary for Economy and Finance signed Order No. 83/2009 to cap junket commissions at 1.25 percent of bets, and require each gaming concessionaire to submit a monthly report to the DICJ. Following promulgation of the by-laws, the Government listened to opinions from all parties, and introduced more refined and detailed guidelines. The amended by-law came into force on 1 December 2009.

Gaming promoters are legally obliged to pay tax at a rate of five percent on commissions they collect from concessionaires, and other remuneration they receive.

The Government has also made efforts to regulate gaming-related loan activities. The Law on Regulating Credit Related to Gaming and Betting in Casinos or Other Gaming Venues stipulates that only concessionaires and sub-concessionaires are authorised to conduct credit-related business. Gaming promoters and management companies are also allowed to conduct such business provided they have already signed relevant contracts with a concessionaire or sub-concessionaire. The credit provided in accordance with this law is regarded as statutory debt. The law also states principles and conditions governing the signing of contracts, credit activities and other related matters. It defines the granting of credit as being transfer of the ownership of casino gaming chips to a third party, when the lender is not immediately compensated by a monetary payment. It also clearly

defines different types of money.

The Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau

The Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ) is a public department responsible for providing assistance in formulating and executing policies related to the gaming industry; and regulation, monitoring and coordination of gaming operations and activities.

The DICJ's work during 2023 was largely in response to changing situations both locally and externally, aiming to ensure the healthy and orderly development of the gaming industry, and align with the MSAR Government's appropriate economic diversification strategy; and can be summarised as follows:

1. Monitoring the implementation of the concession agreements

The current concessionaires made commitments in their tender submissions regarding the development of gaming and non-gaming projects (including entertainment performances, community tourism, culture and art), expanding international visitor sources, and fulfilling social responsibilities (including by supporting local small and medium-sized enterprises and promoting diverse development of industries, ensuring labour rights and supporting charitable activities). The Macao SAR Government has incorporated these commitments into the concession agreements, in accordance with the recently amended By-law No. 26/2001.

The concession agreements, which came into effect on 1 January 2023, clearly state that each gaming concessionaire is required to submit a project implementation plan to the Government, detailing the proposed investments during the following year. The plan should provide details, investment amounts and implementation timeline for the investment projects, in order to obtain government approval. Prior to granting approval, the Government may negotiate and make adjustments with the gaming concessionaires, based on the needs of socio-economic development, and issue approvals within the legal timeframe.

Each gaming concessionaire proceeds with its investments according to the approved plan, while the DICJ and related government departments continuously monitor the implementation of various gaming and non-gaming projects – particularly those involving investments in expanding international visitor sources and developing non-gaming projects such as conferences and exhibitions, entertainment performances, sports events, culture and art, healthcare and health maintenance, themed amusement facilities, city of gastronomy, community tourism and maritime tourism, which aim to enrich the contents of Macao as a world tourism and leisure centre.

2. Regulating the gaming industry in accordance with the law

To ensure that gaming activities in casinos were conducted in strict accordance with the law, the DICJ constantly monitored the onsite operations of casinos, examined the accounts and finance of gaming concessionaires, and conducted reviews of the implementation of the Basic Internal Control Procedures; continuously monitored qualifications of industry players, to ensure that individuals or

companies involved in the industry maintain appropriate qualifications while conducting business or performing their duties; and strictly processed all gaming table and gaming machine applications, to ensure the industry maintains an appropriate scale and structure.

Regarding gaming promoters, according to By-law No. 16/2022, the DICJ continued scrutinising their capital and accounts, and monitored the qualifications of gaming promoters and partners; and reviewed the performance of duties by gaming promoters and partners, particularly to ensure compliance with legal requirements, such as making notifications and submitting documents within the legal timeframe.

In 2023, a total of 39 licences were issued to gaming promoters, representing a year-on-year decrease of 48 percent. To ensure the healthy and orderly development of the industry, the Government has stipulated the maximum number of gambling promoters and partners for 2024 in accordance with the law.

3. Assisting in combating money laundering and terrorism financing

In order to prevent casinos from being used for money laundering and financing terrorism, the DICJ continued to monitor the compliance of gaming concessionaires and gaming promoters with their statutory obligations. Regarding measures to combat money-laundering and terrorism-financing, the DICJ examined the due diligence reviews of large cash transactions by gaming concessionaires, as well as the reporting of large cash transactions by concessionaires and gaming promoters.

4. Continuously improving the legal framework of the gambling industry

The review of Law No. 5/2004 - Law on Regulating Credit Related to Gaming and Betting in Casinos or Other Gaming Venues was completed. A draft of the Law on Regulating Credit Related to Gaming in Casinos or Other Gaming Venues was submitted to the Legislative Assembly, stipulating the entities involved in credit provision and their obligations, and introducing additional supervisory authorities and penalties to further enhance the monitoring mechanism.

The DICJ continued following up on the amendments to By-law No. 26/2012 - Supply System and Requirements on Gaming Machines, Equipment and Systems, as well as the drafting of technical standards for self-service redemption machines for gaming machine coupons.

5. Promoting responsible gaming

The DICJ continued requiring and reviewing the implementation of responsible gaming by the gaming concessionaires, including by reviewing the annual plans for responsible gaming submitted by gaming concessionaires and conducting onsite inspections; completed reviewing the implementation of the Regulations on Conditions for Entering, Working and Gaming in Casinos and follow-up work, which included conducting special inspections regarding measures taken by gaming concessionaires to prevent individuals under the age of 21 from entering the casinos and promoting enhanced publicity efforts.

As at the end of December 2023, there were 176,550 cases of security staff preventing persons

under the age of 21 from entering casinos. Also, 76 cases of persons under the age of 21 entering casinos illegally were discovered and documented.

The DICJ also provided a self-exclusion application service to the public. The DICJ accepted 494 applications in 2023, representing an increase of about 43 percent compared to 2022. Among the applications throughout the year, 418 were for the individuals making the applications, and 76 were on behalf of other persons.

In response to the provisions on responsible gaming in the revised Gaming Industry Regulatory Framework and the Government's responsible gaming policy, the DICJ commenced amending the Responsible Gaming Measures so that gaming concessionaires can more systematically implement responsible gaming, contributing to the development of a healthy tourism city.

The DICJ continued encouraging gaming concessionaires and other gaming operators to participate in the Responsible Gaming Implementation Benchmarks, examined their levels of compliance related to their work on responsible gaming, and provided enhancement proposals with follow-up actions. In 2023, nine casinos, two gaming arcades and one betting centre passed the Responsible Gaming Implementation Benchmarks appraisal, resulting in a cumulative total of 27 units rated as a "Model of Responsible Gaming Implementation".

In order to systematically monitor gaming concessionaires to ensure their compliance with contractual obligations related to responsible gaming, they are required to regularly submit relevant information for analysis and review, in addition to undergoing regular supervision and inspections.

6. Assisting in combating illegal activities

To ensure that gaming activities in Macao were conducted in strict accordance with the law, with fairness and compliance, apart from constantly monitoring the onsite operations of casinos, the DICJ partnered with the Judiciary Police to conduct joint unannounced inspections focusing on any non-compliance in casino operations, and further combat activities related to illegal currency exchanges, thus avoiding any public security risk.

The DICJ continued combating all kinds of illegal gaming websites or platforms that were suspected of operating under different names, such as by posing as DICJ or Macao gaming operators, through a tripartite collaboration mechanism established with the Judiciary Police and gaming concessionaires. In 2023, 2,285 suspected illegal gaming websites or platforms were referred to the Judiciary Police, 22 percent less than the figure in 2022.

Regarding administrative penalties for prevention and handling of illegal gambling, there were 20 cases of illegal gambling in 2023, 39 percent fewer than in 2022. A total of 81 individuals were involved. To enhance public awareness of illegal gambling, the DICJ continues sending representatives to various public locations, to educate the public about illegal street gambling and the associated penalties.

7. Strengthening regulatory work

The DICJ continued providing specific training to related personnel, to enhance their understanding

and awareness of “One country, two systems” and national security, in order to better fulfill regulatory responsibilities in the gaming industry; constructed and developed the surveillance and internal management systems in casinos, and constantly deepened the application of information technology in surveillance work and internal management, to enhance the standard of electronic public services and supervision work.

In terms of e-governance and online application services, publicity campaigns were conducted regarding the regulations on permits for the sale of lottery tickets, lucky draws and similar activities, to prepare for the introduction of new electronic services, which will be launched in conjunction with the Government’s Business and Associations Platform application.

Major Gaming Data for 2023

Contribution to Gaming, by Gross Revenue, of Games of Fortune in 2023	
(billion patacas)	
Items	2023
Gross Revenue of Games of Fortune	183.059
Gross Gaming Revenue	183.7
Proportion of Contribution	99.65%

Gross Revenue from Various Gaming Activities in 2023	
(billion patacas)	
Items	Gross Revenue
Roulette	0.828
Black Jack	2.321
VIP Baccarat	45.189
Baccarat	110.49
Fantan	0.428
Cussec	6.496
Paikao	0.094
Gaming Machines	10.915

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Gross Revenue from Various Gaming Activities in 2023	
(billion patacas)	
Items	Gross Revenue
3-Card Poker	0.312
3-Card Baccarat Game	0.356
Live Multi Game	2.895
Stud Poker	0.8
Casino War	0.025
Craps	0.333
Texas hold'em	0.633
Fortune 3 Card Poker	0.944
Total	183.059

Manufacturing

Macao's manufacturing industry now faces changes in the worldwide manufacturing supply chain and disparities in regional manufacturing costs. Since the 1990s, Macao has gradually transformed into a more service-oriented economy. As a result, the manufacturing industry's share of GDP decreased from 20.6 percent in 1989 to one percent in 2022.

In 2023, Macao's exports totalled 13.34 billion patacas, representing a year-on-year decrease of 1.3 percent, with Macao's domestic product exports amounting to 1.55 billion patacas, down 23.2 percent year-on-year. The value of re-exports was 11.79 billion patacas, up 2.5 percent year-on-year. Hong Kong continued to be the major export market for Macao, with a 71.5 percent share of Macao's total exports. Mainland China accounted for 7.3 percent of Macao's total exports. The United States accounted for 3.3 percent.

In 2023, the value of products exported under the Mainland and Macao Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement ("CEPA") was 73 million patacas. Tax with a total value of 4.38 million patacas was waived. During the past 20 years, the cumulative total value of zero-tariff goods entering mainland China in accordance with CEPA provisions was 1.42 billion patacas, with 91.39 million patacas of taxes waived.

Financial Services Industry

The financial services industry in Macao underwent rapid growth towards the end of the 1980s.

Following over 30 years of growth and refinement, Macao now boasts a sophisticated and open system, with characteristics that are unique in the region.

As at the end of 2023, among financial institutions authorised to operate in Macao, there were 34 banks (including one Government-owned Postal Savings Office), 27 insurance companies, two private pension-fund management companies, one finance company, five lease finance companies, two financial asset trading companies, 10 bureaux de change, six bureaux de change counters, one investment fund management company, four cash remittance companies, three non-banking credit agencies, three share trading companies and one other financial institution. Also, one foreign reinsurer was authorised to set up their representative office in Macao.

The Banking System

The Financial System Act, the primary legislation regulating Macao's financial services industry, emphasises risk management and control requirements for financial institutions. In particular, it imposes strict requirements on operators, which includes the suitability of major shareholders and managers.

Taking into account past regulatory experiences, industry opinions and suggestions, standards and recommended practices advocated by international regulatory organisations, as well as regulatory laws and regulations on financial services in other countries or regions closely related to Macao's financial services or with similar legal systems, the act was amended and officially promulgated in 2023, in order to align with the development of the financial services industry, enhance regulatory requirements, conform to international regulatory standards, optimise and streamline administrative procedures, and strengthen penalties for illegal financial activities.

In accordance with the Financial System Act, the Chief Executive of the MSAR may, after considering advice from the Monetary Authority, approve the registration of credit institutions in Macao on a case-by-case basis, the establishment of branches of overseas credit institutions, the setting-up of subsidiaries, branches or representative offices outside Macao by locally registered credit institutions, and the establishment of financial services intermediaries and other institutions engaging in regulated financial services in Macao.

As at the end of 2023, the 34 credit institutions in Macao (including a Government-owned Postal Savings Office and 33 banks) owned assets with a total value of 2,428.1 billion patacas. Deposits in Macao's banking system amounted to 1,223.4 billion patacas, and loans totalled 1,093.3 billion patacas; the loan-to-deposit ratio was 89.4 percent.

Excluding Macao Postal Savings, there are currently 12 local registered banks operating in Macao, with the other currently operating banks being branches of banking groups registered overseas, which come from: mainland China, Portugal, Hong Kong, Taiwan China, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Singapore.

Moreover, the operations of Macao's banks now make extensive use of computer software and hardware. Electronic banking is popular, including 24-hour banking services via channels such as mobile phones and the Internet.

Under the management principle of prudent operations upheld by Macao's banks, and thanks to

the proven financial regulation measures, Macao's banking system has been kept safe and reliable, maintaining sufficient capital, affluent liquidity and good asset quality.

The Insurance Industry

Market Overview

As at the end of 2023, 27 insurance companies were permitted to conduct business in Macao. Of these, 13 were life insurance companies and the other 14 were general insurance companies. Classified by their origins, 11 of these companies were locally established, and the other 16 were branches of overseas companies. In addition, two fund-management companies were authorised to conduct pension-fund businesses in the MSAR, one of which is a representative office of a reinsurer with an overseas headquarters. At the end of 2023, Macao's insurance industry employed 813 people. There were 7,958 authorised insurance intermediaries: 5,999 individual agents, 1,875 salespersons, 73 corporate agents, and 11 insurance brokers.

In 2023, total insurance premium income was 37.07 billion patacas, 3.0 percent less than in 2022. Life insurance premium income accounted for 92.3 percent of the insurance market's total premium income, with the remaining 7.7 percent coming from general insurance. Life insurance premiums totalled 34.22 billion patacas, 3.9 percent down from the previous year. General insurance premiums totalled 2.85 billion patacas, representing a year-on-year increase of 9.1 percent.

Regarding pension funds, at the end of 2023, six life insurance companies and two pension-fund management companies were providing pension fund management services. So far, 53 pension funds have been established under the Legal Framework for Private Pension Funds, of which one is a closed-end fund and 52 are open-end funds. To date, 2,002 private pension fund schemes and approximately 86,000 non-mandatory central provident fund schemes have been established by businesses or individuals, with participation by more than 228,000 people. In 2023, the managed funds held assets of approximately 42.4 billion patacas.

Supervision and Regulation of the Insurance Industry

In Macao, the duty to supervise, coordinate and inspect insurance activities rests with the Chief Executive, with the Monetary Authority authorised to perform these functions. The Legal System for Insurance Business, the Legal Framework for Private Pension Funds, and the Legal System on Insurance Intermediaries have been formulated to regulate insurance companies, private pension fund management companies, and insurance intermediaries, respectively.

The amendment to the Legal System for Insurance Business is the major law for regulating the operation of insurance business, which was amended and came into effect in 2020. The amendment to the law covers the professional entry requirements for engaging in the insurance business, enhanced supervision of insurance companies, as well as the responsibilities of insurance companies.

The Legal Framework for Private Pension Funds came into effect in 1999. The law requires that a pension fund must be managed by a life insurance company or a company established for the management of the pension fund. To more effectively protect the interests of retirees, the legal

framework also includes articles regulating the management of pension funds.

The Legal System on Insurance Intermediaries, formulated in 1989 and amended in 2001 and 2003, regulates the business practice of insurance intermediaries, the minimum requirements for obtaining an intermediary licence, the rights and duties of an intermediary, and the statutory power of regulatory bodies. In order to strengthen monitoring of insurance intermediaries, further protect the rights of policyholders, and promote the sustainable and sound development of the insurance industry, the related legislation was revised through re-legislation. The legislative procedures are underway.

Compulsory Insurance

There are seven categories of compulsory insurance in Macao, all of which require uniform policy wording and tariff rates. The compulsory insurance categories include: motor vehicle (third-party risks) insurance, employees' compensation insurance, professional liability insurance for travel agents, public liability insurance relating to the installation of publicity and advertising objects, third party liability for pleasure boats, civil liability insurance for lawyers, and civil liability insurance for medical service providers.

The Construction and Real Estate Industry

In 2023, the average unit price per square metre of usable floor area of residential units was 93,500 patacas, representing a year-on-year decrease of 0.3 percent; the average price on the Macao peninsula (89,956 patacas) was down by 3.4 percent, and prices on Taipa (97,367 patacas) and Coloane (107,512 patacas) were up by 5.6 percent and 1.3 percent, respectively. The average price of completed units (92,348 patacas) was down by 0.1 percent, while that of uncompleted units (122,848 patacas) was down by 21 percent.

In 2023, the average unit price of offices per square metre was 89,035 patacas, representing an increase of 5.4 percent; and that of industrial units was 47,238 patacas, representing a decrease of 1.9 percent.

In 2023, the number of housing units and parking space transactions totalled 4,416, down 2.8 percent year-on-year. The transaction value totalled 23.23 billion patacas, down 5.9 percent year-on-year. There was a total of 2,879 residential unit transactions during the year, representing a year-on-year increase of 70 transactions, with a total value of 18.3 billion patacas, representing an increase of 1.8 percent. The transaction values of completed units (totalling 2,722) and uncompleted units (totalling 157) were 17.42 billion patacas and 880 million patacas, respectively.

In 2023, construction permits were granted for 437 residential units, 436 of which were on the Macao peninsula; occupancy permits were granted for 183 residential units, all of which were on the Macao peninsula.

The average price index of construction materials for residential buildings in 2023 dropped by 0.3 percent year-on-year, to 125.1. The real wage index for construction workers, discounted for inflation, was 95.5, down 0.9 percent year-on-year.

Employment and the Labour Market

In 2023, the annual unemployment rate was 2.7 percent, while the unemployment rate among local residents was 3.4 percent, representing year-on-year decreases of 1.0 and 1.4 percentage points, respectively. In 2023, Macao recorded a labour force of 375,200 people, and a labour force participation rate of 67.9 percent. The labour participation rates for males and females were 71.2 percent and 65.2 percent, respectively.

Employment

In 2023, Macao's employed population increased by 0.14 percent over the previous year, and totalled 365,200, of whom 47.98 percent were male and 52.02 percent were female. Broken down by industries, the working population was mainly engaged in recreational, cultural, gaming and other services (21.9 percent); hotels, restaurants and similar activities (12.6 percent); public administration and social security (8.0 percent); construction (7.61 percent); real estate and business and services (8.84 percent) and wholesale and retail (12.8 percent). Classified by occupation, clerical workers, service and sales workers, and non-technical workers accounted for 26.42 percent, 19.58 percent and 14.51 percent, respectively, of the entire working population.

Of the employed population, 9.0 percent had attained primary education, 16.5 percent had completed junior secondary education, 27.7 percent had completed senior secondary education, and 44.9 percent had completed tertiary education. The main age group in the employed population was 35 years to 44 years, accounting for 29.55 percent of the working population, while the age groups of 25 years to 34 years and 45 years to 54 years accounted for 26.72 percent and 21.79 percent, respectively.

Unemployment

In 2023, Macao recorded an unemployed population of 10,000. Among the unemployed, 10.87 percent had completed only primary education; 20.05 percent had completed junior secondary, 19.53 percent had completed senior secondary, and 46.25 percent had completed tertiary education. Among the unemployed, 22.03 percent were from the recreational, cultural, gaming and other services sector, 15.39 percent from the wholesale and retail sector, 19.38 percent from the construction industry, and 15.84 percent from the hotels and restaurants.

Monthly Earnings

In 2023, the median monthly earning of Macao's employed population was 17,500 patacas, representing a year-on-year increase of 2,500 patacas, while that of local residents was 20,000 patacas, which was 1,000 patacas more year on year. The median monthly earning of the recreational, cultural, gaming and other services sector, which employed the largest number of workers, was 20,000 patacas. Sectors with the highest median monthly earnings were, in descending order, public administration and social security (45,000 patacas); the education sector (27,000 patacas); water, electricity and gas production and supply (25,000 patacas); and health and social welfare (24,000 patacas).

Non-Resident Workers

To alleviate local labour shortages, at the end of December 2023, Macao had 176,661 non-resident workers, representing an increase of 14.0 percent compared with the figure in 2022. The hotel and catering industry accounted for the largest share of non-resident workers (28.0 percent), followed by the construction sector (17.1 percent), the domestic work sector (14.6 percent), the real estate and business activities sector (12.8 percent), and wholesale and retail trade (11.6 percent).

Financial Management

Financial Services Bureau

The Financial Services Bureau is mainly responsible for supervising, coordinating and monitoring the financial activities of public departments of the MSAR.

The Financial Services Bureau fulfils its public finance management function by supervising the financial operations of the MSAR in accordance with the law. It puts in place a set of regulations and guidelines concerning budget management, and enhances its financial supervision over autonomous entities. The principle of setting budgets is that public resources should be allocated in the way that most appropriately serves the best interests of the public.

In accordance with the annual budget passed by the Legislative Assembly, the Financial Services Bureau oversees the financial status of each public department, and ensures compliance with the public accounting system and regulations, guaranteeing legitimacy of all expenses. These rigorous administrative measures are designed to maintain balance of the Government's revenues and expenses, foster steady economic development and increase the international competitiveness of Macao.

To fulfil the functions of coordinating and monitoring the financial operations of public departments, the Financial Services Bureau compiles the Budget of the Macao Special Administrative Region ("General Budget") and General Accounts of the Macao Special Administrative Region ("General Accounts") on an annual basis.

Budget of the Macao Special Administrative Region

The Budget of the Macao Special Administrative Region comprises three parts: the comprehensive government budget, the budget for specific organisations and the investment budget for specific organisations.

The comprehensive government budget adopts cash-basis accounting, and covers public departments that can be categorised into non-autonomous departments, autonomous administrative departments, and autonomous entities. A budget fiscal year is from 1 January to 31 December. Every year, the schedule for submitting budget proposals and the special requirements for compiling budget proposals are stipulated via an Executive Order. After consolidating the budget proposals of all public departments, a comprehensive budget proposal is submitted to the Chief Executive and later to the Legislative Assembly for discussion. The budget proposal can only come into effect after it has been approved by the Legislative Assembly and published in the *Macao SAR Gazette*.

The General Budget lists all government income and expenditure. Any income that is not included in the General Budget should not be received. At the same time, expenses of public departments must not exceed the maximum levels stipulated in the General Budget.

The budget for specific organisations and the investment budget for specific organisations adopt accrual accounting, mainly as these organisations are engaged in special businesses such as credit, insurance, financial investment or postal services, as accrual accounting is necessary to truly reflect their financial status. Those considered as engaging in special businesses include the following eight organisations: Macao Post and Telecommunications Bureau, Macao Postal Savings, the Pension Fund, Monetary Authority of Macao, Automobile and Maritime Security Fund, Macao Foundation, Deposits Guarantee Fund, and the Social Security Fund.

General Accounts of the Macao Special Administrative Region

The Budget of the Macao Special Administrative Region regulates government income and expenditure, while the General Accounts of the Macao Special Administrative Region record the Government's actual financial situation. The General Accounts are in two parts. The first part – on the general comprehensive government budget – reflects the results of implementing the general comprehensive budget as well as the year-end financial situation, and is prepared according to cash-basis accounting.

The second part – the budget of specific organisations – adopts accrual accounting to reflect the overall operating results of six specific organisations. The Financial Services Bureau is required to submit the information necessary for the General Accounts of the Macao Special Administrative Region to the Commission of Audit within five months of the end of a financial year, to facilitate the audit process.

Management of Public Property

The Public Property Management Department under the Financial Services Bureau is responsible for the management and maintenance of the durable assets of the Government. This includes carrying out procedures related to trading in the Government's physical property, assisting with clarification of the characteristics of vehicles owned by each government department, holding open tenders for goods and services required by the Government, organising and updating records of durable assets and lists of assets, and analysing the tangible asset accounts of public departments.

To implement the above responsibilities, the Financial Services Bureau holds public auctions each year for vehicles and goods that are deemed unusable by government departments or are appropriated to the Government of Macao Special Administrative Region. To increase its revenue, the Government announces auction dates and ensures that auctions adhere to the principle that the highest bid wins. The Financial Services Bureau conducts open tenders for goods needed by various public departments. The tender notice is published in local newspapers, the *Macao SAR Gazette* and the Financial Services Bureau website, and the transparency of both options and tender procedures is thereby enhanced. Natural persons or companies already registered with the Business Registration Centre of the Financial Services Bureau as engaging in businesses related to items

included in the tender can participate in the bidding for all or part of the commodities. The winner is generally the bidder who makes the best offer in terms of price, quality of goods, past delivery quality and delivery date.

The management of public property also includes the duty of allocating and managing government quarters and parking lots, as well as the maintenance of such quarters. Other duties include renting office venues, warehouses, housing and car parks for both non-independently and independently administered departments, as well as making recommendations on the usage of government-owned properties and community and infrastructure facilities, and handling property and facility transfers.

Sources of Tax Revenue

Government Tax Revenue

Tax income provides funds for the administrative activities of all public entities. Macao has adopted a simple taxation structure with low tax rates. The annual assessment period is from 1 January to 31 December. Taxes levied in Macao include gaming tax, business tax, corporate income tax, personal income tax, real estate tax, tourism tax, excise duty, motor vehicle tax, asset transfer stamp duty, special stamp duty and additional stamp duty for acquisition of second residential property and beyond.

Gaming Tax

The operators of all types of gaming activities, including casino gaming, horse race betting and lotteries, are liable to pay a certain percentage of their gross revenues in tax, or pay tax according to other levy scales. Gaming tax is calculated by gross casino gaming revenue taxed at the rate of 35 percent. Gaming tax is the Government's major source of revenue.

Business Tax

The Regulations on Business Tax require that business tax be levied on all natural persons and legal persons operating any activity with the nature of industrial or commercial business. The amount of tax depends on the fixed amounts stipulated in the Table of General Activities contained in the Regulations on Business Tax. Although business tax is typically 300 patacas a year for each business, for commercial banks the tax is 80,000 patacas, plus a sales tax of five percent.

Note: Pursuant to Article 11 of the Government Budget of the Financial Year 2023 in accordance with Law No. 19/2022, in 2023, no amount of industrial tax as specified in Tables 1 and 2 under the Regulations for Industrial Tax was collected.

Profit Tax

Regulations on Profit Tax require that profit tax be levied on the total income of natural persons or legal persons from local industrial or commercial activities. Rates of profit tax are as follows:

Taxable annual revenue	Percentage
Revenue up to 32,000 patacas	Waived
Progressively in excess of designated amount:	
32,001 patacas to 65,000 patacas	3%
65,001 patacas to 100,000 patacas	5%
100,001 patacas to 200,000 patacas	7%
200,001 patacas to 300,000 patacas	9%
Over 300,000 patacas	12%

Note: Pursuant to Article 24 of the Budget for the Financial Year 2023 approved by Law No. 19/2022, the allowance for exemption from profit tax in 2022 was 600,000 patacas.

Personal Income Tax

Regulations on Personal Income Tax require that personal income tax be levied on working income. Personal income tax payers are classified into two groups. One group is those working for others in any occupation, including daily wage earners and employees. The second group is self-employed freelance professionals. Personal income tax rates are as follows:

Taxable annual revenue	Percentage
Revenue up to 95,000 patacas	Waived
Progressively in excess of designated amount:	
Up to 20,000 patacas	7%
20,001 patacas to 40,000 patacas	8%
40,001 patacas to 80,000 patacas	9%
80,001 patacas to 160,000 patacas	10%
160,001 patacas to 280,000 patacas	11%
Over 280,000 patacas	12%

Note: Pursuant to Article 20 of the Budget of the Financial Year 2023 approved by Law No. 19/2022, in 2023, all personal income taxpayers were eligible for a tax reduction of 30 percent of the personal income tax payable, while the tax allowance for personal income tax in 2023 was set at 144,000 patacas. The tax allowance for employees and casual workers aged 65 or above or with permanent disability level of 60 percent or above in 2023 was increased to 198,000 patacas. In addition,

according to Article 21 of the budget, personal income taxpayers holding Macao Resident Identity Cards on 31 December 2021 were eligible for a tax refund of 60 percent of the personal income tax payable paid in 2021, up to a maximum of 14,000 patacas.

Tourism Tax

Regulations on Tourism Tax require that a five percent tourism tax be levied on the prices of services offered by hotel establishments, restaurants, bars, dance halls, health clubs, saunas, massage parlours and karaoke bars, etc.

Note: Pursuant to Article 17 of the 2023 Government Budget approved by Law No. 19/2022, in 2023, goods and services provided by restaurants that are regulated by Law No. 8/2021 - Law on the Operation of Hotel Premises and Decree-Law No. 16/96/M dated 1 April were exempted from tourism tax as prescribed by the Regulations on Tourism Tax approved by Law No. 19/96/M dated 19 August. The exemption does not apply to establishments that have not been appropriately licensed or permitted, nor does it apply to tax subjects specified under Article 2(b) of the Regulations on Tourism Tax.

Real Estate Tax

Regulations on Urban Real Estate Tax require that real estate tax be levied on the revenue of local housing properties, and that the tax rate shall be six percent on the taxable revenue for non-leased properties, while that for leased properties shall be 10 percent.

Note: Pursuant to Article 22 of the Budget of the Financial Year 2023 approved by Law No. 19/2022, the urban real estate tax deduction for 2023 was set at 3,500 patacas. If the properties were owned by two or more natural persons (individuals), these persons were also eligible for the tax deduction, provided at least one of them was a Macao resident. However, this deduction was not applicable to legal persons, individual business owners or persons who are not Macao residents. Moreover, pursuant to Article 23 of the budget, in 2023 the reduction of the property tax rate for leased properties was reduced to eight percent.

Asset Transfer Stamp Duty

Transfer of an immovable asset before death, whether such transfer be temporary or permanent, or paid or unpaid, is subject to asset transfer stamp duty at the following rates:

Taxable area	Tax rate
Paid transfer of an immovable asset with a value of up to two million patacas	1%
From over two million patacas to four million patacas	2%
Over four million patacas	3%
Unpaid transfer of an asset	5%

Note: (1) Pursuant to Article 13 of the Budget of the Financial Year of 2023 approved by Law No. 19/2022, in 2023, stamp duty was exempted for eligible taxpayers who purchased residential properties worth up to three million patacas;

(2) If a residential property is acquired by two or more individuals, only the acquiring parties who meet the criteria shall have the right to proportionally receive tax exemptions on their respective tax liabilities. Furthermore, according to the same provision, if the property is acquired by a married couple and either party is not the specified property owner as defined in the provision, the acquiring parties shall have the right to enjoy the corresponding tax exemptions.

(3) Legal persons, individual business owners or non-local residents purchasing residential properties were subject to an additional 10 percent tax, on top of the above-mentioned tax rate.

Special Stamp Duty

Transfer of a residential property, commercial property, office premises, car-parking space within two years of its purchase, whether such transfer be temporary or permanent, is subject to special stamp duty at the following rates:

Taxable transfer	Tax rate
Transfer is made within a year of its purchase	20%
Transfer is made between one and two years after the purchase	10%

Property Acquisition Tax

Acquisition of a second residential property and beyond is subject to additional stamp duty at the following rates:

Taxable transfer	Tax rate
Acquisition of a second residential property	5%
Acquisition of a third residential property and beyond	10%

Excise Duty

Pursuant to Article 2 of Law No. 4/99/M of the Excise Duty Regulations which was amended by Law No. 8/2008 on 25 August, Law No. 7/2009 on 25 May, Law No. 11/2011 on 19 December and Law No. 9/2015 on 13 July, alcoholic drinks (Group II) and tobacco (Group III) are considered as excise duty taxable since the time they are produced or they enter Macao. Alcoholic drinks are levied an ad valorem tax subject to CIF (cost, insurance and freight) as well as fixed tax, while tobacco products are levied a fixed excise duty.

Motor Vehicle Tax

Natural persons or legal persons importing new motor vehicles for their own use, or buying new motor vehicles for resale or for their own use are subject to motor vehicle tax based on the taxable value of motor vehicles. The applicable tax rates are as follows:

Heavy and light motorcycles		
Level of taxable value (patacas)	Corresponding rate of each level	Effective average tax rate
Up to 15,000 patacas	---	24%
From over 15,000 patacas to 25,000 patacas	35%	32%
From over 25,000 patacas to 40,000 patacas	40%	42%
From over 40,000 patacas to 70,000 patacas	45%	50%
Over 70,000 patacas	---	50%

Cars		
Level of taxable value (patacas)	Corresponding rate of each level	Effective average tax rate
Up to 100,000 patacas	--	40%
From over 100,000 patacas to 200,000 patacas	50%	46%
From over 200,000 patacas to 300,000 patacas	80%	60%
From over 300,000 patacas to 500,000 patacas	90%	72%
Over 500,000 patacas	--	72%

Certified Public Accountants and Accountants

At the end of 2023, there were 17 accounting firms, three of which providing accounting and taxation services, 156 certified public accountants and 140 accountants providing accounting and taxation services in Macao.

The “Mainland China Factor” in Macao’s Economy

Under the principle of “One country, two systems”, the Government actively strengthens economic and trade interaction and cooperation with provinces and cities in mainland China through appropriate institutions and mechanisms, further developing Macao’s role as a gateway and bridge.

Implementation of the Mainland China and Macao Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) and the signing of the Pan-Pearl River Delta (PPRD) Regional Co-operation Framework Agreement in 2004 marked new milestones for economic and trade cooperation between Macao and mainland China.

In 2017, the National Development and Reform Commission and the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao signed the Framework Agreement on Deepening Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Cooperation in the Development of the Greater Bay Area for to determine the preliminary division of responsibility, cooperative approach and coordination mechanism among the three governments.

In 2018, the Central People’s Government set up the Leading Group for Development of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, marking the implementation stage of the development of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

In 2019, the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area was officially promulgated, stating the development positioning and functions of each district and city in the Greater Bay Area.

In September 2021, the Master Plan for the Development of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin was officially announced, providing a clear direction for the development and opening of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, which focuses on promoting Macao’s appropriate economic diversification. Four strategic positionings were set, aiming to establish the cooperation zone as a new platform for promoting Macao’s adequate economic diversification, a new space for Macao people to live and work, a new showcase for enriching the implementation of “One country, two systems”, and new high ground for fostering the development of the Greater Bay Area.

Interconnections with Mainland China

While striving to maintain close economic and trade relations with its neighbouring regions, the Government actively explores and enhances exchanges and cooperation with other provinces and cities in mainland China.

In April 2023, the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) led a delegation of representatives from Macao’s exhibition and convention industry, totaling 19 people, to join the 18th China Expo Forum for International Cooperation (CEFCO 2023) held in Shaoxing Municipality, Zhejiang Province. Exchange activities regarding the exhibition and convention industries in Zhejiang and Macao were conducted during the event. Also in April, the Macao Pavilion was set up at the Third China International Consumer Products Expo, featuring 14 Macao enterprises that serve as agents for products from Portuguese-speaking countries.

In May, the IPIM set up the Macao Pavilion at the 133rd China Import and Export Fair, and coordinated 18 Macao enterprises to participate as exhibitors.

In June, the IPIM organised a delegation of nearly 40 Macao entrepreneurs and nine exhibiting enterprises from Macao and Hengqin to participate in the Ninth China (Shanghai) International Technology Fair, and set up the Macao Pavilion at the fair.

In August, the IPIM organised 28 Macao enterprises to participate in the Macao Week in Tianjin and held the Tianjin-Macao Business Matching and Negotiation Session to deepen the business exchanges and cooperation between enterprises from Tianjin and Macao.

In September, the IPIM set up the Macao Pavilion at the 2023 China International Fair for Trade in Services, the 23rd China International Fair for Investment and Trade, the 20th China-ASEAN Exposition, the Eighth IE Expo Guangzhou 2023, and organised a delegation of Macao entrepreneurs to join the Third International Science, Technology and Innovation Forum.

In October, the IPIM set up the Macao Pavilion at the 134th China Import and Export Fair, and arranged for 18 Macao enterprises to participate as exhibitors.

In November, the IPIM organised a delegation of nearly 50 Macao entrepreneurs and 41 exhibiting enterprises to participate in the Sixth China International Import Expo, and set up the pavilion of food and beverage products of Macao and Portuguese-speaking countries in the expo's food and agricultural products zone.

Also in November, the IPIM set up the “Pavilion of China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Platform @Macao” at the inaugural China International Supply Chain Expo and arranged a delegation of 16 Macao entrepreneurs to participate as exhibitors. Additionally, the IPIM organised a delegation to attend the Second Global Digital Trade Expo in Hangzhou, and set up the Macao Pavilion at the event.

In December, the 2023 Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Fair for Trade in Services was held in three venues simultaneously – in Zhuhai, Hong Kong and Macao. The IPIM set up the Macao Pavilion in the Zhuhai venue, and arranged for seven Macao enterprises and organisations to participate as exhibitors. The Sub-forum: Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Forum on the MICE Tourism Economy was held in the Macao venue. The IPIM also participated in the Second China (Macao) High-quality Consumption Exhibition and the Hengqin Global Bay Areas Forum.

Relationship with Guangdong Province

Cooperation between Guangdong and Macao continued to deepen. In September, the 2023 Guangdong-Macao Cooperation Joint Conference was held in Macao, with the theme “Fostering quality cooperation between Guangdong and Macao; promoting high-quality development of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area”.

The conference discussed the high-quality development of Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, implementing the recommendatins on financial support for the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and deepening cooperation

between Guangdong and Macao on the modern financial services industry, strengthening scientific research collaboration between Guangdong and Macao and jointly promoting the construction of technology and innovation platforms, promoting high-quality cooperation between Guangdong and Macao in medical and healthcare services and developing the “Big Health Industry”, deepening cooperation between Guangdong and Macao in the integrated tourism and leisure industry and jointly building the Greater Bay Area into a world-class tourist destination, and forging ahead with cooperation between Guangdong and Macao in the convention and trade sector, as well as cultural and sports sectors, and optimising the arrangements for Northbound Travel by Macao Vehicles.

In March 2023, the Regulations for the Development of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin officially came into effect, providing an institutional safeguard for the long-term development of the zone, and better promoting the implementation of the Master Plan for the Development of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

In July, the Measures for Supporting the Development of the Convention and Exhibition Industry in the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin were officially issued, providing subsidies for various convention and exhibition projects, with the aim of cultivating and strengthening convention and exhibition projects in the cooperation zone, promoting the innovative “multi-venue event” model, accelerating the integrated development of the convention and exhibition industries between Hengqin and Macao, and attracting more convention and exhibition enterprises to establish operations and and high-end talents to settle in the area.

In December, the Overall Development Plan for the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin was officially issued, outlining the blueprint for development of and guiding principles for the cooperation zone in the next 10 to 15 years.

In September, the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, the People’s Government of Guangdong Province, the Hong Kong SAR Government and the Macao SAR Government jointly held the First Business Conference on Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development in Macao, to promote the investment environment of the Greater Bay Area. More than 1,000 delegates of governments, industries, academia and research sector from 20 countries and regions attended the Business Conference.

Also in September, the People’s Government of Guangdong Province, the Hong Kong SAR Government and the Macao SAR Government jointly organised the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and Europe Economic and Trade Cooperation Conference in Munich, Germany, to facilitate interactions and exchanges between enterprises from Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, and European enterprises.

To encourage Macao enterprises to invest in mainland China cities in the Greater Bay Area, the IPIM continues providing services to facilitate commercial registration in nine cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, as well services facilitating cross-border commercial registration for the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone. In addition, the IPIM cooperated with the Economic Development Bureau and the Commercial Service Bureau of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone, to provide investment consultation referral and commercial registration services in the Intensive Cooperation Zone.

In 2023, the IPIM continued deepening cooperation with the Guangdong Provincial Commerce Department and the Guangzhou Municipal Commerce Bureau, including by collaborating with the Guangzhou Municipal Commerce Bureau in June to organise the 2023 Macao-Guangzhou Products Fair, which covered an exhibition area of 10,000 square metres, with 164 booths attracting 56 Guangzhou enterprises and 67 Macao enterprises. The Portuguese-speaking Countries, Macao and Guangzhou Business Conference and Investment Promotion Seminar was also held during the event.

In July, the IPIM and the Department of Commerce of Guangdong Province jointly organised the 2023 Guangdong and Macao Branded Products Fair (GMBPF). The fair was held in a 9,000-square metre exhibition venue with 450 booths, attracting participation by 438 exhibitors, and holding 338 business matching sessions.

In November, the IPIM co-organised the Macao Entrepreneur Delegation for Business Exchange in Guangdong (Nansha) with the Department of Commerce of Guangdong Province, as one of the four “Enterprise Investment Expedition” missions of the 2023 Global Investment Promotion Conference for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. The IPIM arranged for Macao entrepreneurs to visit Nansha and attend the Macao and Nansha Business Symposium. Enterprises in Guangdong also actively participated in various local convention and exhibition activities hosted by the IPIM.

In addition, the IPIM actively expanded and strengthened exchanges and cooperation with Guangdong Province:

In February 2023, the IPIM organised a Macao MICE Industry Business Delegation to the Greater Bay Area (Zhongshan and Foshan), with a group of more than 40 people, and jointly held the Zhongshan-Macao Business Matching Session and Foshan-Macao Business Matching Session during the visit with the Bureau of Commerce of Zhongshan Municipality and Bureau of Commerce of Foshan Municipality. Also in February, the IPIM jointly organised a seminar on the Zhuhai Special Economic Zone Market Entity Registration Regulations with the Zhuhai Municipality Administration for Market Regulation.

In June, the IPIM organised the Hengqin-Macao Business Connect Enterprise Exchange Summit 2023 in Macao and the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, holding the Macao Business Environment Exchange Session and arranging site visits, to promote Macao’s business environment and advantages to mainland China entrepreneurs. Also in June, the IPIM set up the Macao Pavilion at the 2023 Guangdong 21st Century Maritime Silk Road International Expo.

In July, the IPIM organised a Macao convention and exhibition industry delegation to visit the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, and held the 2023 Guangdong & Macao Branded Products Fair – Macao-Hengqin Catering Industry Business Matching Session.

In August, the IPIM organised the Pan-Pearl River Delta (Greater Bay Area) City Convention and Exhibition Alliance delegation to visit the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

Relationship with Fujian Province

In 2020, the IPIM and the Department of Commerce of Fujian Province signed the Agreement on Deepening Fujian-Macao Cooperation in the Convention and Exhibition Industry, to strategically

improve the effectiveness of cooperation in the convention and exhibition industry, enhance cooperation on conventions and exhibitions with Portuguese-speaking countries, and develop cooperation in online exhibitions. Meanwhile, the IPIM also strengthened cooperation between Macao and Fujian on information exchanges, venue standardisation and personnel training, to facilitate the development of the convention and exhibition industry.

In 2023, the two parties signed the Agreement on Deepening Economic and Trade Cooperation between Fujian and Macao in the Joint Construction of the “Belt and Road” at the Fourth Fujian-Macao Cooperation Conference.

Throughout the years, the Macao International Environmental Co-operation Forum (MIECF) has invited the People’s Government of Fujian Province to act as co-organiser, and the Fujian Eco-environment Office as supporting government unit. In 2023, 16 entities from Fujian province joined the MIECF as exhibitors.

The 28th Macao International Trade and Investment Fair attracted 33 Fujian enterprises to participate in the Fujian Pavilion with an area of 180 square metres, and a Fujian-Macao-Portuguese-speaking countries economic and trade cooperation matching session was held during the event.

The IPIM has been an active participant of Fujian’s convention and exhibition activities. In September 2023, the IPIM set up the Macao Pavilion at the 23rd China International Fair for Investment and Trade. In October, the IPIM organised 28 Macao enterprises featuring “Macao-manufactured” and “Macao-branded” products, and agents for products of Portuguese-speaking countries, to participate in the Macao Week in Fujian and Xiamen, and jointly organised the Xiamen-Macao Business Matching and Negotiation Session with the Xiamen Municipal Bureau of Commerce, which attracted over 190 representatives from Xiamen and Macao enterprises to attend.

Relationship with Jiangsu Province

While enhancing cooperation with Guangdong and PPRD, the Government puts equal emphasis on cooperation along the Yangtze River Economic Belt by commencing specialised cooperation with provinces including Jiangsu, thereby becoming more deeply involved in the country’s development through regional cooperation, and will strengthen our position and functions in the course of China’s economic development and opening up. Jiangsu has attached particular importance to leveraging the advantages of Macao as a platform for China and Portuguese-speaking countries. Since 2011, the Jiangsu-Macao Industrial and Commercial Summit of Portuguese-speaking Countries has been hosted by the Macao International Trade and Investment Fair for 13 consecutive years. Jiangsu province set up a Jiangsu Pavilion at the 28th MIF, and lined up 14 exhibitors in support of Macao’s convention and exhibition industry. The 14th International Infrastructure Investment and Construction Forum (IIICF) was joined by 111 merchants from Jiangsu Province.

Relationship with Shandong Province

In 2023, the 28th Macao International Trade and Investment Fair invited Shandong province to act as partner-province, setting up the Shandong Pavilion with an area of 405 square metres, which is divided into areas for agricultural products, agricultural technology and open development

demonstration zones, lining up over 100 enterprises to join as exhibitors in Macao. Moreover, the “Sharing New Opportunities Brought by Open Development – Shandong-Macao Economic and Trade Co-operation and Exchange Conference” and “2023 Shandong Traditional Chinese Medicine and Health Industry Cooperation (Macao) Promotion Seminar” were held during the fair.

The Macao Week in Qingdao, Shandong Province was held in June 2023. The IPIM organised 28 Macao enterprises featuring “Macao-manufactured” and “Macao-branded” products, and agents for products of Portuguese-speaking countries to participate as exhibitors. The “Qingdao-Macao MICE, Trade and Investment Promotion Seminar” was also held, attracting a total of 150 enterprises from Macao and Qingdao, leading to 108 business matching negotiations.

Economic and Technological Development Bureau

The Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSED) is mainly responsible for studies, coordination and implementation of the Government’s economic and technological development policies.

Development of the Technology Industry

The Economic and Technological Development Bureau is fostering the development of Macao’s technology industry in three main directions: promoting industrialisation and achievements arising from scientific research, helping outstanding foreign technology enterprises to establish operations in Macao, and promoting the quality development of applied technology in enterprises. Relying on the scientific research strengths of Macao’s higher education institutions and the four national key laboratories, the bureau can identify potential science and technology enterprises in Macao; assist them with establishing connections with Macao and mainland China scientific research institutions and laboratories, launching cooperation in technology and setting up joint laboratories; and promote industrial, academic, and research developments.

Moreover, the bureau constantly provides various support and assistance to outstanding foreign technology enterprises with businesses in line with the MSAR’s technological industry development vision. By coordinating the building of communication channels between enterprises and various administrative departments, local tertiary institutions and scientific research institutions, it provides favourable conditions for outstanding foreign technology enterprises to come to Macao.

With the nation’s support, Macao collaborated with Hengqin and Zhuhai to jointly build the Centre for Science and Technology Exchange and Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries, by leveraging the respective advantages of the three regions in terms of environment, policies and resources, to “bring in” technology enterprises of Portuguese-speaking countries and facilitate Chinese technology enterprises to “go global”, promote exchange and cooperation in technology between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, leverage Macao’s functions as a platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, and foster the development of the local technology industry. The centres in Macao and Hengqin are currently operational.

To support the development of Macao’s technology enterprises, the Technology Enterprises Certification Programme was launched. This aims to identify qualified local technology enterprises

through a quality assurance system, provide them with different levels of official certification, and help the enterprises expand their business, in tandem with the various support measures provided by the Government, to construct a growth ladder for Macao's technology enterprises.

As regards supporting SME digitisation, the bureau held a series of lectures on digital transformation and the application of technological tools, to enhance the understanding of digitised marketing; and launched the 2023 Support Scheme for Digitalisation of SME Back-End Services, to provide SMEs with digital operations awareness training courses, operational model diagnoses, and reform solution assessments, as well as offering digital solutions.

Industrial Licences

Under Decree-Law No. 11/99/M dated 22 March 1999, all assembly and processing manufacturing enterprises licensed under Decree-Law No. 55/97/M dated 9 December 1997 and listed in Category D of the first revised edition of the Macao Industries Classification Index must apply for industrial licences from the Economic and Technological Development Bureau. Under Article 11 of Decree-Law No. 11/99/M, it is strictly prohibited to carry out the above activities in residential buildings.

Applications for industrial licences are classified as “general system” (for industrial buildings), “special system” or “special activities”. In 2016, the charges for applying for all new or renewed industrial licences were waived.

In 2023, the Economic and Technological Development Bureau issued one general-system industrial licence and eight special system/special activity industrial licences. In addition, two general-system industrial unit licences and 13 special-system/special-activity industrial unit licences were issued, 45 industrial licences and 39 industrial unit licences were revoked, and 93 industrial licences were re-issued due to renewals; changes to full licences; transfers, removals or mergers of industrial establishments; or because related information had changed.

Certificates of Origin

Certificates of Origin (CO) may be applied for from the Economic and Technological Development Bureau. These are used to prove to a third party that exports have been sufficiently assembled and processed in Macao, and are thus classified as products originating in Macao. According to By-law No. 29/2003 Regulations on Certificates of Origin, which was amended by By-law No. 20/2016 that came into force on 4 August 2016, the charge for issuing certificates of origin has been cancelled, to reduce trading operating costs.

Certificates of Origin are classified into four types: General Certificates of Origin apply to general customs clearance; Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) Certificates of Origin apply to customs clearance in importing countries and regions that use GSP; Certificates of Origin (Foreign Products) are used for proving that Macao was not the origin of products re-exported via Macao; CEPA Certificates of Origin are for goods of Macao origin that enjoy zero tariff and other incentives under CEPA to enter mainland China markets.

In 2023, the Economic and Technological Development Services Bureau issued 3,636 general

certificates of origin, with 71.0 percent of these issued for exports to the United States; and 15.2 percent for exports to mainland China, including 531 CEPA certificates of origin.

Certificates of Macao Service Suppliers

All Macao enterprises that conform with all the regulations in supplementary protocols and Annex 3 of the Agreement on Trade Services under CEPA are required to apply to the Economic and Technological Development Bureau for a Certificate of Macao Service Supplier. From 1 January 2004, when CEPA was first implemented, to 31 December 2023, the Economic and Technological Development Bureau issued 876 Certificates of Macao Service Suppliers.

Export and Import Licences

Licences for Export and Import are regulated by External Trade Law (Law No. 7/2003), as amended by Law No. 3/2016 dated 4 July 2016. Under the law, any natural person or legal person may engage in external trade activities, provided the Government holds evidence that they have fulfilled their tax obligations, particularly those involving business tax and excise duty. Macao exercises minimal controls over import and export activities that are consistent with its international obligations, and considerations of environmental, sanitary, safety and security issues.

The laws and regulations that currently govern imports and exports include:

1. Law No. 7/2003 of the External Trade Law amended by Law No. 3/2016;
2. By-law No. 28/2003 on External Trade Operations amended by By-law No.19/2016;
3. Executive Order No. 209/2021 (Table of Goods for Self-Use or Self-Consumption; Exportation Table [Table A] and Importation Table [Table B]; and Table of Goods Requiring Health Quarantine/Plant Quarantine) amended by Executive Order No. 188/2022, Executive Order No. 208/2022 and Executive Order No. 110/2023;
4. Law No. 2/2017 on enforcement laws and regulations regarding the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);
5. Law No. 4/99/M of the Excise Duty Regulations amended by Law No. 8/2008, Law No. 7/2009, Law No. 11/2011, and Law No. 9/2015;
6. Decree-Law No. 62/95/M about the formulation of policies and measures on the Control and Reduced Use of Ozone-Depleting Substances and its related regulations;
7. Annual import limits and allocation method for chemicals referred to in Decree-Law No. 62/95/M approved by Executive Order No. 45/2022 and for controlled materials referred to in Decree-Law No. 62/95/M stipulated by Executive Order No. 46/2022;
8. Decree-Law No. 51/99/M regulating commercial or industrial activities concerning computer programmes and audiovisual products;
9. Law No. 17/2009 prohibiting the illegal production, trafficking and consumption of narcotics and psychoactive drugs, amended by Law No. 4/2014, Law No. 10/2016, Law No. 10/2019,

Law No. 22/2020, Law No. 10/2021, and Law No. 18/2023;

10. Law No. 15/2019 on enforcement laws and regulations regarding the Implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme for the International Trade in Rough Diamonds and other relevant regulations; and
11. Law No. 12/2002 on Legal System for the Control of Hazardous Substances and related regulations.

According to law, licences for commodities that are subject to the special regime, listed in Exportation Table A and Importation Table B (contained in Annex II of Executive Order No. 209/2021, amended by Executive Order No. 188/2022, Executive Order No. 208/2022 and Executive Order No. 110/2023), must be applied for in advance, regardless of the type of import or export. These licences are issued by authorised institutions. The Economic and Technological Development Bureau is the authority for issuing such licences.

Regulated exported goods include:

1. Species regulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (stipulated in Chief Executive Notice No. 5/2020) ;
2. Ozone-depleting substances;
3. CD ROM production facilities;
4. Weapons, ammunition and related parts and accessories;
5. Pharmaceutical items and medicines, and certain chemicals; and
6. Rough diamonds; and
7. Hazardous substances.

Regulated imported goods include:

1. Drinks with alcohol concentrations of equal to or higher than 30 percent by volume, and tobacco;
2. Motor vehicles;
3. Species regulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (stipulated in Chief Executive Notice No. 5/2020);
4. Ozone-depleting substances;
5. CD ROM production facilities and materials;
6. Live animals, meat and seafood, eggs and certain milk products;
7. Pharmaceutical products and drugs, and certain chemicals;
8. Weapons, ammunition and related parts and accessories;
9. Inflammable explosives;
10. Certain telecommunication transmitters and receivers;

11. Petroleum products; and
12. Rough diamonds; and
13. Hazardous substances.

The Economic and Technological Development Bureau has been stepping up its efforts to electronically process applications for import and export licences. Electronic customs clearance has been implemented since 2000. The current electronic customs clearance service applies to Macao Customs Service, the Municipal Affairs Bureau, the Pharmaceutical Administration Bureau, the Economic and Technological Development Bureau, Macao Post and Telecommunications Bureau, the Public Security Police and the Transport Bureau.

External trade operators only need to log in to the Electronic Customs Declaration Service Platform (EDI) through a website or a mobile application to submit their licence application or customs declaration information to the relevant licence issuing department or Macao Customs Service for paperless approval. Currently, most goods that require licences or declaration forms for import and export can use the electronic customs clearance service.

In 2023, the Economic and Technological Development Bureau issued 13,469 import licences and 1,216 export/re-export licences.

Protection of Intellectual Property Rights

The Intellectual Property Department of the Economic and Technological Development Bureau is responsible for managing and enforcing laws relating to intellectual property rights; handling registration affairs relating to industrial property rights, including registration of trademarks, business names and logos; patents for inventions; utility patents, designs/new prototypes, semiconductor product topographies, places of origin/geographical indicators and awards. It is also responsible for updating and recording any remarks, extensions and acts of termination relating to industrial property rights. In addition, the department registers copyright and other related rights collectively managed by relevant organisations.

The Macao Customs Service is responsible for enforcement of legislation regarding intellectual property rights and implementation of punitive measures should they be infringed, to enhance fair competition and combat counterfeiting, thus promoting compliance with intellectual property rights and authorship regulations.

Intellectual Property Rights System

The Copyright and Related Rights Code and the Industrial Property Law are currently the two major pieces of legislation related to intellectual property rights in Macao.

Copyright and Related Rights Code

In Macao, copyright is subject to legal regulation and protection. On 16 August 1999, the Copyright and Related Rights Law (Decree-Law No. 43/99/M) was gazetted; it came into effect on 1 October

that year, protecting copyright under clearly defined terms. The regulation provides full protection for works of literature, drama, music and art, movies and television broadcasting, as well as all original productions, and it fulfils the requirements of Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights formulated by the WTO.

To comply with the international protection standards arising from the special features of the modern information society, in 2012 the Government amended the Copyright and Related Rights Law approved by Decree-Law No. 43/99/M to produce Law No. 5/2012, which came into effect on 1 June the same year. The amended law enhances the rights and protection of copyright holders, art workers and producers, providing them with the rights of internet transmission, distribution and commercial lease. At the same time, the law also adequately modifies the relevant criminal penalty to further protect copyright in a digital environment. Together, these measures more closely aligned Macao's copyright system with the latest international protection standards.

In Macao, copyright is an inherent right. A piece of work, whether issued, published, used or operated, already lends copyright to the author upon completion, allowing the author to enjoy related legal protection, even without registration. In general, copyright in Macao expires 50 years after the death of the author, including for works issued or published after death. However, the period of protection of individual pieces of work varies, depending on their type.

The Industrial Property Rights System

The current Industrial Property Law was promulgated on 13 December 1999 and came into effect on 6 June 2000, replacing the previous rules and regulations. It was only then that Macao had its own industrial property rights laws and was able to completely fulfil its international duties.

The Industrial Property Law offers protection in the following eight areas: patents, including invention patents and utility patents; certificates of complementary protection for drugs and herbal medicines; topology maps of semiconductor products; industrial designs/new industrial products; trademarks; the names / logos of business establishments; places of origin/geographical indications; and awards.

Trademark Registration

Any trademarks that fulfil the requirements of the Industrial Property Law may be registered in Macao, but registration is not compulsory. Trademark registration is geographical: trademark regulations in the Macao SAR protect only trademarks issued locally. Separate applications must be made in other countries and regions for protection there.

In 2023, the Intellectual Property Department of the Economic and Technological Development Bureau accepted 13,360 applications for trademark licences, representing an increase of 7.46 percent from the 12,432 applications processed in 2022. Applications were mainly from mainland China, Macao SAR, Hong Kong SAR, the United States and Japan. As at 31 December 2023, the Economic and Technological Development Bureau had received a cumulative total of 233,364 applications.

Patent Registration

From 6 June 2000, all applications for patents – including invention patents and utility patents, designs / new products – may be submitted directly to the Economic and Technological Development Bureau.

The Economic and Technological Development Bureau and the State Intellectual Property Office (SIPO) signed the Cooperation Agreement on Intellectual Property between the State Intellectual Property Office and the Economic and Technological Development Bureau of the Macao SAR on 24 January 2003. In 2020, they also signed the Arrangements for Deepening Exchanges and Cooperation in Intellectual Property between the State Intellectual Property Office and the Economic and Technological Development Bureau of the Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region, which came into effect on 16 June 2020. The above arrangements included an agreement to extend the applicability of SIPO patent approvals to Macao.

In 2023, the Economic and Technological Development Bureau accepted 1,035 applications for patents and applications for registration of 319 designs/new products. These applications were mainly from countries or regions including mainland China, the United States, Switzerland and Japan. As at 31 December 2023, the Economic and Technological Development Bureau had received a cumulative total of 9,919 applications for patents and applications for the registration of 3,467 designs/new products.

SME Assistance Programme

Supporting the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has always been a focal point for the Government's policy. In 2003, in response to the prevailing socio-economic situation, three SME finance programmes were introduced.

The SME Aid Scheme aims to support SMEs with improving business and operating capacity, and dealing with financial difficulties due to force majeure. The maximum amount of the aid is 600,000 patacas. The maximum period for repayment of the loan is eight years. From the commencement of the scheme till the end of December 2023, a total of 21,190 applications had been received, with 17,467 applications approved, and provided with a total of 5.597 billion patacas of financial aid. Enterprises receiving the loans are primarily engaged in retail industry, construction and public works, restaurants and hotels, wholesale, corporate services, and personal services including automobile and motorcycle repair and maintenance, and hair and beauty salons.

The SME Credit Guarantee Scheme was launched in August 2003. The scheme is designed to assist enterprises in obtaining bank loans for business development. The Government provides eligible enterprises with credit guarantees of up to 70 percent of bank loans of up to 4.9 million patacas, with a maximum repayment period of five years.

From the scheme's commencement to the end of December 2023, the Government had received 1,627 applications, involving a total loan amount of 3.302 billion patacas; 863 of the applicants obtained government credit guarantees totalling 1.496 billion patacas. Most successful applicants were from the construction and public works sector, retail, wholesaling, company services, imports and exports, transportation and warehousing, travel agencies, Chinese restaurants or other restaurants

and hotels.

The SME Credit Assurance Scheme was launched in August 2003. The scheme is designed to assist SMEs in launching specific projects. On the financing front, the MSAR Government will provide eligible enterprises with credit guarantees of up to 100 percent of a bank loan up to one million patacas, with a maximum repayment period of five years.

From the scheme's commencement to the end of 31 December 2023, the Government had received 90 applications, involving a total credit guarantee of 76.14 million patacas; 66 of the applicants obtained 100 percent credit guarantees from the Government, with a total value of 55.64 million patacas. Most successful applicants were from retailing, wholesaling, paper, printing and publishing, imports and exports, construction and public works, textiles, garments and leather manufacturing, Chinese restaurants, other restaurants and hotels, and personal services including automobile and motorcycle repair, and hair and beauty salons.

Young Entrepreneurs Aid Scheme

To encourage young people in Macao to fulfil their dreams of starting their own businesses, and thereby fostering economic diversification and innovation in Macao, the Government launched an interest-free business start-up loan programme specially designed for young people. Interest-free financial assistance is provided to those who already have conceived the idea of starting a business and have already started the relevant operations, to relieve them of the pressure of funds shortage during the business start-up stage.

The Young Entrepreneurs Aid Scheme was launched in August 2013, with a maximum interest-free loan amount of 300,000 patacas and a maximum repayment period of eight years. In August 2017, the scheme was revised, primarily to expand coverage to not only include young people who start businesses for the first time, but also provide assistance to enterprises established by young people who have previous experience of entrepreneurship; and enhanced training for youth entrepreneurship by requiring young entrepreneurs to enrol in relevant training programmes.

From the scheme's commencement to the end of December 2023, a total of 2,783 applications had been received, 2,080 of which were approved, involving a total of 439 million patacas. The industries involved were mainly retail, restaurants and hotels, corporate services, automobile and motorcycle repair, personal services including hair and beauty salons, education, healthcare and social welfare.

Monetary Authority of Macao

The Monetary Authority of Macao, previously known as the Monetary and Foreign Exchange Authority, functions as a quasi-central bank. In accordance with Decree-Law No. 14/96/M, it is responsible for formulating and applying monetary and financial policies, overseeing financial services institutions and financial markets, and monitoring the stability of the financial system. In accordance with Law No. 8/2011, it is responsible for the investment and management of the fiscal reserves of the SAR. In accordance with government policy, the Monetary Authority of Macao actively optimises the software and hardware infrastructure of the financial services market,

cultivates new financial services business models, and fosters the continuous development of modern finance services.

Monetary Policy

Capital flows freely and currencies are freely convertible in Macao. The stability of Macao's currency is reflected in the linked exchange rate between the Macao pataca and the Hong Kong dollar. The Monetary Authority conducts money market operations on each trading day. Monetary bills are short-term money market tools issued by the Monetary Authority in response to banks' liquidity needs, and are used to adjust the liquid capital of patacas in the financial system. Under the linked exchange rate system, the interest rate of the financial instruments set by the Monetary Authority is usually at the same level as the interest rate in Hong Kong. In addition, the Monetary Authority balances the liquidity in the money market via repurchase agreements of monetary bills and currency swap contracts with banks.

The Pataca

The pataca has been the legal tender of Macao for more than a century. As early as 1905, the former Portuguese administration authorised the Banco Nacional Ultramarino (BNU) the monopoly right to issue pataca notes. The first pataca notes were issued on 27 January of the following year. At that time, the Mexican eight reales silver coin, called Pataca Mexicana in Portuguese, was very popular in Asia, and the pataca was named after it.

In 1980, the former Portuguese administration set up the Issuing Institute of Macau (Instituto Emissor de Macau), which was given the monopoly right to issue pataca notes. Since then, the Banco Nacional Ultramarino has continued to issue banknotes, but has acted only as the agent of the Issuing Institute of Macau. On 1 July 1989, the Monetary and Foreign Exchange Authority of Macau was created. The Government redeemed the right to issue patacas, but the Banco Nacional Ultramarino remained the agent bank for issuing notes. In October 1995, the Bank of China (BOC) became the second agent bank for note issuing. Although more than one bank is now authorised to issue notes in Macao, overall power to issue currency is retained by the Government.

Under the currency board system, all the patacas issued must be 100-percent-backed by foreign exchange reserves. As legal backing for the notes they issue, the agent banks for note-issuing are required to pay an equivalent amount in Hong Kong dollars to the Monetary Authority; in exchange they receive a Zero-Percent Certificate of Indebtedness at a fixed exchange rate of one Hong Kong dollar to 1.03 patacas. The 100-percent reserve backing system enables the Monetary Authority to ensure the full convertibility of the pataca into its reserve currency – the Hong Kong dollar – thus establishing the linked exchange rate relationship between the pataca and the Hong Kong dollar. As the Hong Kong dollar is pegged to the US dollar, the pataca is indirectly pegged to the US dollar at an exchange rate of one US dollar to about eight patacas.

The pataca is the legal tender of Macao, to circulate and use in Macao; however, the law does not prohibit the circulation and use of other currencies. Decree-Law No. 16/95/M, Circulation of Local Currency – Mandatory Use of the Pataca, requires that any goods sold and services

offered in local business transactions must be clearly priced in patacas; and they can also be simultaneously priced in one or more other currencies. Under the decree-law, regardless of the nature and objectives of the debts and transactions, no reasons or excuses can be used to decline settlement using the pataca.

According to Law No. 10/2023 on the Legal System for Currency Issuance, the pataca is the legal tender of the Macao SAR and has legal tender power. No one may refuse to accept it at its face value as a means of payment. However, to cater to the actual needs of the current digital economic and social development, the law also stipulates certain circumstances where the obligation to accept banknotes and coins can be exempted, including transactions completed over the internet, as well as the provision of goods or services through unattended sales.

Foreign Exchange Reserves

Foreign exchange reserves are the cornerstone for maintaining Macao's monetary and financial stability. The reserves enable the convertibility of patacas and effectiveness of the financial safety net, and changes in the reserves basically reflect Macao's balance of payments. Foreign exchange reserves are mainly invested in safe and stable money market instruments and highly rated short-term debt instruments. As at the end of 2023, the year-end balance of foreign exchange reserves increased by 8.4 percent over 2022, amounting to 223.6 billion patacas.

Fiscal Reserve

A fiscal reserve was established in early 2012, with the Monetary Authority responsible for its investments and management. Over the years, it has adopted a safe, effective and prudent investment approach. The capital of the fiscal reserve comes from the balance of the MSAR's reserve fund as well as the balance of past annual budgets. Balances amounting to 98.86 billion patacas were transferred to the fiscal reserve as start-up capital, while the remaining 54.2 billion patacas were transferred to the foreign exchange reserve. The original MSAR reserve fund was written off following the above transfers. As at the end of 2023, the total asset value of the fiscal reserve, including the central budget balance for 2021 transferred early in the year, was 580.5 billion patacas, representing an increase of 22.5 billion patacas over the same period in 2022.

The fiscal reserve comprises two parts: the basic reserve and the excess reserve. The basic reserve refers to the financial reserves that provide ultimate protection for the Government's ability to cover public finances, at an amount equal to 1.5 times the provisions for expenditures of central departments set out in the latest fiscal budget reviewed and approved by the Legislative Assembly. Meanwhile, the excess reserve is used mainly to facilitate the implementation of the Government's public financial policies as well as to protect the liquidity of public finances, and is the fiscal reserve balance after meeting the basic reserve requirement.

Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute

The Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) is a MSAR government department responsible for promoting external cooperation such as external trade, foreign investment,

convention and exhibition, and economic and trade cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

In accordance with the By-law on the Organisation and Operation of the Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute, which came into force on 1 July 2024, the IPIM has been renamed the Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute.

Forging ahead with the establishment of a platform for cooperation in trade and economic services between China and Portuguese-speaking countries

To further expand Macao's function as the platform cooperation for trade and economic services between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, and integrate with the physical space of the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Commercial and Trade Service Platform Complex, promoting developments in trade, conventions and exhibitions, and culture between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, the IPIM set up the Pavilion of China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Commercial and Trade Service Platform on the basement 1 floor of the complex. This occupies an area of 1,800 square metres and features seven zones: Zone A, the entrance area; Zone B, the business and trade cooperation display area; Zone C, the area demonstrating achievements by businesses; Zone D, the display area dedicated to Portuguese-speaking countries; Zone E, the corporate services and information centre; Zone F, a multi-function room; and Zone G, a display centre for products of Portuguese-speaking countries.

The pavilion displays information related to building the Sino-Portuguese platform through multiple dimensions, and includes over 2,000 physical exhibits and multimedia items. It also features business and trade service facilities, to allow enterprises and visitors from all regions to further understand milestones in the development of the Sino-Portuguese platform, and the business environment, unique products and services of Portuguese-speaking countries, thereby building bridges for commerce and trade negotiations between enterprises from China and Portuguese-speaking countries. The pavilion also offers live streaming commerce as well as live streaming on-site visits, while providing free public guided tours on every open day.

The pavilion provides free public guided tours on every open day and continuously organises various activities, including live streaming commerce, business matching sessions, trade promotion events and specialised seminars. In 2023, the IPIM organised a total of 11 live-streaming related events, attracting nearly 140,000 views. To further explore more sales channels for the pavilion exhibitors, in September 2023 an exclusive zone for products from Portuguese-speaking countries was launched on a local e-commerce platform in Macao.

By the end of 2023, the IPIM had already set up 19 facilities displaying food products of Portuguese-speaking countries in various provinces and cities in mainland China, including display points in mainland China representative offices in Fuzhou, Hangzhou, Shenyang, Chengdu, Guangzhou and Wuhan. In 2023, the IPIM held business matching sessions for wine of Portuguese-speaking Countries in Wuhan and Chengdu, respectively.

The IPIM continued to organise various activities to promote special products from Portuguese-speaking countries and Macao. In 2023, it held three sessions of “Vamos Desfrutar – Portuguese Speaking Countries and Macao Products Bazaar” in Macao and the Guangdong-Macao Intensive

Cooperation Zone in Hengqin. It also set up the “PSC Mart – Portuguese-speaking Countries Products and Services Experience Zone” at the 11th Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo. To expand Macao’s function as a food trading and distribution centre for Portuguese-speaking countries, the IPIM organised participation by 12 Macao entrepreneurs in the Sagal Expo Lisboa 2023, held in March.

The IPIM continued refining the functions of the Economic and Trade Cooperation and Human Resources Portal between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries, including adding customs data between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, setting up backend data analysis functionality, and optimising various search engine-related features. As at the end of 2023, the portal had 42,939 registered accounts, with 4,848 registered suppliers and agents, 2,946 professional services providers, and 2,129 registered talents who are bilingual in Chinese and Portuguese; and featured 34,178 entries on foods, 449 entries on non-food products, and 483 entries on investment projects of Portuguese-speaking countries.

The China-PSC Business Compass

The IPIM’s China-PSC Business Compass provides a range of bridging support services for enterprises, organisations and individuals interested in developing markets in China and Portuguese-speaking countries. These include business consultation and referral, assisting with formalities for setting up companies in Macao, business negotiation and matching, and publicity and promotion services.

External Cooperation

The Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) is a member of International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI), International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE), World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) and Asia Trade Promotion Forum (ATPF). In recent years, the IPIM has signed agreements on cooperation with trading organisations of various Portuguese-speaking countries and many provinces and regions of mainland China, including a memorandum on cooperation with the Portuguese Agency for Foreign Investment and Commerce (AICEP) signed in April 2023, to help local and overseas merchants to explore business opportunities

In May 2023, the IPIM represented Macao, China as a guest economy to attend the 55th APEC Small and Medium Enterprises Working Group (SMEWG) Meeting in Hong Kong. In July, it participated online in the 31st work meeting of the Asian Trade Promotion Forum (ATPF).

Enterprise Expansion Services

The IPIM has launched the “invest here” website, presenting investment information on Macao, the nine cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and key cities in Portuguese-speaking countries, to help investors sift practical and essential information about investment from the vast amount of information available on the internet.

The IPIM provides a series of enterprise expansion support services for investors, including an online business matching service platform (bm.ipim.gov.mo/), helping investors find business partners and expand their markets by holding business matching sessions in trade and investment promotion events organised or co-organised by the IPIM, and helping find suitable customers and suppliers for investors who have settled in Macao, especially product and service providers for SMEs in Macao.

During 2023, to strengthen solicitation of investments: in March, the IPIM organised a commercial and trading delegation to Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia, holding 10 investment promotion events to promote the new model of synergy between industries with “Macao platform + international resources + Hengqin space + shared results”. Coinciding with the Government’s visit to Europe, in April, the IPIM organised a delegation of over 40 Macao entrepreneurs to visit Lisbon and Porto in Portugal, holding the Macao- Portugal Investment and Tourism Promotion Seminar and signing 11 onsite agreements.

The IPIM continues holding themed training courses to help enterprises understand Macao’s latest development trends and international industries, and to promote business exchanges. In 2023, the IPIM co-organised the “34th Certified in Exhibition Management® (CEM CHINA) Learning Programme” with the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) Training Centre, and 40 participants successfully obtained their certificates. The IPIM also collaborated with the Labour Affairs Bureau to hold the “Workshop on Booth Design” and “Workshop on MICE Technology Applications”, inviting exhibition consultants to provide in-depth lectures on attracting more international exhibitors to Macao and enhancing the use of technology in exhibitions. Three online MICE training sessions were held, covering new trends in Asia-Pacific MICE markets, MICE bidding strategies, and tips on the use of MICE technologies.

To help small and medium sized enterprises in Macao to seize the opportunities in e-commerce development, on 29 March 2023 the IPIM announced the revised “E-commerce Promotion Incentives Scheme”, and the previous “E-Commerce Promotion Incentive Measures” and “E-Commerce Promotion (B2C) Incentives Scheme” ceased accepting applications.

Macao Ideas

Macao Ideas, established by the IPIM, is a merchandise exhibition centre in Macao dedicated to all things “Macao-manufactured”, “Macao-branded” and “Macao designed” through online and offline channels. It also acts as a bridge for Macao enterprises to connect with domestic and overseas business partners, to explore new business opportunities. In December 2023, the IPIM and the Economic Development Bureau of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin jointly organised the “Briefing Session on Support Policies for Macao Ideas’ Enterprises to Set up Operations in the Cooperation Zone”, to introduce Macao Ideas’ enterprises to the first targeted preferential policy from Cooperation Zone authorities for Macao-funded enterprises.

Major Exhibitions and Events Hosted and Organised by IPIM

In 2023, the IPIM continued organising large local brand exhibitions, including:

- The 14th International Infrastructure Investment and Construction Forum (IIICF);
- 2023 Macao International Environmental Co-operation Forum and Exhibition (MIECF);
- The 2023 Guangdong and Macao Branded Products Fair (GMBPF);
- The 28th Macao International Trade and Investment Fair (MIF);
- The Macao Franchise Expo 2023 (MFE);
- The First China-Portuguese-Speaking Countries Economic and Trade Expo (Macao) (C-PLPEX); and
- The 2023 Guangdong & Macao Branded Products Fair, which became the 11th Macao exhibition to be certified by the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI) in 2023.

Additionally, the IPIM co-organised the Global Legal & Sustainable Timber Forum 2023 (GLSTF) with the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) for the first time, establishing an exchange and collaboration platform for the industry while demonstrating Macao's advantages in hosting new forms of exhibitions and conferences.

The 2023 MIECF attracted over 400 exhibitors to join physically, with nearly 400 matching interviews, leading to a total of nearly 40 project signings; the 28th MIF, 2023 MFE and 1st C-PLPEX attracted over 1,100 exhibitors, with about 1,000 business matching sessions leading to over 101 project signings; the 2023 GMBPF attracted participation by 438 exhibitors, holding 338 business negotiation sessions, leading to 54 project signings; the 14th IIICF witnessed the signing of 39 cooperation agreements, the staging of 220 business meetings, and released the Belt and Road Infrastructure Development Index (2023) and its Index Analysis Report. The GLSTF 2023 attracted 700 guests from 36 countries and regions to attend. During the event, two major research outputs of the timber industry were released and two cooperation agreements were signed.

The IPIM continued organising MICE environment experience tours, thus helping event organisers gain a deeper understanding and experience of Macao's MICE hardware and software support, in order to attract more event organisers to host events in Macao. In 2023, three experience tours were organised, inviting a total of 69 professional event organisers to visit Macao's event facilities and supporting infrastructure.

Overseas Promotion

During 2023, the IPIM actively promoted Macao as a preferred MICE destination, thus continuously enhancing Macao's image as an international convention and exhibition city. In February and March, the IPIM attended the "UFI Global CEO Summit" in Lisbon, Portugal, and the "UFI Asia-Pacific Conference" in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, respectively. In May, the IPIM arranged a delegation of Macao enterprises to participate in the "IMEX Frankfurt" in Germany; set up the Macao Pavilion; and held the Macao MICE Environment Promotion Seminar. In November, the IPIM organised a delegation from Macao's MICE sector to attend the 62nd ICCA World Congress 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand, to facilitate exchanges and cooperation between Macao and the international MICE sector.

The IPIM and the Economic Development Bureau of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive

Cooperation Zone in Hengqin jointly launched the “MICE² Macao x Hengqin” brand in 2023. At the 2023 IT&CMA in Bangkok, Thailand and the IBTM World 2023 in Barcelona, Spain, they set up the Macao-Hengqin Pavilion, to strengthen overseas promotion and showcase the advantages of the Macao-Hengqin MICE platform.

One-Stop Service for MICE Bidding and Support

The IPIM provides a one-stop service for convention and exhibition bidding and for event organisers in Macao, by assigning dedicated staff to help follow up and provide support according to the needs of organisers of conventions and exhibitions in Macao. This support includes providing information on organising convention and exhibition events, coordinating with relevant Government departments and units to complete the necessary procedures or applications, assisting with events in the community or at different venues to enrich the experience of exhibitors in Macao, and providing financial support for organising convention and exhibition activities.

One-Stop Service for Investors

The IPIM continued optimising the one-Stop Service for Investors, which provides investors with comprehensive support and assistance for starting and implementing their investment projects in Macao. Apart from serving investors through face-to-face discussions, the Internet, phone calls, and video conferencing, designated personnel are assigned to assist investors from the very beginning until the launch of their investment projects in Macao.

As for significant investments or investments involving complicated administrative procedures, the Investment Committee – comprising 13 departments and organisations: the IPIM, Municipal Affairs Bureau, Economic and Technological Development Bureau, Financial Services Bureau, Macao Government Tourism Office, Labour Affairs Bureau, Land and Urban Construction Bureau, Monetary Authority of Macao, Fire Service, Health Bureau, Pharmaceutical Administration Bureau, Environmental Protection Bureau, and Macau Productivity and Technology Transfer Centre – assists and guides investors and follows up regarding all the necessary administrative procedures involved in launching and implementing investment plans in Macao.

Applications for Temporary Residence Permits

Law No. 7/2023 on Talent Recruitment System and related by-laws came into effect on 1 July 2023, while abolishing the technical personnel residency system under By-law No. 3/2005 on Temporary Residency Regime for Investors, Management and Technical Personnel. The transitional provisions adopt the principle of applying the new system to new applicants while maintaining the previous system for existing applications. Technical personnel residency applications filed in accordance with By-law No. 3/2005 before the Talent Recruitment System took effect – including new applications, renewals and extensions to family dependents – were handled by IPIM according to the relevant by-law.

Under By-law No. 3/2005, natural persons listed below who are not local residents can apply for temporary residency in the Macao SAR according to the related by-law:

1. investors who plan to make significant investments that facilitate Macao's development and whose plans are being considered by the relevant authorities; and
2. investors who have made significant investments that facilitate Macao's development.

Macau Investment and Development Limited

To implement the projects under the Framework Agreement on Cooperation Between Guangdong and Macao, the MSAR Government approved the establishment of Macau Investment and Development Limited on 29 June 2011, pursuant to Chief Executive Notice No. 17/2011 in the *Macao SAR Gazette* and By-law No. 14/2011.

Macau Investment and Development Limited endeavours to contribute to Macao's sustainable economic development and continuous progress in external economic cooperation and trade, through a series of efforts including participating in regional economic and trade cooperation, and launching investment projects.

Among these efforts, on 18 November 2011 Macau Investment and Development Limited jointly set up with Zhuhai Da Hengqin Investment Company Limited (presently known as Zhuhai Da Heng Qin Group Company) the Guangdong-Macao Traditional Chinese Medical Science and Technology Industrial Park Development Company Limited, to follow up on the of the Traditional Chinese Medicine Science and Technology Industrial Park, which is a cooperative project between Guangdong and Macao. The cooperative company acts as the developer and operator of the park, to carry out its projects.

Macau Investment and Development and Macao Industrial Parks Development Company jointly hold shares of Parafuturo de Macao Investment and Development. Parafuturo de Macao Investment and Development was established on 24 November 2015, pursuant to the Commercial Code, and was commissioned to operate the Young Entrepreneur Incubation Centre by the MSAR's Economic Services Bureau (presently known as the Economic and Technological Development Bureau) on 18 October 2017, with a view to promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in Macao.

Macau Productivity and Technology Transfer Centre

The Macau Productivity and Technology Transfer Centre (CPTTM) was established in 1996. It is a non-profit organisation jointly established by the Government and the private sector. The mission of CPTTM is to help enterprises effectively use new approaches, ideas, information and technology to enhance the value of their products or services. Its objectives are to increase productivity and competitiveness, encourage and support the establishment and development of new businesses, and encourage employees to pursue self-development and enhance their vocational skills.

Ongoing Professional Training

Ongoing professional training provided by the centre covers the four areas of fashion and innovation, information technology, business language and business administration, which are covered through a series of training programmes that are well-structured and can meet the requirements of professional/

public examinations. The courses comprise: Industrial Development Series, Administration and Management Training Series, Business Start-up and Business Administration Training Series, and Business Language Training Series.

In 2023, the CPTTM held 1,052 training programmes comprising 23,950.8 learning hours. The number of students totalled 26,026.

Professional and Open Examinations

The Professional Examination Resources Unit under the centre manages various professional qualification public examinations and provides the public with reference information about these and other local professional examinations. In addition to serving as the National Vocational Qualification Assessment, the unit is recognised by mainland China as a social training evaluation organisation. The vocational training programmes in the first stage were for beauticians and hairdressers. Commissioned by the Labour Affairs Bureau, the centre continued to serve as the agency for applying for certificates of corresponding graded vocational skills in mainland China (showing direct recognition of Macao's vocational skill certificates). Cumulatively, 925 people successfully applied for vocational skill certificates in the electrician category. In 2023, a total of 6,007 people sat for examinations on various subjects provided by the centre.

At present, there are five types of public examinations available at the Professional Examination Resources Unit: information technology, commerce and management, languages, vocational skills and admission examination. In 2023, newly added examinations included the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and American Hotel & Lodging Education Institute (AHLEI) certification.

In 2023, the CPTTM again organised the 15th Office Software Competencies Competition for Macao Students, the 10th Multimedia Design Software Competencies Competition for Macao Tertiary Students, and the fifth Professional English Competition. Four secondary school students trained by the centre achieved outstanding results at the Microsoft Office Specialist World Championship, winning two gold medals and two silver medals.

In 2023, the centre launched its first ITEC Manicure Course. Eleven trainees completed the course and obtained the ITEC Level 2 Award in Providing Manicure Treatments. All the trainees obtained ITEC international certification.

Technical Training and Support

The House of Apparel Technology provides technical training, technological support, fashion and innovation seminars, and organises study tours on sewing equipment to help the garment industry move towards high added value, in-house brands and innovation. There are also fashion information stations, and the online fashion information platform, WGSN (Worth Global Style Network), to help Macao factory owners, fashion designers and cultural and creative industry professionals obtain information about fashion, retail trends and analysis. In 2023, the CPTTM continued providing varied technological support to the industry. During the year, it assisted in 110 cases that resulted in over 1,860 final products.

In 2023, the CPTTM again led the award-winning students of the Diploma in Fashion Design and Production to participate in the MaConsef fashion training programme and Fashion Forward GBA activities. Also, it jointly organised fashion design competitions together with Macao public institutions and integrated entertainment, tourism and leisure enterprises. In 2023, the CPTTM organised 25 Macao clothing brands to participate in fashion shows in various regions and cities, including Hong Kong CENTRESTAGE Online Platform, Shanghai Fashion Week, Dalian Fashion Week and Shenzhen Original Design Fashion Week, to promote Macao brands abroad, resulting in over 220 negotiations with businesses from countries such as Japan, Vietnam, India, Iran, Austria and France, resulting in 60 successful cases.

The CPTTM continued cooperating with the IPIM, to hold the Macao Fashion Festival 2023 during the 28th Macao International Trade and Investment Fair (MIF). The festival attracted participation by more than 80 designers. During the event, 12 business negotiations were arranged for participating brands, to help Macao fashion brands to reach international and mainland China markets. The festival attracted over 6,000 visitors, and 5,080,000 online viewers on social media and online platforms.

The CPTTM continued working with the Cultural Affairs Bureau to operate and manage the Macao Fashion Gallery in St. Lazarus Parish. Over the years, by hosting various fashion themed activities, the gallery has helped Macao fashion brands to quickly integrate into the market, fostered commercialisation of products, and guided and expanded cultural consumption. In 2023, the Macao Fashion Gallery hosted fashion shows, multi-brand stores, live-streaming, and cultural and creative activities, promoting 70 fashion brands and receiving nearly 25,000 visitors. The operation of the Macao Fashion Gallery ended on 31 December 2023.

In 2023, the CPTTM organised and participated in 18 fashion-related competitions, with participation by 234 secondary school students and 387 designers. The CPTTM also held or participated in 26 fashion events which were joined by 536 fashion and accessory designers and fashion industry practitioners from Macao.

The CPTTM also held the second “Theatre Skills and Programme Production Course (3 years)” vocational skills training, in collaboration with Escola Luso-Chinesa Tecnico-Profissional, to train professionals for Macao’s film and television and theatre industries.

In 2023, the CPTTM participated in several vocational skills competitions in mainland China, winning a silver medal in Fashion Technology and a gold medal in Visual Merchandising at the 12th Guangzhou/Hong Kong/Macao/Chengdu (GHMC) Youth Skills Competition 2023; and winning a merit award in Product Display Technology at the Third Vocational Skills Competition of Guangdong, and receiving an advanced (level 3) vocational skill level certificate from the Human Resources and Social Security Department of Guangdong Province, as well as a vocational skills certificate from the Labour Affairs Bureau.

In 2023, the CPTTM collaborated with the Economic and Technological Development Bureau to launch the first round of Back-Office Digital Support Services for SMEs 2023, benefiting 199 enterprises. It also again collaborated with the United Association of Food and Beverage Merchants of Macao to launch the 3rd round of the Back-office Electronic Funding Scheme in the Catering Industry (2023), benefiting 40 catering enterprises.

Management Information and Consulting Services

As a correspondent member of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), CPTTM is committed to helping local organisations to raise their management and product quality levels to international standards.

In 2023, a total of 90 cases were resolved via management system consulting services. There were 39 applications under the assistance scheme for the International Management System Certification/Laboratory Accreditation. From the commencement of the scheme in October 1996 to the end of 2023, a total of 627 applications were awarded certification. There were 11 test categories under the External Testing Relay Service. A total of 2,816 applications were filed. The Macau Product Quality Certification Scheme (MPQC), organised by the CPTTM and the Industrial Association of Macau, received 51 applications. From the scheme's launch in September 2018 to the end of 2023, 112 applications were received and 75 product certificates were issued.

The CPTTM continued to help local organisations to implement the ISO 14001 environmental management system and ISO 50001 energy management system, as well as realising green purchasing, referring to the sustainable development report framework promulgated by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and promoting sustainable development. The CPTTM again held the 17th Envirokids Programme – Children's Environmental Protection Action; a total of 8,104 primary school students from 36 schools have participated in this programme through the years. The CPTTM also issued the Good Management Series on food safety management, retail shop management, convention management, the application of ISO9001 Quality Management by SMEs and the Good Manufacturing Tools for SMEs Food Factories, to support development of the industry.

Information Technology Application and Training

The Cyber-Lab provides Macao students and working adults with the most comprehensive and professional information technology training programmes. In 2023, the CPTTM organised eight IT-related competitions for 1,122 secondary students and 60 tertiary students. The CPTTM is committed to assisting SMEs to adopt information technology, providing information system application support services, promoting the application of freeware, and providing related support services. In 2023, it provided technical support for various enterprises on 30 occasions. Also in 2023, the CPTTM continued producing a live-streaming IT programme – IT Today, which allows SMEs to learn various practical aspects of IT knowledge online through sharing by live broadcasters, and explanations of industry trends by guest speakers. A total of 22 episodes were broadcast in 2023.

External Interaction and Cooperation and Services for SMEs

One of the long-term functions of CPTTM is to provide SMEs with various support services. In 2023, it handled a total of 94 SMEs cases, including intermediary/consultancy services for SMEs, as well as new media tutorials.

In 2023, the CPTTM collaborated with the Centre for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Studies at the University of Macau to conduct a strategic analysis of Macao's cross-border

e-commerce development, to assist the Government with planning and enhancing policies for the development of cross-border e-commerce.

Also in 2023, the CPTTM assisted 11 Macao organisations/enterprises with participating in the 25th China Hi-Tech Fair.

Participating in the Construction of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Productivity Promotion Service Alliance was established in 2018, with the CPTTM as Vice President Unit. In 2023, a Macao resident and a Macao enterprise won third prize in the 2022 Productivity Promotion Awards (Service Excellence) and third prize in the 2022 Productivity Promotion Awards (Innovative Development), organised by China Association of Productivity Promotion Centres, respectively.

In 2023, as one of the initiators of the Zhuhai-Macao Vocational Skill Level Certification Alliance, the CPTTM served as a vice-chairman unit. It also served as a council-member unit of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Certification Alliance and the Guangdong Greater Bay Area Certification Promotion Centre.

World Trade Center Macau

The goals of the World Trade Center Macau are to promote and expand trading opportunities beyond Macao, to assist individuals and enterprises in searching for international business opportunities, and to pioneer the exploration of new markets for Macao business organisations. Through the World Trade Center Macau, members can stay in close touch with nearly 300 world trade centres around the world, building new market networks and researching potential international trading partners.

The World Trade Center Macau and the Arbitration Centre of the China Chamber of International Commerce (CCOIC) have co-established the CCBC-CCPIT Joint Conciliation Centre, for resolving commercial disputes between mainland China and Macao enterprises.

Macao Industrial Parks Development Company Limited

To attract investment, the Government made the decision in 1993 to set up an industrial park in the Concordia Reclaimed Zone in Coloane to foster industrial diversification. A total of 337,000 square metres of land was reclaimed, of which 160,000 square metres is occupied by the Concordia Industrial Park. In October 1993, Concordia Industrial Park Company Limited (SPIC) was officially set up to take over the management of the industrial park.

On 5 December 2003, the Central People's Government approved the establishment of Zhuhai-Macao Cross-border Industrial Zone, in which Zhuhai would take up 290,000 square metres of land, and Macao would take up 110,000 square metres of land from reclamation in Ilha Verde.

In June 2004, the Government restructured Concordia Industrial Park Company Limited (SPIC) to form Macao Industrial Parks Development Company Limited, to develop and manage the Concordia Industrial Park, Zhuhai-Macao Cross-border Industrial Zone and other industrial parks.

The MSAR and the Trade and Investment Promotion Institute own 60 percent and 40 percent shares of the company, respectively.

Labour Affairs Bureau

The Labour Affairs Bureau is responsible for implementing policies concerning labour, employment, occupational safety and health, and vocational training.

Employment Services

The Employment Department of the Labour Affairs Bureau assists local residents who are looking for work in the private sector, and assists employers with recruiting local employees.

In 2023, in order to adapt to the changing human resource needs in Macao, the Labour Affairs Bureau continued to actively organise various job matching activities to promote diverse employment for Macao residents by providing appropriate supportive services, and helping job seekers to enter the workplace as soon as possible. Throughout the year, the Labour Affairs Bureau helped local citizens to successfully find employment on 13,835 occasions, through various online and offline employment matching services.

In 2023, the Labour Affairs Bureau organised two large recruitment fairs in collaboration with other organisations, as well as weekly job matching sessions for specific industries, including hotel, high-end retail, daily-shopping retail, catering, and security and cleaning, totalling 152 sessions, leading to successful job matching for 1,476 people. The Labour Affairs Bureau joined hands with Macao's six major leisure business enterprises to hold monthly job fairs, totalling 48 sessions, leading to successful job matching for 8,124 people.

The Labour Affairs Bureau also continued to provide ongoing job matching services, and through general matching, it fostered employment of 1,328 people in 2023. The bureau launched the "Available Jobs at a Glance" website, to provide self-help job application services for job seekers. During the year, successful matching via online services totalled 2,629 people.

To promote diverse employment, in 2023, the bureau launched the "Employment + Training" specialised programme with leisure business enterprises, to provide phased training for job seekers lacking relevant experience, so they could develop their careers – thus promoting upward mobility, resulting in 144 people being successfully employed through the programme.

To support youth employment, the Labour Affairs Bureau held the fresh university graduate internship programme for the fourth year in a row, taking in 213 young people in 2023. As at the end of December 2023, 78 people were employed after internships. The bureau also co-organised the Youth Career Expo 2023 with youth organisations, and collaborated with community associations to launch the "Navigator - Trainee Program", covering four major industry-related fields including smart+, cultural tourism and modern financial services, with 14 people employed and trained through the programme.

Taking a multi-pronged approach, the bureau also launched various youth employment mentorship programmes themed around newly-rising industries in the Macao SAR. In 2023, it held

15 industry Q&A seminars, which were joined by 2,781 people online and offline, including 1,763 secondary school students, providing a clearer picture of the development prospects of newly-rising industries and their human resource demands. Working together with the Livelihood Affairs Bureau of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin and renowned enterprises in mainland China, the bureau launched seven internship programmes, with participation by a total of 136 people. These programmes help to nurture talents for Macao's future industrial development by providing intensive field training for young people.

In June 2022, the Labour Affairs Bureau launched a temporary allowance plan to encourage employers to hire jobless residents during the pandemic, which concluded in March 2023. From June 2022 to February 2023, employers may receive a one-off allowance of 19,968 patacas upon employing one eligible local citizen. During the application period, a total of 2,029 applications were received, involving additional employment of 4,105 local citizens.

The Labour Affairs Bureau has set up a dedicated task force to follow up on job referrals and job matching for people with disabilities. In 2023, it held two special job matching sessions for people with disabilities, successfully matching 44 people. Together with regular employment matching, 51 people were successfully employed. Through the "Salary Subsidy Scheme for Employees with Disabilities", the bureau has ensured that the salaries of employees with disabilities are up to the minimum wage level. In 2023, 88 applications were received, 85 of which were eligible for the subsidy.

Vocational Training

The Vocational Training Department under the Labour Affairs Bureau provides vocational training to citizens, meeting market needs. In addition, it strives to promote cooperation with other enterprises and organisations in terms of vocational training, and to align the development approaches of training programmes in a timely manner. It has also begun to establish a vocational skill certification system for different industries, to further improve professionals' skills and enhance recognition of their qualifications, supporting the upward or horizontal mobility of the labour force.

The Labour Affairs Bureau responded to changes and needs in the economy and the labour market by organising vocational courses that aimed at upgrading skills, certification-linked training, on-the-job paid training and subsidised training. The department continued reviewing and optimising course design and provision through course evaluation and questionnaires. The courses offered in 2023 were attended by 19,686 persons.

In response to the impact of the pandemic on the job market in Macao, subsidised training programmes were again launched in 2023, including the "Employment Oriented Subsidised Training Programme" and the "Skills Upgrading Oriented Training Programme". Through organising training programmes, the bureau aimed to assist unemployed residents affected by the pandemic, graduates of tertiary institutions, working persons and freelance workers to improve vocational skills or enter the job market, as well as provide subsidies to relieve economic pressure caused by the pandemic. The final intake for these training programmes was in December 2023, and the programmes concluded after the courses were completed.

Statistics on Vocational Training Department Students in 2023

Training system	Training Mode	Target Participants	Number of Courses	Number of Students	Number of Completed Courses	Number of Students who Completed the Courses
Pre-employment training	Pre-employment training programme	F.3 graduates or above, aged 15 years to 24 years. To help young people acquire a vocational skill within 6 months; and to offer comprehensive pre-employment counselling for young people, to better equip them before entering the labour market.	4	77	3	49
	Youth skill promotion programme	Lower/higher secondary school students; workshops or skill experiencing opportunities for young people to increase their awareness of vocational skills, getting them prepared for future career choice making.	1	14	1	14
Education Training	General Courses	The currently employed/unemployed. To enhance the knowledge and skills of industry workers and promote professional development along career paths.	190	3,640	177	3,006
	Specialised on-the-job paid training (Note)	Existing employees, newly-recruited workers and staff who wish to change jobs; to provide on-the-job paid training on necessary skills and job matching, to provide opportunities for upward or lateral mobility.	36	724	34	675

(Cont.)

Statistics on Vocational Training Department Students in 2023

Training system	Training Mode	Target Participants	Number of Courses	Number of Students	Number of Completed Courses	Number of Students who Completed the Courses
Education Training	Occupational Quality Training	Existing employees; to reinforce professional ethics, core values and awareness of responsible gaming; to raise their overall capabilities and employment competitiveness.	142	3,051	142	2,958
	Subsidised Vocational Skills Training and Development Programme	Employed/ unemployed individuals / Macao residents; to provide financial support through subsidies to eligible entities to promote the development of vocational training activities, so as to facilitate the continuous development of career paths.	11	221	11	194
	Vocational Rehabilitation Programme	Rehabilitating persons; to provide vocational training to rehabilitating persons who are willing and able to work, and assist them in entering the job market.	1	7	1	6
	Domestic Helper Training	Domestic helpers / employed / unemployed individuals; to raise their professional knowledge and service quality in serving households.	1	20	1	13
	Fishing moratorium training programme	Through organising subsidised training, enhance vocational skills of fishermen, and alleviate the financial pressure faced by fishermen during the summer fishing moratorium.	18	356	18	346

(Cont.)

Statistics on Vocational Training Department Students in 2023

Training system	Training Mode	Target Participants	Number of Courses	Number of Students	Number of Completed Courses	Number of Students who Completed the Courses
Education Training	Employment-oriented Subsidised Training Scheme	Assist unemployed persons and graduates of higher education institutions with understanding the meaning of the law, to upgrade their vocational skills so they can enter the job market through subsidised training; and relieve the economic pressure caused by the pandemic.	253	6,811	238	5,775
	Skills-upgrade Oriented Training Scheme	Designed for working employees and freelancers to participate in training, to encourage employees to participate in courses during normal working hours or during unpaid leave, to enhance their employment competitiveness and companies' development potential.	155	3,482	155	3,362
	Skills Competition Enhancement Training Programme	To provide skills enhancement training for shortlisted skills competition contestants, and to identify strong performers to represent Macao in skills competitions	33	159	14	28
	Vocational skills pre-examination study course	For those who have signed up for vocational skills assessment. To provide focused revisions and information about examination rules.	76	1,133	76	1,121
Total			921	19,695	871	17,547

**Note: Specialised on-the-job paid training includes: Facility Maintenance Skills Training Programme, Hotel and Catering Chef Training Programme, Comprehensive Food and Beverage Management Programme, Cookery Foundation Acceleration Programme, Youth Development Programme, Cross-Training Development Programme for Gaming Workers, Fast Track Front Office Supervisor Training Programme, Excellent Security Talent Development Programme, Culinary Career Development Programme and Catering Talent Development Programme.*

Skills Evaluation

In 2023, 2,787 persons were issued with local, mainland China and international vocational skills certificates at different skill levels, through skills tests organised by the Labour Affairs Bureau. Breaking the figure down by sectors, the certificates mainly involved the engineering and maintenance industry, real estate, and the personal care industry, accounting for 50.8 percent, 10.8 percent and 9.8 percent of the total, respectively.

The Labour Affairs Bureau continued actively working with Guangdong province on occupational skills testing, to explore skills testing or training programmes for “One Examination, Two Accreditations” for more types of jobs and at various levels, thereby fully realising the advantages of regional cooperation.

In October 2023, the Labour Affairs Bureau, in collaboration with the Human Resources and Social Security Department of Guangdong Province, Vocational Training Council of Hong Kong and Macao Institute for Tourism Studies, set up a joint Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao assessment station for skilled workers in Nansha, Guangzhou. The station served as the convergence point for vocational skills assessment standards spanning the three regions, as well as an incubation hub for cooperative projects.

Additionally, the three parties signed the Tripartite Cooperation Agreement on the “One Examination, Multiple Accreditations” Initiative between the Guangdong Vocational Skills Appraisal Guidance Centre, the Vocational Training Council of Hong Kong, and the Labour Affairs Bureau of the Macao SAR Government, to promote comprehensive upgrades to the cooperation between the three parties, support talent cultivation in the Greater Bay Area, and deepen the integrated development of talent assessment in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Vocational skill competitions

The Labour Affairs Bureau fosters vocational skills development, broadens horizons and arouses interest in skills training among young people, by participating in or organising vocational skills competitions, to facilitate talent cultivation. Also, it further enhances exchanges and cooperation with vocational training organisations worldwide, thereby learning from advanced training experiences and skills, increasing public awareness of the importance of vocational training, and promoting the development of vocational skills training in Macao.

In 2023, the Labour Affairs Bureau organised and supported young people and the industry to participate in various international, regional and local skill competitions, including: the 47th WorldSkills Competition Macao Regional Selection, the 12th Guangzhou/Hong Kong/Macao/

Chengdu (GHMC) Youth Skills Competition, the 2023 “Shenhe Cup” Vocational Skills Competition, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Cantonese Cuisine Master Skills Competition, the Jiangmen-Macao Infant-Caregiver Vocational Skills Competition, and the Integrated Tourism and Leisure Enterprises Vocational Skills Competition.

Labour Regulations

In terms of labour laws and regulations, the following sets out the minimum statutory requirements and protection for employees at work, balancing the legal interests of both employers and employees:

- Law No. 7/2008 – “The Labour Relations Law”;
- Law No. 21/2009 – “The Law on Employment of Non-Resident Workers”;
- Decree-Law No. 40/95/M – “The Compensation Mechanism for Labour Accidents and Occupational Diseases”;
- Law No. 5/2020 – “The Law on Minimum Wage”; and
- Law No. 10/2015 – “The Workers’ Credit Rights Protection Scheme” establishes a protection scheme on credit rights arising from labour relations, to ensure that payments are made in relation to credit rights not fulfilled by debtors.

The bureau has consistently implemented Law No. 4/98/M – “The Framework Law on Employment Policy and Workers’ Rights”, ensuring that when employing non-resident workers, the employer must ensure employment priority for local employees, and equal rights, working conditions and benefits for local and non-resident workers.

To improve the occupational safety and health protection measures for the construction industry, establish specific technical standards and requirements, and regulate the system regarding safety management, the Government formulated Law No. 2/2023 on Occupational Safety and Health in the Construction Sector and its supplementary By-law No. 33/2023 on Technical Regulations on Occupational Safety and Health in the Construction Industry. In addition, the Government submitted the Union Law to the Legislative Assembly; this passed its first reading in the Legislative Assembly on 16 January 2023.

The Government completed the first statutory review of the minimum wage amount as stipulated in Law No. 5/2020 – “The Law on Minimum Wage”, and adjusted the minimum wage through Law No. 19/2023 – “Amendments to Law No. 5/2020 – The Law on Minimum Wage”.

The Government also initiated reviews of other labour-related laws and regulations, including: review of the limits of compensation for work accidents and occupational diseases as stipulated in Decree-Law No. 40/95/M – “Compensation Mechanism for Labour Accidents and Occupational Diseases”, and review of the maternity leave compensation subsidy as stipulated in Law No. 8/2020 – “Amendments to the Labour Relations Law (Law No. 7/2008)”.

Labour Relations

The Labour Inspection Department under the Labour Affairs Bureau provides free consultancy

services on labour regulations to local citizens, accepts and mediates in labour-relations, conducts preventive labour monitoring in conjunction with law promotion measures, monitors enterprises' compliance with labour regulations and handles applications for business licences of employment agencies. To effectively monitor the employment conditions of foreign workers and curb illegal employment, and improve the exit mechanism for non-resident workers, the Labour Inspection Department, the Public Security Police, and the Macao Customs Service jointly or independently carried out regular or non-regular inspections, according to their authority.

In 2023, the Labour Inspection Department provided 3,264 consultations about labour regulations to enquirers visiting the office. Of the individuals who sought assistance, 83.6 percent were employees and 16.4 percent were employers. Most enquiries were from persons in the cultural, entertainment and gaming industries, as well as other service industries, chiefly the construction industry. Consultation topics were mainly related to dismissal compensation, wages and contract termination, which accounted for 17.3 percent, 12.4 percent, and 10.5 percent of all enquires, respectively. There were 40,594 enquiries via telephone.

A total of 1,587 in-person complaints from 2,270 employee enquiries were handled, similar to the figure in 2022. Most complaints involved wages (29.7 percent), dismissal compensation (11.0 percent) and overtime compensation (9.4 percent). Categorised by industry, most complainants were from construction (27.8 percent), followed by real estate and business and services (19.0 percent), and hotels and food and beverage (14.6 percent).

In 2023, 2,883 complaints related to employment disputes, illegal employment and other cases were settled, involving 6,134 employees and 2,129 employer entities. There were 1,763 cases related to rights of creditors involved in the employment disputes, involving totals of 146,425,429 patacas and 3,767 employees, with 353 of these cases transferred for trial by the judiciary, accounting for about 20 percent of total creditors' rights issues – mainly concerning wages, dismissal compensation and annual leave, with the rest being resolved by the department itself.

In 2023, the Labour Inspection Department received notifications of 74 cases of agreement on lowering basic remuneration. None of the cases required filing and follow-up due to alleged breach of reduction of employees' basic compensation.

In the department's efforts to combat illegal employment, 624 cases of illegal employment were filed in 2023, in accordance with the Regulation on the Prohibition of Illegal Employment (By-law No. 17/2004) and the Law on Employment of Non-resident Workers (Law No. 21/2009) and its relevant supplementary laws. After investigations, 538 offenders were penalised for breaches of the law, with fines imposed totalling 6,352,500 patacas. In these cases, 52 non-local residents were found to be working for others in Macao without permits. Also, 162 non-local residents were found to be engaged in activities for their own benefit. Individuals in the two groups were fined a total of 3,510,000 patacas.

In 2023, a total of 346 applications for businesses related to employment agencies were processed; they included 118 applications for employment agency business licences and 228 applications for employment service instructor licences. A total of 29 cases involving alleged breaches of law by employment agencies were filed. These cases involved 21 activities, and there were 21 penalties for operating without a licence, non-submission of a legally required record, absence of receipt

for service givers, and unauthorised license modifications with a total of 228,000 patacas in fines imposed.

According to Law No. 10/2015 – “Labour Creditor’s Rights Protection Scheme”, the administrative and technical support for the Labour Creditor’s Rights Protection Fund should be provided by the Labour Affairs Bureau. In 2023, 810 employees applied for protection of labour creditor’s rights. The Managing Committee of the Labour Affairs Bureau handled 1,130 cases in 2023, 1,106 of which were approved for payment.

In 2023, 174 inspections were conducted on major construction sites, to monitor employers’ compliance with labour laws and reach out to the community to promote the law. During the year, the department conducted publicity targeting 230 business establishments in nine industries.

The Labour Affairs Bureau continued to promote labour-related laws through interactive and diverse ways. In 2023, the bureau cooperated with various organisations and associations to hold 34 special briefing sessions attended by 1,260 people, explaining to them the labour laws and regulations. Apart from the e-learning course on labour rights and interests, the bureau added an e-learning course on employment agencies’ rights and interests, and complemented it with a knowledge-based online quiz game, introducing labour rights to citizens in varied ways. There were 24,791 participants in the online game.

Mobile apps and websites providing simulated calculations of labour benefits, and templates of written labour contract documents on mobile apps were complemented with promotional leaflets and infographics in Chinese, Portuguese, English, Vietnamese and Indonesian and Burmese languages. The bureau also published information about labour laws and regulations through various media, including WeChat, Facebook, television and radio commercials.

In 2023, the bureau launched the “Online Application for Renewal of Employment Service Adviser Licences” system; and in 2024, launched the renewal services for employment agency activity licence on the Business and Associations Platform, to enhance the convenience of online services.

Occupational Safety and Health

The Occupational Safety and Health Department under the Labour Affairs Bureau has been conducting educational and promotional activities as well as supervision on occupational safety and health. To continuously raise the awareness and level of occupational safety and health in various industries, different types of occupational safety and health education and training programmes are organised, ranging from providing general knowledge on occupational safety and health, to training courses for various industries and specific work processes. The department also provides various courses on safety management and tiered occupational safety and health certificate courses, to train, nurture and retain professional safety technology and management talents.

According to the attributes and needs of various industries, the department adopts different approaches to promote occupational safety and health, conducts promotional talks on occupational safety and health at different enterprises and workplaces, and organises thematic lectures,

seminars, symposia, field trips and promotional booths on occupational safety and health for different industries. The department continued organising occupational safety charter and occupational safety and health equipment promotion programmes, to promote self regulation of occupational safety and health in the industry and raise occupational safety and health standards. The department also produced work safety guidelines, brochures and pamphlets for different industries, organised online games with occupational safety and health as the theme, and released occupational safety and health information through various media, to convey messages about occupational health and safety.

The Occupational Safety and Health Department conducts occupational safety and health inspections in different industries, and pays close attention to industries that may experience frequent industrial accidents that can have serious consequences. Take the construction industry for example: in 2023, three comprehensive, in-depth inspections were carried out on construction and other work sites across Macao. Furthermore, the department joined forces with public works departments to implement the Safety Project Investment Plan. In 2023, 25 new public works projects joined the plan. The department organised 13 workshops for relevant personnel, enabling them to better understand the implementation and rating criteria of the plan, thereby fostering a safety culture in the industry.

In 2023, the regular inspections, industrial accident investigations and related measures were conducted as follows:

Work item	Target	Number of Inspections	Number of Suggested Improvements	Other Actions
Routine Safety and Health Inspection	1,339 construction sites	3,780	444	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Penalty procedures were instituted 46 times for construction sites that violated relevant regulations (minor violations), with penalties totalling 222,000 patacas imposed. It was ordered that work be suspended in two cases due to high-risk situations. 2. Three employers and four individuals were found to have contravened regulations regarding occupational safety cards of the construction industry.

Work item	Target	Number of Inspections	Number of Suggested Improvements	Other Actions
Routine Safety and Health Inspection	10 supermarkets	13	3	
	1 hotel	1	--	--
	113 food processing factories	144	99	
Safety Inspection Jointly Conducted with Other Departments	312 enterprises	406	123	--
Industrial Accident	5,293 victims of industrial accidents	--	--	<p>1. Five penalty procedures were instituted for construction sites that violated relevant regulations (minor violation), with penalties totalling 43,500 patacas imposed.</p> <p>2. Two penalty procedures was instituted for commercial venue s that violated relevant regulations (minor violation), with penalties totalling 4,000 patacas imposed; it was ordered that work be suspended in one case due to a high-risk situation.</p>

Occupational safety and health training in 2023:

Course/activity	Number of classes	Number of participants	Number and types of certificates awarded
Occupational safety and health seminar	591	19,171	--
Occupational safety and health training module	164	3,974	3,740 (Certificate of Competency)
Construction Sector Occupational Safety Card Training Course and Open Exam	582	13,354	12,315 (Construction Sector Occupational Safety Card)
Construction Sector Occupational Safety Card Refresher Course and Renewal Exam	615	11,416	10,985 (Construction Sector Occupational Safety Card Renewal)
Construction safety designated training courses	115	2,269	2,057 (Construction Safety Designated Training Certificate)
Hotel and catering sector occupational safety cards training courses	510	12,684	12,276 (Hotel and Catering Sector Occupational Safety Card)
Construction safety supervisor certificate courses (organised jointly with Macau Construction Safety Association) (Previously known as assistant construction safety supervisor certificate courses)	6	210	181 (Assistant Construction Safety Supervisor Certificate) *3 classes not completed
Construction safety officer certificate courses (organised jointly with the University of Macau) (Previously known as construction safety supervisor certificate courses)	4	119	(Construction Safety Officer Certificate) *4 classes not completed
Occupational Safety and Health Officer certificate courses (organised jointly with Macau University of Science and Technology)	1	26	(Occupational Safety and Health Officer certificate) *Classes not completed

Occupational safety and health promotional activities in 2023:

Activity	Number of participants	Number of participating individuals
Occupational safety and health promotional activities	469 construction sites	15,308
	40 hotels	1,071
Safety shoes promotion	26 enterprises	136 (provided with safety shoes)
First-aid kit promotion	58 enterprises	--
Temporary anchor devices promotion	9 enterprises	56 (attended training)
Safety harness, fall-arresting device and independent rescue line (kit) promotion programme	11 enterprises	63 (attended training)
Construction industry occupational safety and health management – promotion programme on working on mobile platforms	23 enterprises	104 (attended training)
Portable residual current device promotion programme	6 enterprises	39 (attended training)
Cut- and heat-resistant gloves promotion programme	16 enterprises	--
Sun protection clothing and hat promotion programme	27 enterprises	--

Non-resident Workers Employment Department

The Non-resident Workers Employment Department under the Labour Affairs Bureau is mainly responsible for administrative work related to employment of non-resident workers. The Government imports non-resident labour on the main premise that the employment and labour rights of local employees are not harmed, whilst ensuring the continuous and stable development of Macao's economy.

During 2023, the Non-resident Workers Employment Department handled 33,477 applications for work permits for importation and renewal of permits of non-resident workers including professionals,

non-professionals, domestic helpers, etc, transfer of professional non-resident employees, and activities for personal interest. Of these applications, 21,372 were for non-professional employees, 2,930 were for professional employees and 9,166 were for domestic helpers. Also, there were nine applications for permits to work on activities for the applicants' personal interest.

At the end of December 2023, there were 176,661 employees with non-resident ID cards in Macao, including 145,386 non-professional employees, 5,518 professional employees, and 25,757 domestic helpers, 967 of whom were from mainland China.

Consumer Council

The Consumer Council was established and commenced operation in 1990. In accordance with By-law No. 37/2023 “Organisation and Operations of the Consumer Council”, the council is responsible for assisting the Government in formulating, promoting and implementing policies and measures for the protection of consumer rights and interests, providing recommendations on matters related to the implementation of such policies and measures, and driving various efforts to protect consumer rights.

Establishment of Cooperative Networks

In 1997, the council became a full member of Consumers International. Regarding international cooperation, it subsequently signed cooperation agreements with consumer rights departments or organisations of Portugal, Brazil, East Timor, Mozambique, Singapore and Korea. In 2014, the Consumer Council joined the International Consumer Organization for Portuguese-speaking Countries as an observer. Regarding cooperation with China, it has signed consumer rights protection cooperation agreements with 45 consumer councils and organisations of various mainland China provinces and cities, the Hong Kong SAR and Taiwan region, details of cooperation included mutual referral of cases, to exchange relevant information and undertake various cooperation programmes by 2023.

The Cooperation Memorandum on Consumers' Rights Protection in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the Pan-Pearl River Delta Region Consumption Right Protection Cooperation Agreement signed in 2018 and 2022 both designate the Macao Consumer Council as the intermediary platform for disputes among member organisations of the above memorandum and agreement, consumer organisations in Portugal, and consumer organisations in Portuguese-speaking countries. The council also introduced mechanisms for cooperation into the agreements on cooperation it has signed with dozens of consumer organisations in mainland China.

Consumer Mediation and Arbitration Centre

The Consumer Arbitration Centre was established in Macao in 1998, and was renamed the Consumer Mediation and Arbitration Centre (the centre) according to Chief Executive Order No. 228/2020 dated 15 December 2020. The centre aims to resolve minor consumer disputes that occur within the territory through mediation and arbitration. It only handles consumer disputes of a civil nature, without a ceiling for the dispute amount.

The centre comprises a council of directors, an executive committee, and a secretariat. After negotiation, the two parties of a dispute may choose to resolve the dispute by either mediation and arbitration or both. If the latter is chosen, the dispute will be dealt with through a procedure of “mediation first, arbitration later”. The arbitration award has the same enforceability as a base court decision.

The centre provides a cross-region mediation and arbitration service. Tourists can report consumer disputes to the consumer councils in their home cities, and complete the arbitration procedures across the border through video conferencing.

Businesses that value their reputations and wish to resolve potential customer disputes are invited to apply to become Certified Shops, to solve consumer disputes through arbitration involving amounts of less than 100,000 patacas with the customers.

By the end of 2023, 1,671 active companies were Certified Shops. They included Chinese and western pharmaceutical businesses, department stores, supermarkets, catering companies, jewellery and timepiece shops, laundry and dyeing companies, beauty product retail and services, souvenirs (food products), communication equipment, computer product companies, travel agencies and real estate agencies.

Law No. 9/2021 – Consumer Rights and Interests Protection Law comes into effect

The Consumer Rights and Interests Protection Law was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 24 June 2021, and came into effect on 1 January 2022.

The Consumer Rights and Interest Protection Law defines consumers and traders, establishing and maintaining the justice and fairness of the legal relationship between traders and consumers. The law lists the seven rights of consumers: the right to be informed, the right to protection for health and safety, the right to quality goods and services, the right to protection for economic benefits, the right to compensation, the right to participation in the definition of consumer’s rights and interests, and the right to legal protection and easy access to redress.

The Consumer Rights and Interests Protection Law safeguards consumer rights in the following ways:

1. Safeguards consumer rights;
2. Prohibits the adoption of unfair trade practices affecting consumers;
3. Regulates contracts for sale of goods and contracts for supply of services offered to consumers;
4. Regulates distance contracts, contracts concluded outside business premises, and contracts for prepayment consumption; and
5. Perfects the mechanism for resolving consumer disputes.

To promote consumer rights and the relevant law, the Consumer Council published the first *Consumer Report* in July 1993. As of December 2023, the report had been published up to the 364th issue, with a monthly circulation of 4,000 copies.

Consumer Complaints

In 2023, the Consumer Council received 5,508 complaints and 610 enquiries. The number of cases handled totalled 6,118. The complaints mainly involved disputes arising from tourism, entertainment and catering services.

Of around 6,000 complaints and enquiries received, about 30 percent were made by tourists (predominantly from mainland China).

Tourists who have a consumer dispute in Macao but do not file a complaint during their stay in Macao can file a complaint with a consumer organisation of their place of residence that has an agreement on cooperation with the Macao Consumer Council. The complaint case will then be promptly transferred to the Macao Consumer Council through a green channel for follow-up.

Research and studies

The Consumer Council works to realise consumer rights, based on information gathered through research, which includes quality spot checks on commercial goods. The research includes collecting and analysing the prices of various goods and services in the market.

In line with the consumption trends related to the integration of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, in recent years the Consumer Council has strengthened cooperation with consumer organisations in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and jointly released product testing reports. The Consumer Council has launched several apps. In 2016, an app known as the Macao Price Information Platform was developed to incorporate existing apps including “Macao Supermarket Price Information Platform”, “Macao Fuel Price Information Platform” and “Certified Shop”. It provides information on everyday prices in the markets provided by the Municipal Affairs Bureau, as a one-stop information service platform for consumers to check prices and information about Certified Shops.

Quality Mark of “Certified Shops”

In March 2001, the Consumer Council established the “Certified Shop” quality mark, and introduced it to the general public. Shops that meet the established criteria and pass the “Certified Shop” qualification assessment are awarded the “Certified Shop” quality mark. Since 2007, the quality mark has been jointly issued by the Consumer Council and the China Chamber of Tourism, which cooperate to widely promote the quality mark in mainland China.

In 2021, the Consumer Council launched the “Certified Shop” scheme and held the “Best Certified Shop” campaign to improve the overall quality of “Certified Shop”. Every year, a total of 20 “Best Certified Shops” receive trophies as a token of appreciation.

As at the end of 2023, the Consumer Council had issued the “Certified Shop” emblem to a total of 1,440 establishments.

The council has enhanced the regulation of Certified Shops by requesting these shops to abide by the following additional rules:

- Provide consumers with accurate information about the products and services before any sale; and
- Settle disputes with consumers within 14 days of complaints being received.

The Consumer Council has also formulated a code of practice for each industry sector in keeping with social developments. By the end of 2023, 19 industry sectors under the Certified Shops mechanism – covering cleaning and dyeing services, supermarkets, mobile phone retailing, electrical appliance retailing, computer product retailing, gold and jewellery retailing, pharmacies, birds’ nest products retailing, beauty services, real estate, leather garments and shoes, souvenirs (food product), photography equipment retailing, photo printing services, eyewear retailing, furniture retailing, watch and clock retailing, food and beverage services, tourism services (overseas tours), and pet product retail and services – have formulated these codes of practice. The Consumer Council has also established a mechanism to assess whether the Certified Shops implement their general pledges and codes of practice.

In 2023, the council launched a “Certified Shops” webpage and a “Macao Certified Shops” application. Consumers can easily access information such as on the business operations, contact details, and locations of “Certified Shops”, anytime and anywhere.

Continuously Reinforcing Market Pricing Survey to Protect Consumer Rights

In order to protect the rights and interests of consumers, the Consumer Council strives to enhance pricing transparency, and continues reinforcing market pricing surveys. In 2023, price surveys were conducted at a total of 14,127 shops, and 453 price survey reports on supermarkets – including supermarket products, 10 special products and three seasonal food products – were published. The price comparison function of Macao Price Information Platform is continuously improved and upgraded. The platform app recorded 8,079 downloads and 262,557 views in 2023.

Statistics and Census Service

The Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) is one of the authorities under Macao’s statistical services system, and is responsible for compiling population, social, economic and environmental statistics.

Official Statistics

Under Decree-Law No. 62/96/M promulgated on 14 October 1996, all statistical information compiled by government statistical agencies is regarded as official. Another statistical agency is the Monetary Authority of Macao, which is responsible for information regarding finance, currency,

foreign exchange and insurance business.

The Statistics and Census Service compiles a series of official statistics through research and by using administration information, providing the Government and investors with important references for the formulation of policies and business decision-making, respectively, and providing important references for academic studies.

Particularly noteworthy among the DSEC's regular investigations are the Population and Housing Census conducted every 10 years, and the By-Census and Household Budget Survey conducted every five years. Industries covered include construction, industrial manufacturing, hotel, food and beverage, service sector, transport, warehousing and communications, and wholesale and retail trade. The DSEC collects and compiles monthly and quarterly data relating to Macao's economic activity, including external trade in commodities, tourism, convention and exhibition, retail, prices, employment, real estate transactions and construction. Moreover, by integrating and analysing Macao's comprehensive economic, social and public financial statistics, the DSEC also compiled the Gross Domestic Product value, Gross Domestic Income and Direct Investment Statistics, reflecting Macao's macro economic conditions.

Dissemination of Information

The DSEC publishes essential statistical data that is of public interest via press releases. It also disseminates detailed information through webpages and mobile applications. All official statistical data is provided free of charge. Users may download the data from the website, or obtain the data or make enquiries about it from the Documentation and Information Centre by phone, email, fax, online customer service platform or in person.

Launch of Revamped Mobile Application

The DSEC launched a revamped mobile app with a new interface. Users can customise the frequently used statistical services on the homepage to streamline the operation. New statistical services have been added, including activating and binding questionnaires, online customer service, commodity code lookup, synchronising "My Statistics" services through the "Macao One Account" account, and creating a customised list of statistical indicators based on personal preferences or needs. Additionally, the app provides a push notification function to keep user up-to-date regarding the latest published statistics.

"Government Statistical Questionnaires" Service on "Macao One Account"

The DSEC added the "Government Statistical Questionnaires" service on "Macao One Account", with surveys including the Employment Survey and the Household Income and Expenditure Survey. Upon receiving a survey notification letter from DSEC, respondents may activate and bind the online questionnaire to their "Macao One Account" through the service, and complete the survey via a mobile phone or computer. Data can be saved temporarily, so that respondents may complete the questionnaire in multiple sittings during the specified period.

Supporting Office to the Permanent Secretariat to the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries

The Supporting Office to the Permanent Secretariat to the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation Between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries was established in Macao in accordance with Executive Order No. 33/2004, on the foundation of the Preparatory Office for China-Portuguese Speaking Countries Economic and Trade Co-operation Forum, established in 2003, as a government department under the Secretary for Economy and Finance. It focuses on providing administrative and resources support to the secretariat, enhancing economic and trade exchange and cooperation between mainland China, Macao and Portuguese-speaking countries, and give full play to Macao's advantages and its role as an economic and trade services platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

In 2023, the supporting office followed the administrative principles of the Government and implemented the second 5-year plan, working towards the construction of the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Commercial and Trade Services Platform, as well as supporting the permanent secretariat to implement the work plans under the forum's framework.

The supporting office also assisted the permanent secretariat in holding and joining various economic and trade activities including: the Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo, which involved setting up a Portuguese-speaking Countries Pavilion and co-organising a promotion session; the International Infrastructure Investment and Construction Forum, with the supporting office co-organising a parallel forum; the Macao International Environmental Co-operation Forum (MIECF), with the supporting office setting an exhibition booth; and the Macao International Trade and Investment Fair, with the supporting office setting up a Portuguese-speaking Countries Pavilion. All these efforts aimed at promoting trade and economic exchanges between mainland China, Macao and Portuguese-speaking countries, demonstrating Macao's functions as a platform.

The year 2023 marked the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries. The supporting office organised a series of events to commemorate the 20th anniversary, including a high-level seminar and a retrospective exhibition, to review the history and achievements of the forum.

The supporting office also assisted the permanent secretariat in launching Sino-Portuguese exchanges and cooperation in humanities. In 2023, the Training Centre of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Macao) organised a study programme on entrepreneurship and leadership for SMEs, and a study programme on traditional medicines for participants from Portuguese-speaking countries, attracting participation by 29 government officials, technicians and corporate top management representatives from Portuguese-speaking countries.

The supporting office helped the permanent secretariat to organise a series of online and offline activities for the 15th China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Cultural Week. Art groups, folk performers and cultural figures from Yunnan province, Macao and Portuguese-speaking countries assembled to showcase the essence of their respective cultures through various forms of artistic performances, music and dance, art exhibitions, cuisine and handicrafts. Showcases of products from Portuguese-speaking countries and Macao, as well as cultural workshops, attracted participation by

many residents and visitors. For the first time, the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Cultural Week Photography Exhibition was held simultaneously in both Macao and Hengqin, adopting the innovative “multi-venue event” model.

The Supporting Office continued to support and encourage local students, and students from mainland China and Portuguese-speaking countries studying in Macao, to participate in the forum’s events. The office made arrangements for students studying in Portuguese-language faculties in Macao’s tertiary institutions to actively participate in related activities and voluntary work; and for some students to work as interns in the office, to improve their bilingual ability through practice.

Consultative Bodies

Economic Development Council

Established under By-law No. 1/2007, the Economic Development Council is the Government’s consultative department for formulating economic development strategy, especially regarding consultations on and suggestions on economic diversification, manpower policies, expansion and development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, and cultivating nascent industries.

The council comprises the Chief Executive as its chairperson and Secretary for Economy and Finance, together with representatives of organisations with different economic interests, professionals, outstanding and reputable people in relevant fields, and representatives of relevant public organisations and departments.

The Standing Committee for the Coordination of Social Affairs

The Standing Committee for the Coordination of Social Affairs (hereinafter referred to as “the standing committee”) is an advisory body to the Chief Executive on the formulation of labour policies. It was established in accordance with the Decree-Law No. 59/97/M. Its objective is to facilitate dialogue and coordination between administrative authorities, employers and employees. This aims to ensure their participation in the formulation of labour policies, and in activities that strengthen social development.

The standing committee consists of the Chief Executive (who presides over its meetings); secretaries with responsibility for the economy, security, and culture; members of the Executive Committee; three representatives from Macao employers’ associations (who must be the heads of their associations); and three representatives from Macao labour associations (who must be the heads of their associations).

In accordance with legal requirements, the Secretary for Economy and Finance is authorised to be the president of the standing committee.

The standing committee holds two plenary meetings each year. Special meetings may be called by the president or at the request of one third of the members.

In 2023, the standing committee held 19 meetings: three plenary meetings and 16 executive committee meetings.



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Transforming the Community Economy



Over the years, the MSAR Government has adopted various measures – including the “Distinctive Shops” programme for promoting accredited shops with local characteristics, online and offline promotions, support for the use of electronic tools and the “Courtesy Campaign”; and providing one-on-one advisory services on optimising the use of management, operations, techniques and technology, to improve the business environment and operating conditions of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in multiple ways. These measures help business operators to address the new economic model and actively expand their customer base; and promote the development of the community economy.



