

Quality Education Fund

Financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024

Report of the Director of Audit



Audit Commission

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Independent Auditor's Report To the Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporated

Opinion

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Quality Education Fund set out on pages 4 to 22, which comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 August 2024, and the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including material accounting policy information.

In my opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Quality Education Fund as at 31 August 2024, and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Hong Kong Financial Reporting Standards ("HKFRSs") issued by the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants ("HKICPA") and have been properly prepared in accordance with section 8(3) of the Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporation Ordinance (Cap. 1098).

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with section 8(5) of the Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporation Ordinance and the Audit Commission auditing standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements* section of my report. I am independent of the Quality Education Fund in accordance with those standards, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with those standards. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Responsibilities of the Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporated for the financial statements

The Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporated is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with HKFRSs issued by the HKICPA and section 8(3) of the Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporation Ordinance, and for such internal control as the Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporated determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporated is responsible for assessing the Quality Education Fund's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Audit Commission auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Audit Commission auditing standards, I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control;
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose

of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Quality Education Fund's internal control;

- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporated;
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporated's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Quality Education Fund's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Quality Education Fund to cease to continue as a going concern; and
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporated regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Terry Mok
Assistant Director of Audit
for Director of Audit

21 February 2025

Audit Commission
6th Floor, High Block
Queensway Government Offices
66 Queensway
Hong Kong

QUALITY EDUCATION FUND
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024
(Expressed in thousands of Hong Kong dollars)

	Note	2024	2023
INCOME			
Interest income	3	181,624	159,529
Dividend income	4	87,117	83,415
Net realised and revaluation gains/(losses) on:			
— securities		647,490	178,380
— derivative financial instruments		(9,881)	(16,116)
— deposits with banks and other financial institutions		7,783	(11,719)
		645,392	150,545
Other income	5	137	135
		<u>914,270</u>	<u>393,624</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Grants and awards	6	(464,301)	(415,815)
Operating expenses	7	(102,319)	(122,641)
		<u>(566,620)</u>	<u>(538,456)</u>
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR		347,650	(144,832)
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME/(LOSS) FOR THE YEAR		<u>347,650</u>	<u>(144,832)</u>

The accompanying notes 1 to 17 form part of these financial statements.

QUALITY EDUCATION FUND
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2024
(Expressed in thousands of Hong Kong dollars)

	Note	2024	2023
ASSETS			
Cash at bank		50,517	56,318
Deposits with banks and other financial institutions			
with original maturities within three months	8	145,015	136,631
Deposits with banks and other financial institutions			
with original maturities over three months	8	3,582,534	919,153
Securities	9	4,162,336	6,160,299
Derivative financial instruments	10	18,881	9,889
Receivables and other assets	11	93,663	84,510
Placement with the Exchange Fund	12	1,080,000	1,402,894
		9,132,946	8,769,694
LIABILITIES			
Derivative financial instruments	10	(22,228)	(8,171)
Payables and other liabilities	13	(28,628)	(27,083)
		(50,856)	(35,254)
NET ASSETS		9,082,090	8,734,440
Representing:			
FUND BALANCE			
Accumulated surplus		9,082,090	8,734,440

The accompanying notes 1 to 17 form part of these financial statements.

Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporated
Trustee of the Quality Education Fund

(Ms Michelle Li)
Permanent Secretary for Education
21 February 2025

QUALITY EDUCATION FUND
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024
(Expressed in thousands of Hong Kong dollars)

	2024	2023
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS		
Balance at beginning of year	8,734,440	8,879,272
Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year	<u>347,650</u>	<u>(144,832)</u>
Balance at end of year	<u>9,082,090</u>	<u>8,734,440</u>

The accompanying notes 1 to 17 form part of these financial statements.

QUALITY EDUCATION FUND
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024
(Expressed in thousands of Hong Kong dollars)

	2024	2023
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	347,650	(144,832)
Adjustments for:		
Interest income	(181,624)	(159,529)
Dividend income	(87,117)	(83,415)
Increase in deposits with banks and other financial institutions with original maturities over three months	(2,663,381)	(541,746)
Decrease/(Increase) in investments in securities	1,997,963	(117)
Decrease in placement with the Exchange Fund	322,894	317,741
Change in derivative financial instruments	5,065	12,174
(Increase)/Decrease in receivables and other assets	(14,892)	2,568
Increase/(Decrease) in payables and other liabilities	1,545	(17,487)
Elimination of foreign exchange differences in revaluation of cash and cash equivalents	279	(631)
Interest received	187,061	178,927
Dividends received	87,419	85,893
NET CASH FROM/(USED IN) OPERATING ACTIVITIES	2,862	(350,454)
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	192,949	542,772
EFFECT OF EXCHANGE RATE CHANGES	(279)	631
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
AT END OF YEAR	195,532	192,949
ANALYSIS OF CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
Deposits with banks and other financial institutions with original maturities within three months	145,015	136,631
Cash at bank	50,517	56,318
	<u>195,532</u>	<u>192,949</u>

The accompanying notes 1 to 17 form part of these financial statements.

QUALITY EDUCATION FUND

Notes to the financial statements

(Amounts expressed in thousands of Hong Kong dollars, unless otherwise stated)

1. General

The Quality Education Fund (the Fund) was established by a declaration of trust made on 2 January 1998 by the Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporated (the Trustee). The Fund provides grants to fund projects that aim to raise the quality of school education, and to promote quality school education in Hong Kong.

2. Material accounting policies

(a) Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with section 8(3) of the Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporation Ordinance (Cap. 1098), accounting principles generally accepted in Hong Kong, and Hong Kong Financial Reporting Standards (HKFRSs), which is a collective term that includes all applicable individual HKFRSs, Hong Kong Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants (HKICPA). Material accounting policies adopted by the Fund are set out below.

The HKICPA has issued certain new or revised HKFRSs that are first effective or available for early adoption for the current accounting period of the Fund. Note 2(c) provides information on the changes, if any, in accounting policies resulting from initial application of these developments to the extent that they are relevant to the Fund for the current and prior accounting periods reflected in these financial statements.

(b) Basis of preparation of the financial statements

The measurement basis used in the preparation of the financial statements is historical cost except that equity and debt securities managed by the Fund's external investment managers (note 15(a)) and derivative financial instruments are measured at fair value as explained in the accounting policies set out in note 2(d).

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with HKFRSs requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and the reported amounts of assets, liabilities, income and expenditure. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances, the results of which form the basis for making judgements about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and

future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

There are no critical accounting judgements involved in the application of the Fund's accounting policies. There are also no key assumptions concerning the future, and other key sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date, that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities in the next year.

(c) Changes in accounting policies

The HKICPA has issued certain new or revised HKFRSs that are first effective for the current accounting period of the Fund. There have been no changes to the accounting policies applied in these financial statements for the years presented as a result of these developments.

The Fund has not applied any new standard or interpretation that is not yet effective for the current accounting period (note 17).

(d) Financial assets and financial liabilities

(i) Initial recognition and measurement

The Fund recognises financial assets and financial liabilities on the date it becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. Regular way purchases and sales of financial instruments are recognised on trade date, the date on which the Fund commits to purchase or sell the instruments.

At initial recognition, financial assets and financial liabilities are measured at fair value plus or minus, in the case of a financial asset or financial liability not measured at fair value through surplus or deficit (equivalent to "fair value through profit or loss" under HKFRS 9 "Financial Instruments"), transaction costs that are directly attributable to the acquisition of the financial assets or the issue of the financial liabilities. Transaction costs of financial instruments measured at fair value through surplus or deficit are expensed immediately.

(ii) Classification and subsequent measurement

Financial instruments measured at fair value through surplus or deficit

These comprise equity and debt securities managed by the Fund's external investment managers (note 15(a)), and derivative financial instruments. They are subsequently measured at fair value. Changes in fair value are recognised in surplus or deficit in the period in which they arise.

Derivative financial instruments used by the Fund to manage its risks associated with foreign currency fluctuations do not qualify for hedge accounting. They are presented as assets when the fair value is positive and as liabilities when the fair value is negative.

Financial assets measured at amortised cost

These comprise cash at bank, deposits with banks and other financial institutions, receivables and other assets, and placement with the Exchange Fund. They are held for the collection of contractual cash flows which represent solely payments of principal and interest. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. The measurement of loss allowances for these financial assets is based on the expected credit loss model as described in note 2(d)(vi).

The effective interest method is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial asset or a financial liability and of allocating and recognising the interest income or interest expense over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts or payments through the expected life of the financial asset or financial liability to the gross carrying amount of the financial asset or to the amortised cost of the financial liability. When calculating the effective interest rate, the Fund estimates cash flows by considering all contractual terms of the financial instrument but does not consider the expected credit losses. The calculation includes all fees received or paid between parties to the contract that are an integral part of the effective interest rate, transaction costs and all other premiums or discounts.

Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost

These comprise payables and other liabilities. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

The Fund reclassifies a financial asset when and only when it changes its business model for managing the assets. A financial liability is not reclassified.

(iii) Fair value measurement

The Fund measures equity and debt securities managed by the Fund's external investment managers (note 15(a)) and derivative financial instruments at fair value at each reporting date. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. The fair value measurement is based on the presumption that the transaction to sell the asset or transfer the liability takes place either (a) in the principal market for the asset or liability, or (b) in the absence of a principal market, in the most advantageous market for the asset or liability; and the Fund has access to these markets at the measurement date.

The fair value of an asset or a liability is measured using the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability, assuming that market participants act in their best economic interest.

The Fund uses valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data are available to measure fair value, maximising

the use of relevant observable inputs and minimising the use of unobservable inputs. The Fund measures fair values using the following fair value hierarchy that reflects the significance of inputs used in making the measurements:

Level 1 – fair values are quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities;

Level 2 – fair values are determined with inputs other than quoted prices included in Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly (i.e. as prices) or indirectly (i.e. derived from prices); and

Level 3 – fair values of financial instruments are determined with inputs that are not based on observable market data (unobservable inputs).

For assets and liabilities that are recognised in the financial statements on a recurring basis, the Fund determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by re-assessing categorisation (based on the lowest level of input that is most significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the reporting date.

(iv) Derecognition

A financial asset is derecognised when the contractual rights to receive the cash flows from the financial asset expire, or where the financial asset together with substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership have been transferred.

A financial liability is derecognised when the obligation specified in the contract is discharged, cancelled or expires.

(v) Offsetting

Financial assets and financial liabilities are offset and the net amount is reported in the statement of financial position where there is a legally enforceable right to offset the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis, or realise the assets and settle the liabilities simultaneously.

(vi) Impairment of financial assets

For financial assets measured at amortised cost, the Fund measures the expected credit losses to determine the loss allowance required to be recognised. Financial assets measured at fair value through surplus or deficit are not subject to the expected credit loss assessment.

Expected credit losses are a probability-weighted estimate of credit losses. They are based on the difference between the contractual cash flows due in accordance with the contract and the cash flows that the Fund expects to

receive, discounted at the effective interest rate. They are measured on either of the following bases:

- 12-month expected credit losses (for financial instruments for which there has not been a significant increase in credit risk since initial recognition): these are losses that are expected to result from possible default events within the 12 months after the reporting date; and
- lifetime expected credit losses (for financial instruments for which there has been a significant increase in credit risk since initial recognition): these are losses that are expected to result from all possible default events over the expected life of the financial instruments.

In assessing whether the credit risk of a financial instrument has increased significantly since initial recognition, the Fund compares the risk of default occurring on the financial instrument assessed at the reporting date with that assessed at the date of initial recognition. In making this assessment, the Fund considers that a default event occurs when (i) the borrower is unlikely to pay its credit obligations to the Fund in full; or (ii) the financial asset is 90 days past due. The Fund considers both quantitative and qualitative information that is reasonable and supportable, including historical experience and forward-looking information that is available without undue cost or effort. A financial asset is written off when there is no reasonable expectation of recovering the contractual cash flows.

(e) Revenue recognition

(i) Interest income

Interest income is recognised on an accrual basis using the effective interest method.

(ii) Dividend income

Dividend income from equity securities is recognised in surplus or deficit when the share price is quoted ex-dividend.

(iii) Net realised and revaluation gains/losses

Realised gains or losses on financial instruments are recognised in surplus or deficit when the financial instruments are derecognised. Changes in fair value of financial instruments measured at fair value through surplus or deficit are recognised as revaluation gains or losses in surplus or deficit in the period in which they arise.

(iv) Other income

Other income is recognised in surplus or deficit on an accrual basis.

(f) Grants recognition

Grants are payable to schools, educational bodies, institutions or individuals who are permanent residents in Hong Kong. Grants are recognised as expenditure when they are approved by the Trustee except in those cases where the release of grant is subject to certain conditions, such grants are only recognised as expenditure when the conditions are met.

(g) Foreign currency translation

Foreign currency transactions during the year are translated into Hong Kong dollars at the spot exchange rates at the transaction dates. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated into Hong Kong dollars at the closing exchange rates at the reporting date. All foreign currency translation differences are recognised as net realised and revaluation gains or losses in surplus or deficit.

(h) Cash and cash equivalents

For the purpose of the statement of cash flows, cash and cash equivalents include cash at bank and deposits with banks and other financial institutions with original maturities within three months.

3. Interest income

	2024	2023
Interest income from:		
— placement with the Exchange Fund	45,764	69,882
— debt securities measured at fair value through surplus or deficit denominated in:		
— Hong Kong dollar	15,581	15,643
— other currencies	57,247	44,645
	72,828	60,288
— deposits denominated in:		
— Hong Kong dollar	35,524	23,267
— other currencies	27,508	6,092
	63,032	29,359
	<u>181,624</u>	<u>159,529</u>

4. Dividend income

	2024	2023
Dividend income from equity securities listed:		
— in Hong Kong	43,310	37,328
— outside Hong Kong	43,807	46,087
	<u>87,117</u>	<u>83,415</u>

5. Other income

	2024	2023
Sale of materials developed from projects	130	125
Commission recapture income	3	10
Miscellaneous	4	—
	<u>137</u>	<u>135</u>

6. Grants and awards

	2024	2023
Grants paid/due for payment	494,851	462,803
Refund of unused grants	(36,983)	(52,116)
	457,868	410,687
Awards under the teaching excellence scheme	6,433	5,128
	<u>464,301</u>	<u>415,815</u>

7. Operating expenses

	2024	2023
Dissemination and promotion costs	83,191	103,656
Fees for investment managers	13,887	13,833
Fees for custodians	3,455	3,222
Investment transaction costs	1,658	1,828
Others	128	102
	<u>102,319</u>	<u>122,641</u>

8. Deposits with banks and other financial institutions

	2024	2023
Fixed deposits denominated in:		
— Hong Kong dollar	1,014,590	765,690
— other currencies	2,667,944	209,153
Call deposits and balances with custodians denominated in currencies other than Hong Kong dollar	<u>45,015</u>	<u>80,941</u>
	3,727,549	1,055,784
Less: Deposits with banks and other financial institutions with original maturities over three months	<u>(3,582,534)</u>	<u>(919,153)</u>
Deposits with banks and other financial institutions with original maturities within three months	<u>145,015</u>	<u>136,631</u>

9. Securities

	2024	2023
<i>Financial assets measured at fair value through surplus or deficit</i>		
Equity securities listed:		
— in Hong Kong	1,090,962	1,166,311
— outside Hong Kong	3,071,374	2,736,989
Debt securities denominated in:		
— Hong Kong dollar	—	494,495
— other currencies	—	1,762,504
	<u>4,162,336</u>	<u>6,160,299</u>

10. Derivative financial instruments

	2024		2023	
	Assets	Liabilities	Assets	Liabilities
Forward currency contracts, at fair value	<u>18,881</u>	<u>22,228</u>	<u>9,889</u>	<u>8,171</u>

All these forward currency contracts would mature within one year and had a total notional amount of HK\$5,325.1 million as at 31 August 2024 (2023: HK\$1,999.9 million). The notional amounts of these contracts indicate the volume of outstanding transactions and do not represent the amounts at risk.

11. Receivables and other assets

	2024	2023
Proceeds receivable from investments sold	12,514	237
Accrued interest from placement with the Exchange Fund	27,051	29,235
Other interest and dividends receivable	31,698	35,253
Other receivables	<u>22,400</u>	<u>19,785</u>
	<u>93,663</u>	<u>84,510</u>

12. Placement with the Exchange Fund

The balance of the placement with the Exchange Fund amounted to HK\$1,080.0 million (2023: HK\$1,402.9 million), being the principal sums of HK\$1,080.0 million (2023: the principal sums of HK\$1,330.0 million plus interest paid but not yet withdrawn at the reporting date of HK\$72.9 million). The term of the placement is six years from the date of placement, during which the amount of principal sums cannot be withdrawn.

Interest on the placement is payable at a fixed rate determined every January. The rate is the average annual investment return of the Exchange Fund's Investment Portfolio for the past six years or the average annual yield of three-year Government Bond for the previous year subject to a minimum of zero percent, whichever is the higher. The interest rate has been fixed at 3.7% per annum for the calendar years 2024 and 2023.

13. Payables and other liabilities

	2024	2023
Unsettled purchases of investments	10,042	3,404
Other payables and accruals	18,586	23,679
	<u>28,628</u>	<u>27,083</u>

14. Commitments

As at 31 August 2024, grants approved but not yet due for payment (note 2(f)) amounted to HK\$526.5 million (2023: HK\$708.2 million).

15. Financial risk management

(a) Investment management and control

The Trustee may invest moneys of the Fund in accordance with section 5 of the Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporation Ordinance. She has appointed the Director of Accounting Services to manage the investments of the Fund.

The Steering Committee, established under the declaration of trust, may advise the Trustee on policies and procedures governing the operation of the Fund and on the assessment of applications for the funding from the Fund. Members of the Steering Committee are appointed by the Secretary for Education.

The Fund's investment objective is to generate a reasonable growth in the value of the funds whilst producing recurrent income to meet regular funding requests in order to support the development of quality education in Hong Kong and to fund activities that aim to raise the quality of school education, and to promote quality school education in Hong Kong.

The investment performance of the Fund is monitored through the Investment Committee which meets regularly to review investment reports prepared by the Director of Accounting Services and to interview the Fund's external investment managers. The Investment Committee also formulates guidelines on asset allocation in order to meet the investment objective. Members of the Investment Committee are appointed by the Secretary for Education.

The investment management and control of the Fund are set out in a documented risk management and investment strategy and are reviewed on a regular basis by the Investment Committee.

(b) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that changes in market variables, such as equity prices, interest rates and currency exchange rates may affect the fair value or cash flows of a financial instrument.

(i) Equity price risk

Equity price risk is the risk of loss arising from changes in equity prices. The Fund's investments in equity securities are subject to the equity price risk inherent in all equity securities, i.e. the value of holdings may fall as well as rise. As at 31 August 2024, the equity securities were included in securities as shown in note 9. The risk is primarily addressed through diversification of investment portfolio in accordance with a documented risk management and investment strategy, and the Fund monitors the risk on a continuous basis.

As at 31 August 2024, it is estimated that a 10% increase/decrease in the market bid prices of the equity securities, with all other variables held constant, would have increased/decreased the surplus for the year by HK\$416.2 million (2023: decreased/increased the deficit for the year by HK\$390.3 million).

(ii) Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. This can be further classified into fair value interest rate risk and cash flow interest rate risk.

Fair value interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. Since a substantial portion of the Fund's debt securities and all of its deposits with banks and other financial institutions bear interest at fixed rates, their fair values will fall when market interest rates increase. Investments in debt securities are made in accordance with a documented risk management and investment strategy, and the Fund monitors the fair value interest rate risk on a continuous basis.

As at 31 August 2024, the Fund did not hold any debt securities (2023: it is estimated that an increase/decrease of 100 basis points in interest rates, with all other variables held constant, would have increased/decreased the deficit for the year by HK\$161.7 million). As regards deposits with banks and other financial institutions, since they are all stated at amortised cost, changes in market interest rates will not affect their carrying amounts and the Fund's surplus/deficit for the year.

Cash flow interest rate risk is the risk that future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. The Fund does not have a significant exposure to cash flow interest rate risk because only a small portion of its debt securities bear interest at rates determined by reference to market interest rates.

(iii) Currency risk

Currency risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate due to changes in currency exchange rates. The Fund's investments denominated in currency other than Hong Kong dollar are

exposed to currency risk. The Fund only makes investments denominated in Hong Kong dollar, US dollar, Renminbi and currencies of countries whose foreign currency long-term debt has a high credit rating. The Fund's exposure to currency risk is handled in accordance with a documented risk management and investment strategy, and the Fund monitors the risk on a continuous basis.

The net exposure to each currency at the reporting date arising from recognised assets and liabilities after taking into account the effect of forward currency contracts is shown below:

	2024	2023
Hong Kong dollar	3,269,326	4,830,789
US dollar	4,655,865	2,360,821
Euro	265,240	497,177
Japanese yen	236,323	329,964
Pound sterling	218,445	246,411
Renminbi	195,160	184,772
Others	241,731	284,506
	<u>9,082,090</u>	<u>8,734,440</u>

As at 31 August 2024, it is estimated that, with all other variables held constant:

- a 0.5% increase/decrease in the exchange rate of US dollar against Hong Kong dollar would have increased/decreased the surplus for the year by HK\$23.3 million (2023: decreased/increased the deficit for the year by HK\$11.8 million); and
- a 5% increase/decrease in the exchange rates of other currencies against Hong Kong dollar would have increased/decreased the surplus for the year by HK\$57.8 million (2023: decreased/increased the deficit for the year by HK\$77.1 million).

(c) Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that an issuer or a counterparty will cause a financial loss to the Fund by failing to discharge an obligation. Cash at bank, deposits with banks and other financial institutions, debt securities, derivative financial instruments, receivables and other assets, and placement with the Exchange Fund are potentially subject to credit risk. The Fund selects issuer or counterparty with good credit standing, strong financial strength and sizeable capital. The Fund also limits the individual exposure, in accordance with a documented risk management and investment strategy, and monitors credit risk on a continuous basis.

While the financial assets measured at amortised cost are subject to the impairment requirements, the Fund has estimated that their expected credit losses are immaterial and considers that no loss allowance is required.

The credit quality of cash at bank, deposits with banks and other financial institutions, and debt securities at the reporting date, analysed by the ratings designated by Moody's or their equivalents, is shown below:

	2024	2023
Cash at bank and deposits with banks and other financial institutions, by credit rating:		
Aa1 to Aa3	2,000,995	714,918
A1 to A3	1,777,071	397,184
	<u>3,778,066</u>	<u>1,112,102</u>
Debt securities, by credit rating:		
Aaa	—	910,489
Aa1 to Aa3	—	431,614
A1 to A3	—	767,989
Baa1 to Baa3	—	145,244
B1 to B3	—	1,663
	<u>—</u>	<u>2,256,999</u>

The maximum exposure to credit risk of the financial assets of the Fund at the reporting date is equal to their carrying amounts.

(d) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Fund will encounter difficulty in meeting obligations associated with financial liabilities. The Fund monitors the liquidity requirements on a continuous basis and maintains a level of short-term deposits and cash to pay grants and operating expenses as necessary. Hence the Fund does not have significant exposure to liquidity risk.

As at 31 August 2024, the remaining contractual maturities of all financial liabilities, based on contractual undiscounted cash flows and the earliest date on which the Fund can be required to pay, were one year or less (2023: one year or less).

(e) Other financial risk

The Fund is exposed to financial risk arising from change in the interest rate on the placement with the Exchange Fund which is determined every January (note 12). As at 31 August 2024, it is estimated that an increase/decrease of 50 basis points in interest rate, with all other variables held constant, would have increased/decreased the surplus for the year by HK\$5.4 million (2023: decreased/increased the deficit for the year by HK\$7.0 million).

16. Fair values of financial instruments

The fair value of financial instruments classified under Level 1 is based on the quoted market prices of these financial instruments at the reporting date, without any deduction for estimated future selling costs.

In the absence of such quoted prices, the fair value of financial instruments classified under Level 2 is estimated using present value or other valuation techniques which maximise the use of observable data, using inputs based on market conditions existing at the reporting date.

(a) Financial instruments measured at fair value on a recurring basis

The carrying values of financial instruments measured at fair value at the reporting date according to the fair value hierarchy are shown below:

2024	Level 1	Level 2	Total
Assets			
Financial assets measured at fair value through surplus or deficit	4,162,336	—	4,162,336
Derivative financial instruments	—	18,881	18,881
	<u>4,162,336</u>	<u>18,881</u>	<u>4,181,217</u>
Liabilities			
Derivative financial instruments	—	22,228	22,228
	<u>—</u>	<u>22,228</u>	<u>22,228</u>
2023	Level 1	Level 2	Total
Assets			
Financial assets measured at fair value through surplus or deficit	3,903,298	2,257,001	6,160,299
Derivative financial instruments	—	9,889	9,889
	<u>3,903,298</u>	<u>2,266,890</u>	<u>6,170,188</u>
Liabilities			
Derivative financial instruments	—	8,171	8,171
	<u>—</u>	<u>8,171</u>	<u>8,171</u>

No financial assets or liabilities were classified under Level 3. During the year ended 31 August 2024, there were no transfers between Level 1 and Level 2 (2023: nil). The Fund's policy is to recognise transfers between levels of fair value hierarchy as at the end of the reporting period in which they occur.

(b) Financial instruments not measured at fair value on a recurring basis

All other financial instruments are stated in the statement of financial position at amounts equal to or not materially different from their fair values.

17. Possible impact of amendments, new standards and interpretations issued but not yet effective for the year ended 31 August 2024

Up to the date of issue of these financial statements, the HKICPA has issued a number of amendments, new standards and interpretations which are not yet effective for the year ended 31 August 2024 and which have not been early adopted in these financial statements. These include the following which may be relevant to the Fund.

**Effective for accounting
periods beginning on or after**

HKFRS 18 “Presentation and Disclosure in Financial Statements”	1 January 2027
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The Fund is in the process of making an assessment of the expected impact of these amendments, new standards and interpretations in the period of initial application. So far, it has concluded that the adoption of them is unlikely to have a significant impact on the financial statements.