

# 2023/24 Tea Gathering with the Media

Director-General of Communications

24 January 2024



# A) Update of Broadcasting Regulatory Regime



# A1 Follow-up of the Mid-term Review for Free TV and Sound Broadcasters (1/2)

We supported CA in implementing the decisions of the CE in Council in **February 2023** in the mid-term review which refined and streamlined regulatory requirements, and encouraged additional investment in the industry

Total **investment** commitments for remaining six years: **HK\$11.2 billion**



**Consolidated** positive programmes from 7 into **5 categories** (news, current affairs, children, young persons & others)

Largely the same requirements in positive programmes but with **flexibility** through the “**others**” category



**Increased** the respective amounts of **local productions** (more than 3,100 – 13,200 hours/year/TV broadcaster) 

**Enhanced** the provision of **subtitling and sign language** for viewers in need



**Relaxed** the daily broadcast time limit of non-English content on English channels from 25% to **45%** 



# A1 Follow-up of the Mid-term Review for Free TV and Sound Broadcasters (2/2)

CA considers it incumbent upon broadcasters to raise public awareness of the importance of national security and engender in them a sense of citizenship and national identity, and to promote youth development

- No less than 30 minutes per week of programmes to positively promote national education, national identity and Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL) under the category “current affairs”



- Each TV broadcaster shall double the weekly broadcast hours of programmes for young persons (5 hours in total/week)



- All aforesaid measures were effected through licence amendments and CA's directions in **May 2023**



維護國家安全

# A2 Revision of TV and Radio Codes of Practice (CoPs) (1/2)

To strike an appropriate balance between facilitating the operation of the licensees and protecting the interests of the community at large, thereby enabling the traditional broadcasting sector to develop in a sustainable way, the CoPs was lately revised in **December 2023**

## (A) Relaxation of Programme and Advertising Requirements

Relaxing regulation of programme sponsorship and indirect advertising by way of general and overarching principles

Allowing a concise version of the advisory message for real property advertisements on radio

Removing the classification requirement for promotional material

Impartiality requirement does not apply to programmes relating to national education, national identity and the NSL

Allowing the use of QR code for providing access to advertising information where substantiation of factual claims is required

Removing the provisions governing the appearance of the person giving testimonials in an advertisement related to weight loss claims

Relaxing the limits on repeat of children's programmes to not more than four times within any period of 24 months

Exempting programmes/channels acquired from reputable sources on the Mainland for direct re-transmission from complying with the CoPs

# A2 Revision of TV and Radio Codes of Practice (CoPs) (2/2)

## (B) National Security-related Requirement

- Licensees have the duty and obligation all along to safeguard national security and ensure that their programming contents comply with the relevant requirements
- CA sets out the general requirement relating to the NSL in the CoPs, thereby ensuring that broadcasters would abide by the law in their provision of broadcasting services



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區  
維護國家安全法

## (C) Implementation

- The revised CoPs published in the Gazette and took effect on **15 December 2023**



# A3 Work Ahead in 2024

## Paving way for renewal of major broadcasting licences

- OFCA will conduct a **broadcasting service survey** to track the changes of viewing and listening habits of the general public, and prepare for handling of renewal applications from six major broadcasting licences including (domestic free TV, domestic pay TV and sound broadcasting) with the earliest deadline of **March 2025**

Broadcasters	Licence period	Statutory deadline for submitting applications to CA
	1 Apr 2015 – 31 Mar 2027	31 Mar 2025
	26 Sep 2015 – 25 Sep 2027	25 Sep 2025
	1 Dec 2015 – 30 Nov 2027	30 Nov 2025
	31 May 2016 – 30 May 2028	30 May 2026
 881903.COM 新城廣播有限公司	26 Aug 2016 – 25 Aug 2028	25 Aug 2026

## B) Facilitation of Telecommunications Network Rollout



# B1 Extension of Optical Fibre Networks to Remote Villages under the Subsidy Scheme

## The scheme

- OFCA continues to implement the subsidy scheme for selected operators to extend fibre-based networks to **235 villages** across nine districts in the New Territories and on outlying islands



## Target

## Achievements

- **Three submarine fibre cables** connecting **Lamma Island, Cheung Chau** and **Peng Chau** completed in **May 2023**
- Rollout of fibre-based networks for **more than 150 remote villages** already completed



## Benefits

- Before the subsidy scheme, broadband connectivity on these islands was limited, with slow speed and low reliability
- Citizens on these islands can now enjoy high-speed, stable broadband services reaching **1Gbps or above** at **reasonable prices**, significantly improving the livelihood of peoples on the islands



- Complete roll-out to all target villages by **2026**

# B2 5G Development in Hong Kong



Mobile Network Operators (“MNOs”) launched commercial 5G services in **Q2 2020**



## Ubiquitous 5G network coverage

Over 90% population coverage

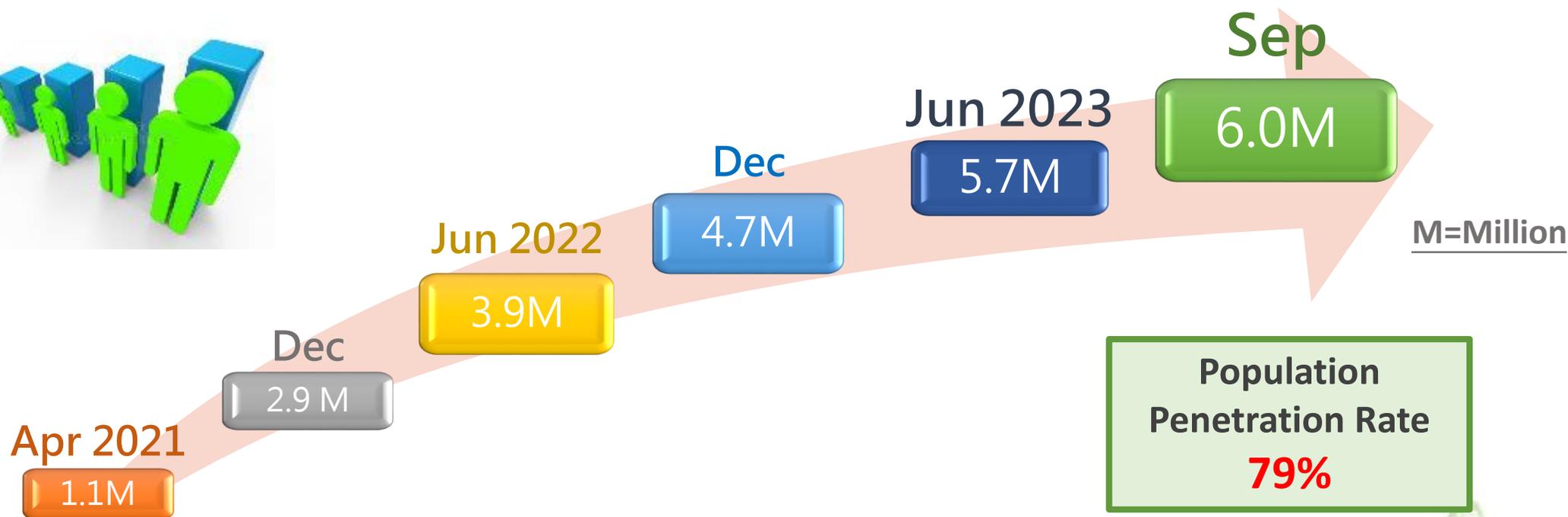


Over 99% coverage at core business areas

All MTR stations



# B2 Growth in Number of 5G Users in Hong Kong



April 2020  
Launched 5G Services

# B2 Consultancy Study on 5G's Contribution to the Hong Kong Economy

OFCFA completed a consultancy study in end 2023 on 5G's contribution to the economy by **2027**

5G's Contribution	Increment in GDP	Increment in No. of Jobs
Adoption of 5G applications and use cases by various industries	HK\$20.5 billion (0.66% of total GDP)	11 317 (0.30% of total labour market)
Investments in 5G network infrastructure by MNOs	HK\$1.5 billion (0.05%)	2 302 (0.06%)
<b>Overall</b>	<b>HK\$22.0 billion (0.71%)</b>	<b>13 619 (0.36%)</b>

5G's contribution to economy of Hong Kong (0.71% increase in GDP) aligns broadly with that to other economies

Jurisdiction	Year	% GDP growth
USA 	2028	0.90%
Mainland 	2027	0.49%
Japan 	2027	0.78%
South Korea 	2027	0.73%
India 	2027	0.44%
UK 	2025	0.57%
<b>Hong Kong</b> 	<b>2027</b>	<b>0.71%</b>

# B3 Legislative Amendment Enabling Access to New Buildings for Installation of 5G Networks (1/2)

- Pursuant to the **2022 Policy Address**, OFCA has been implementing the policy initiative actively to ensure that appropriate space will be made available in new buildings for installation of mobile communications facilities
- We have already tabled to the LegCo the legislative amendment to the Telecommunications Ordinance, and have been working with stakeholders to formulate the relevant guidelines

## Proposed Facilitation of Access Right for MNOs

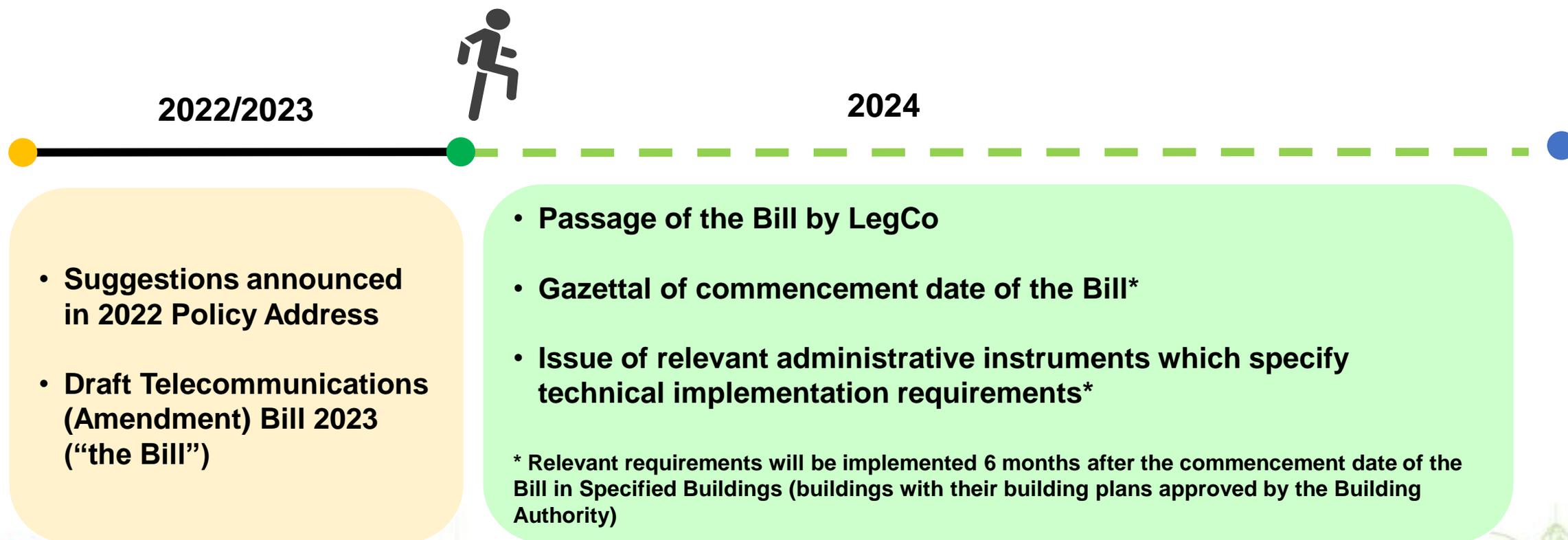
Lift the stringent requirements under section 14(1A) of the TO for authorising access to **Specified Buildings** (new or rebuilt **commercial**, **industrial**, **residential** and **hotel** buildings)

Unconditional Access right **without payment of any fees**



# B3 Legislative Amendment Enabling Access to New Buildings for Installation of 5G Networks (2/2)

## Timetable



# B4 Forthcoming Work in 2024 - Facilitating 5G Capacity Expansion in Major Public Event Venues

## 2023 Policy Address Initiative

- Facilitate 5G capacity expansion by proactively coordinating with relevant organisations to enhance 5G network capacity at the major public event venues, including:



Hong Kong Coliseum

Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre



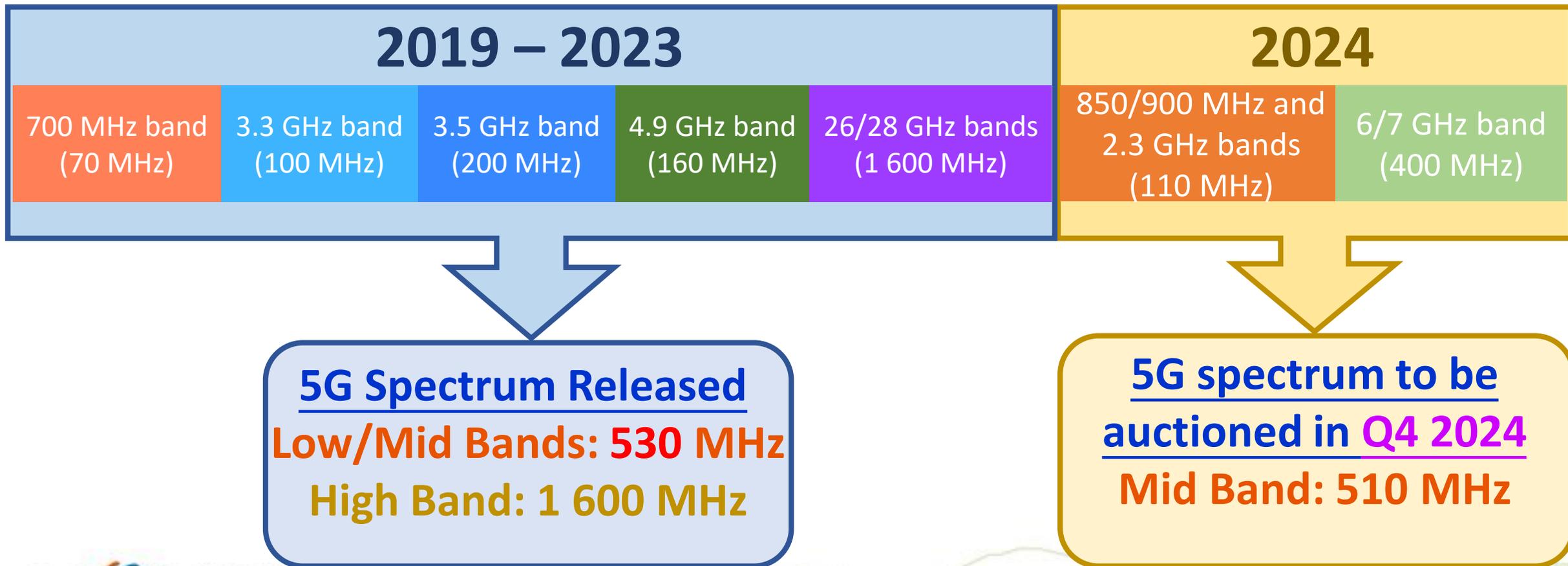
AsiaWorld-Expo

Central Harbourfront Event Space



- OFCA will take lead to coordinate with the relevant venue owners/managers and MNOs to facilitate mobile network installation / enhancement at these target venues **starting from Q2 2024**

# B4 Forthcoming Work in 2024 - Conducting Two Spectrum Auctions



# B4 Forthcoming Work in 2024 - Subsidy Scheme for Enhancing Coverage of 5G Networks in Rural and Remote Areas

## Aim of scheme

- New initiative announced in the **2023 Policy Address** to enhance overall coverage of 5G networks by expediting the expansion of mobile network infrastructure in rural and remote areas through subsidies



## In progress

- OFCA is working with the industry on the design of the scheme, e.g. potential sites, costs, technical requirements, etc.



## Next steps

- OFCA will formulate the implementation framework, seek support from stakeholders and apply for funding



## Target

**Consultation of stakeholders in 2nd half of 2024**

## C) Measures Against Phone and SMS Scams



# C1 Blocking Phone Numbers and Websites referred by Police

9/2022

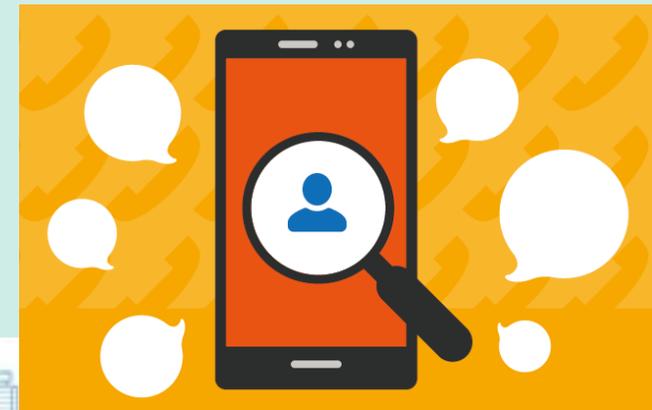
- With OFCA's coordination, Police and telecommunications operators established a liaison protocol since **September 2022**

10/2022

- Based on Police's information, telecommunications operators will:
  - ▣ suspend telecommunications services of local phone numbers suspected to be involved in scam cases
  - ▣ block users' access to suspicious websites

11/2022

- As of **end December 2023**,
  - ▣ more than **2 400** local numbers were suspended
  - ▣ over **6 800** web addresses were blocked



## C2 Full Implementation of Real-name Registration (RNR) Programme for SIM Cards

1/2023



Full implementation since **24 February 2023**

2/2023

To plug the loophole arising from the anonymous nature of pre-paid SIM (PPS) cards in the past. One of the ways to assist the law enforcement agencies in detection of crimes including phone deception involving the use of PPS Cards.

3/2023

Registration platforms of mobile service providers have **rejected 1.02 million registration requests** by December 2023 for not providing information satisfying the RNR requirements. Mobile service providers are requested to enhance their registration platforms with use of **“iAM Smart” by mid 2024**



Mobile service providers conduct **sample checks** on registration records **regularly**. As of December 2023, they have **deregistered 1.16 million registration records** which do not comply with the RNR requirements.

Regular market surveillance and inspections by OFCA will continue.

# C3 Blocking Suspicious Calls from Outside Hong Kong

4/2023

5/2023

6/2023

“Code of Practice in relation to Calling Line Identification and Other Calling Line Identification Related Services”



- In February 2023, OFCA issued updated regulatory guidance to set out practical guidance for telecommunications operators to block transmission or delivery of suspicious “+852” calls
- Operators were required to implement the measure starting from **April 2023**
- As of **end December 2023**, over **2.1 million** suspicious calls were blocked

# C4 Alerts for Calls from Outside Hong Kong

4/2023

5/2023

6/2023

- To raise public awareness of other calls originating from outside Hong Kong with caller number prefixed with “+852” (Hong Kong area code)
  - ▣ Starting from **May 2023**, mobile service providers are sending voice or text alert to all mobile service users for incoming “+852” calls
  - ▣ “Call is from outside Hong Kong. Beware of deception.”
  - ▣ Voice alert is spoken in Cantonese, Putonghua and English
  - ▣ Text alert is written in English and Chinese
  - ▣ As of **end December 2023**, over **22 million voice/text alerts** were issued



# C5 Suspending Suspicious Local Telephone Services

5/2023

- OFCA has formulated the **Code of Practice on Management of Scam Calls by Telecommunications Service Providers**

6/2023

- Since **end June 2023**, mobile service providers have been required to monitor the calls originating from their networks and systems, and suspend the service of the relevant telephone numbers if suspicious scam call patterns are identified

7/2023

- As of **end December 2023**, about **510 000** local mobile numbers were suspended under the code of practice
- OFCA revised the code of practice to cover fixed telephone services. Fixed service providers have implemented the code of practice since **end December 2023**

## C6 Launch of SMS Sender Registration Scheme (1/2)

- **Newly introduced prefix “#”**
  - ➔ Identify “Registered SMS Sender IDs”
  - ➔ Identify whether an SMS is sent by a Registered Sender easily



sms

- Only Registered Senders can send SMS using their Registered SMS Sender IDs with prefix “#” to local subscribers of mobile services in Hong Kong



# C6 Launch of SMS Sender Registration Scheme (2/2)

10/2023

- The Scheme was first launched by **the telecommunications sector** on **28 December 2023**
- **Police** also joined the Scheme from 2 January 2024

11/2023

**12/2023**

- **The banking sector** will join the Scheme on 28 January 2024
- OFCA would assist **government departments / bureaux** and **other interested organisations** in participation in the Scheme

## *Examples of Participants in the Scheme*



## C7 Promoting the Use of Call Filtering Service/App

- Various **call filtering apps** are available in the market for smartphone users to download free-of-charge and filter telemarketing calls and suspicious calls
- Major mobile service operators are offering call filtering services for their customers
- Some mobile service operators have agreed to provide their customers with **call filtering service for free or as free trials (e.g. customers aged 65+ or subscribing to monthly service plans)**



# C8 Raising Public Awareness of Phone and SMS Scams

## 2023

- Consumer Education Campaign launched under the theme of “**Use Communications Services Smartly. Stay Vigilant against Telephone Scams.**” via TV and radio announcements, roving exhibitions, school talks and drama performances and promotion truck tour campaign (in December 2023 under the theme of “My Promise against Phone Scams”)



## 2024

- Broadcast of new TV and radio announcements on “**SMS Sender Registration Scheme**” and “**Beware of Phone/SMS Scams**”
- Collaboration with **political parties and District Council Members** to launch publicity activities at community level in eighteen districts

# Thank You

