

Financial Life Raft for SMEs

中小企業財政紓困措施



Experts explain some of the lending schemes and other help available for businesses hit by the pandemic
疫情打擊大小企業，專家闡釋部分貸款計劃及其他援助

Hong Kong's major financial institutions have rolled out a range of measures to support local businesses through the current crisis. To help members understand what is available, the Chamber organized two online sessions – in Cantonese and English – to discuss the various options.

At the English webinar on 20 March, Lionel Ng, Assistant Vice President, SME Financing Guarantee Scheme Operations at HKMC Insurance Limited, introduced this scheme, which has been running for several years. When it

was launched in 2012 it offered an 80% guarantee and required businesses to have been in operation for one year. The criteria have since been relaxed, and in his February Budget the Financial Secretary announced the HKMCI special 100% guarantee product.

"This measure aims to alleviate the burden of paying employee wages and rent. The product is applicable to all SMEs, not just those most affected," Ng said.

The maximum loan amount will cover wages and rent for six months, up to \$2

million. The application process is quite simple, he added, and those that qualify can expect to be approved fairly quickly.

Ng then shared an example: "One borrower was the owner of an education centre, with one year of business operating history and four employees, who had tried to apply for a personal loan but could not provide collateral. The owner successfully applied for a 90% loan with an interest rate below 6%."

Winnie Tung, Managing Director & Head of Business Banking, Retail Banking,

Hong Kong at Standard Chartered, explained that the bank had extended its principal moratorium scheme to all existing customers. Already, the bank had processed a number of these applications as well as loan deferments, she said.

Recognising that the principal moratorium may not be enough for some clients, the bank also offers tailored repayment plans. Tung said that it was important to understand the needs of the bank's different customers.

"We have dedicated people to talk to the clients specifically to see how we can help customers through this difficult period," she said.

Besides deferring loan payments, the bank has introduced some plans for other customers, Tung added.

"We also understand there are a lot of start-ups, so aside from lending we are also offering the waiver of account maintenance fees until the end of the year."

Paul Yeung, Managing Director, Sales and Client Coverage, Business Banking, Commercial Banking Hong Kong, at

HSBC, remarked that the bank had seen a lot of ups and downs during its long history in Hong Kong.

He explained that measures already being offered amid the trade war tensions and protests included the subsidy of some fees and rebates on certain services. The funding introduced by the Government to deal with the coronavirus has allowed the bank to come up with more schemes, he said: "With these measures we have been more creative, because this is a situation Hong Kong has not faced in more than 30 years."

Yeung added that helping businesses to save money was just one aspect.

"SMEs need help not only on finance alone, but also in working from home," he said. "We are doing a lot to help our customers to stay healthy and work in a digital manner, for example through enhanced business functionality and mobile banking."

He added that Hong Kong SMEs are very dynamic, and when economies change, many companies quickly adapt their own business models.

"I have never seen anything like this

before," said Amos Chan, Head of Business Banking, Hang Seng Bank. "It is a perfect storm for businesses, with seven months of social unrest and now the coronavirus."

But he said that Hang Seng hoped to act as a "buddy" to help small businesses through the crisis that was now affecting businesses in all sectors.

To give useful and immediate relief, Hang Seng has introduced a principal payment moratorium for its existing customers.

"For example, one customer is a restaurant chain with 20 outlets, so you can imagine the problems they have had with weddings and events being cancelled," Chan said. "Principal moratorium is a big help to them as they can save more than \$2.5 million in cash flow."

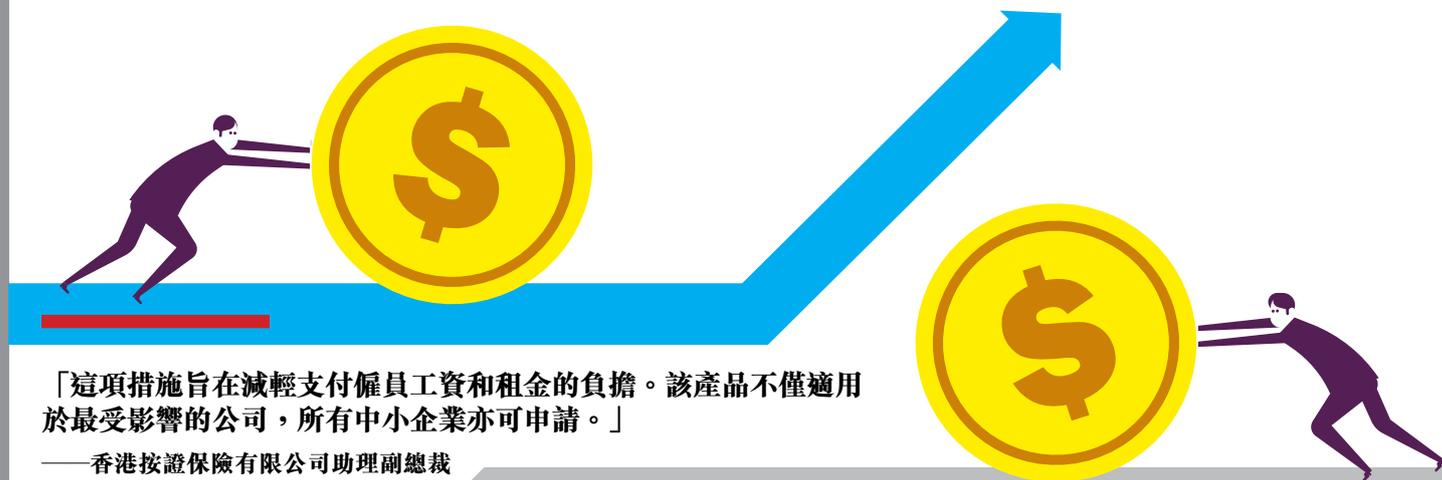
He added that for other customers, trade loans can be extended, and further help includes fee waivers and business loans.

"Even if you are not already a customer, we can still help through new loans including through the Government schemes such as SFGS."



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**– Lionel Ng, Assistant Vice President,
SME Financing Guarantee Scheme Operations
at HKMC Insurance Limited**



「這項措施旨在減輕支付僱員工資和租金的負擔。該產品不僅適用於最受影響的公司，所有中小企業亦可申請。」

——香港按揭保險有限公司助理副總裁
(中小企融資擔保計劃業務運作)
吳廣平

香港的主要金融機構已推出一系列措施，支援本地企業渡過當前危機。為協助會員了解可獲得的援助，總商會舉辦兩場分別以廣東話和英語進行的網上研討會，介紹各種方案。

在3月20日以英語進行的網上研討會，香港按揭保險有限公司助理副總裁（中小企融資擔保計劃業務運作）吳廣平介紹該項已推行數年的計劃。計劃於2012年推出時提供八成擔保，並要求企業最少已經營一年。此標準其後有所放寬，而財政司長在2月份發表的《財政預算案》中，公布了按揭保險公司提供的百分百特別擔保產品。

吳廣平說：「這項措施旨在減輕支付僱員工資和租金的負擔。該產品不僅適用於最受影響的公司，所有中小企業亦可申請。」

最高貸款額將涵蓋六個月的工資和租金，上限為200萬元。他補充，申請程序相當簡單，而符合申請條件者可望很快獲批。

吳廣平又分享了一個案例：「曾有貸款人是教育中心的擁有人，公司有一年的經營歷史，並聘有四名僱員。他嘗試申請個人貸款，但無法提供抵押。最後，他成功申請九成貸款，利率低於6%。」

渣打銀行香港個人金融業務董事總經理及中小企業主管董美怡解釋，該行已把其按揭「還息不還本」計劃擴展至涵蓋所有現有客戶。她表示，該行已處理了多宗此類申請及延期還款。

該行明白「還息不還本」對某些客戶來說並不足夠，因此還提供了度身的還款計劃。董美怡表示，了解銀行不同客戶的需要十分重要。

她說：「我們有專人與客戶溝通，深入了解我們可如何在這個艱難時期為客戶提供協助。」

她補充，除了延期還款，該行還為其他客戶推出了一些計劃。

「我們也知道還有很多初創企業需要援助，因此貸款以外，我們還豁免了戶口管理費，直至年底。」

滙豐工商金融商務理財業務及客戶常務總監楊偉強指出，該行在香港歷史悠久，經歷了不少高低起伏。

他解釋，在貿易戰緊張局勢和示威活動期間推出的措施包括部分服務費補貼和回扣。政府為應對冠狀病毒疫情而提供的資助，亦促使該行推出更多計劃；他說：「該等措施令我們的創意加以發揮，因為香港30多年來都未曾經歷這個情況。」

楊偉強續道，協助企業節流只是其中一個範疇。

他說：「中小企業不僅需要財政援助，也需要在家工作方面的支援。我們正全力協助客戶保持健康，並推行數碼工作模式，例如通過優化業務功能和流動銀行服務。」

他補充，本港中小企活力十足、靈活變通，每當經濟出現變化，很多企業都能迅速調整他們的商業模式。

恒生銀行商務理財業務總監陳紹樂說：「我從未見過如斯境況。對企業來說，實在是禍不單行，先有接連七個月的社會動盪，如今則面對冠狀病毒。」

但他表示，當前的危機對各行各業都造成打擊，該行希望扮演「夥伴」的角色，協助小商企渡過難關。

為了提供實用的即時援助，恆生銀行向現有客戶推出了「還息不還本」的安排。

陳紹樂說：「例如，某客戶經營連鎖酒樓，在全港設有20家分店，你大可想像得到，他們的婚宴和活動遭到取消所帶來的問題。」他續說：「『還息不還本』對他們有莫大的幫助，從中可節省超過250萬元的現金周轉。」

他補充，其他客戶方面，貿易貸款可獲延長，而進一步的支援包括費用豁免和商業貸款。

「即使你還未成為客戶，我們仍可通過新貸款提供援助，包括通過『中小企融資擔保計劃』之類的政府計劃。」