

Chapter 14A

EQUITY SECURITIES

CONNECTED TRANSACTIONS

Preliminary

- 14A.01 The connected transactions rules are intended to ensure that the interests of shareholders as a whole are taken into account by a listed issuer when the listed issuer enters into connected transactions. The rules set out in this Chapter also provide certain safeguards against listed issuers' directors, chief executives or substantial shareholders (or their associates) taking advantage of their positions.
- 14A.02 This is achieved through the general requirement for connected transactions to be disclosed and subject to independent shareholders' approval. Accordingly, where any connected transaction is proposed, the transaction must be announced publicly and a circular must be sent to shareholders giving information about the transaction. Prior approval of the shareholders in general meeting will be required before the transaction can proceed. A connected person with a material interest in the transaction will not be permitted to vote at the meeting on the resolution approving the transaction.
- 14A.03 Certain categories of transaction are exempt from the disclosure and independent shareholders' approval requirements and certain transactions are subject only to disclosure requirements.
- 14A.04 Connected transactions may be either one-off transactions (in the case of listed issuers) or continuing transactions (in the case of both listed issuers and new applicants). Different rules apply in each case. A listed issuer must, in respect of all connected transactions, enter into a written agreement with the relevant parties.
- 14A.05 If a listed issuer proposes to enter into a transaction which could be a connected transaction, it is essential that the listed issuer consult the Exchange at an early stage so that, in cases of doubt, the listed issuer can ascertain whether and to what extent the provisions of this Chapter apply. The relevant contract(s) or, if applicable, draft contract(s) must be supplied to the Exchange, if requested.
- 14A.06 The Exchange has the specific power to deem a person to be connected (see rule 14A.11(4)) and to specify that certain exemptions will not apply to particular transactions (see rule 14A.30).
- 14A.07 The Exchange may grant a waiver from all or any of the requirements in this Chapter where the Exchange deems it appropriate on such terms and conditions as the Exchange may determine (see rule 14A.42).
- 14A.08 A connected transaction may also be a reverse takeover, very substantial acquisition, very substantial disposal, major transaction, discloseable transaction, or share transaction and listed issuers should also refer to Chapter 14 of the Exchange Listing Rules.
- 14A.09 Listed issuers must complete and submit any checklist(s) in such form as may be prescribed by the Exchange from time to time in respect of any connected transactions or continuing connected transactions.

General matters concerning definitions and interpretation

14A.10 In this Chapter:

- (1) a “banking company” means a bank, a restricted licence bank or a deposit taking company as defined in the Banking Ordinance or a bank constituted under appropriate overseas legislation or authority;
- (2) “consideration” is calculated as set out in rule 14.15;
- (3) “controller” means a director, chief executive or controlling shareholder of the listed issuer;
- (4) “financial assistance” includes granting credit, lending money, providing security for, or guaranteeing a loan;

Note: see also the definition of “ordinary and usual course of business” in rule 14A.10(9).

- (5) “independent shareholder” means any shareholder of the listed issuer that is not required to abstain from voting at a general meeting to approve a connected transaction;
- (6) an “issuer” means a listed issuer or company or other legal person whose securities are the subject of an application for listing on the Main Board and its subsidiaries;
- (7) a “listed issuer” shall have the meaning set out in rule 14.04(6);
- (8) “normal commercial terms” are terms which a party could obtain if the transaction were on an arm’s length basis or on terms no less favourable to the listed issuer than terms available to or from independent third parties;
- (9) “ordinary and usual course of business” of an entity shall have the meaning set out in rule 14.04(8);
- (10) “percentage ratios” shall have the meaning set out in rule 14.04(9);
- (11) “recognised stock exchange” means a regulated, regularly operating, open stock market recognised for this purpose by the Exchange;
- (12) “total assets” shall have the meaning set out in rule 14.04(12); and
- (13) a “transaction” by an issuer, whether or not it is of a revenue nature in the ordinary and usual course of business as defined in rule 14.04(1)(g), includes:
 - (a) the acquisition or disposal of assets including deemed disposals set out in rule 14.29;
 - (b) any transaction involving a listed issuer writing, accepting, transferring, exercising or terminating (in the manner described in rule 14A.68) an option to acquire or dispose of assets or to subscribe for securities;
 - (c) entering into or terminating finance leases;

- (d) entering into or terminating operating leases or sub-leases, including those of properties;
- (e) granting an indemnity or a guarantee or providing financial assistance;
- (f) entering into any arrangement or agreement involving the formation of a joint venture entity in any form, such as a partnership or a company, or any other form of joint arrangement;
- (g) issuing new securities;
- (h) the provision of or receipt of services;
- (i) sharing of services; and
- (j) providing or acquiring raw materials, intermediate products and finished goods.

Definition of connected person

14A.11 Rule 1.01 contains a general definition of “connected person”. In this Chapter, the definition of “connected person” includes:

- (1) a director, chief executive or substantial shareholder of the listed issuer;
- (2) any person who was a director of the listed issuer within the preceding 12 months;
- (3) a promoter or supervisor of a PRC issuer;
- (4) any associate of a person referred to in rules 14A.11(1), (2) or (3). The definitions of “associate” (in the context of non-PRC issuers and PRC issuers) are contained in rules 1.01 and 19A.04, respectively. In this Chapter, an “associate” of a person referred to in rules 14A.11(1), (2) or (3) includes the following additional persons:
 - (a) any person or entity with whom a person referred to in rules 14A.11(1), (2) or (3) has entered, or proposes to enter, into any agreement, arrangement, understanding or undertaking, whether formal or informal and whether express or implied, with respect to the transaction which is such that, in the opinion of the Exchange, that person or entity should be considered a connected person;
 - (b) any person cohabiting as a spouse with, and any child, step-child, parent, step-parent, brother, sister, step-brother and step-sister of, a person referred to in rules 14A.11(1), (2) or (3); and
 - (c) a father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, cousin, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, nephew and niece of a person referred to in rules 14A.11(1), (2) or (3) whose association with the person referred to in rules 14A.11(1), (2) or (3) is such that, in the opinion of the Exchange, the proposed transaction should be subject to the requirements of this Chapter. Listed issuers must notify the Exchange of any proposed transaction with these parties unless the transaction is exempt under rules 14A.31 or 14A.33. Listed issuers must also provide information to the Exchange to demonstrate whether or not

these parties should be regarded as associates of the person referred to in rules 14A.11(1), (2) or (3);

Note: A company which is an “associate” of a person referred to in rules 14A.11(1), (2) or (3) only because that person has an indirect interest in the company through its shareholding in the listed issuer is not a connected person.

- (5) any non wholly-owned subsidiary of the listed issuer where any connected person(s) of the listed issuer (other than at the level of its subsidiaries) as defined under rules 14A.11(1) to (4) is/are (individually or together) entitled to exercise, or control the exercise of, 10% or more of the voting power at any general meeting of such non wholly-owned subsidiary; and

Notes: 1 It follows that a non wholly-owned subsidiary is not a connected person where:

(a) no connected person(s) of the listed issuer (other than at the level of its subsidiaries) as defined under rules 14A.11(1) to (4) is/are (individually or together) entitled to exercise, or control the exercise of, 10% or more of the voting power at any general meeting of such non wholly-owned subsidiary; and

(b) the non wholly-owned subsidiary is not an associate of a person referred to in rules 14A.11(1), (2) or (3).

- 2 An interest of a connected person of the listed issuer (other than at the level of its subsidiaries) in the subsidiary which is held through the listed issuer is to be excluded from the 10% referred to in this rule.*

- (6) any subsidiary of a non wholly-owned subsidiary referred to in rule 14A.11(5).

14A.12 The definition of “connected person” does not include a wholly-owned subsidiary of the listed issuer.

Definition of connected transaction

14A.13 A connected transaction is:

- (1) (a) any transaction between a listed issuer and a connected person; or

Acquisition or disposal of interest in a company

- (b) (i) any transaction between a listed issuer and a person who is not a connected person and the transaction involves the listed issuer acquiring or disposing of an interest in a company where a substantial shareholder of that company is, or is proposed to be, a controller or is (or will become as a result of the transaction) an associate of a controller. The Exchange may aggregate the interests of any person and his associates (as defined in rule 14A.11(4)) in determining whether together they are a “substantial shareholder” of any company. Where assets (as opposed to businesses) account for

90% or more of such a company's net assets or total assets, the Exchange will treat the acquisition or disposal of such assets as a connected transaction and an acquisition or disposal of an interest in that company; or

Notes: (1) A listed issuer itself will not be considered an "associate" of a controller when the listed issuer is acquiring or disposing of an interest in a company of which it is already a substantial shareholder.

(2) A controller whose only interest in a company is through its interest in the listed issuer will not be taken to be a "substantial shareholder" of that company.

(3) This rule does not apply where all the following conditions are met:

(i) the listed issuer acquires an interest in a company;

(ii) the substantial shareholder of the company being acquired is a director, chief executive or controlling shareholder of the company being acquired (or an associate of such director, chief executive or controlling shareholder) immediately prior to the acquisition;

(iii) it is proposed that the substantial shareholder will remain a director, chief executive or controlling shareholder of the company being acquired (or an associate of such director, chief executive or controlling shareholder) following the acquisition; and

(iv) following the acquisition, the only reason why he is still a controller is that he remains a director, chief executive or controlling shareholder of the company being acquired (or an associate of such director, chief executive or controlling shareholder), as the case may be. Where he remains a controlling shareholder, there must not be any increase in his interest in such company as a result of the acquisition.

(ii) any transaction between a listed issuer and a person who is not a connected person and the transaction involves the listed issuer acquiring an interest in a company (or an option to acquire such interest) of which a controller (or an associate of a controller) is, or will become, a shareholder where the interest being acquired is:

(A) of a fixed income nature;

(B) shares to be acquired on less favourable terms than those granted to the controller or its associate; or

- (C) shares which are of a different class from those held by, or to be granted to, the controller or its associate.

Note: This rule does not apply where the acquisition is pursuant to the terms of a subscription of shares in the company by the listed issuer and the controller (or its associate) and the subscription upon such terms has previously been approved by shareholders in accordance with the requirements of this Chapter.

Subscription on favourable terms

- (iii) any transaction between a listed issuer and a person who is not a connected person and the transaction involves a controller (or an associate of a controller) subscribing on specially favourable terms shares in a company in which the listed issuer is a shareholder; or

Note: This rule does not apply where the subscription is pursuant to the terms of a subscription of shares in the company by the listed issuer and the controller (or its associate) and the subscription upon such terms has previously been approved by shareholders in accordance with the requirements of this Chapter.

Subscription of different class of shares

- (iv) any transaction between a listed issuer and a person who is not a connected person and the transaction involves a controller (or an associate of a controller) subscribing shares in a company in which the listed issuer is a shareholder but which are of a different class from those held by the listed issuer.

Note: This rule does not apply where the subscription is pursuant to the terms of a subscription of shares in the company by the listed issuer and the controller (or its associate) and the subscription upon such terms has previously been approved by shareholders in accordance with the requirements of this Chapter.

Financial assistance

- (2) the provision of financial assistance:

- (a) by a listed issuer to:

- (i) a connected person; or
- (ii) a company in which both the listed issuer and a connected person are shareholders and where any connected person(s) of the listed issuer (other than at the level of its subsidiaries) as defined under rules 14A.11(1) to (4) is/are (individually or together) entitled to exercise, or control the exercise of, 10% or more of the voting power at any general meeting of such company; or

Note: An interest of a connected person of the listed issuer (other than at the level of its subsidiaries) in the company which is held through the listed issuer is to be excluded from the 10% referred to in this rule.

- (b) to a listed issuer by;
 - (i) a connected person; or
 - (ii) a company in which both the listed issuer and a connected person are shareholders and where any connected person(s) of the listed issuer (other than at the level of its subsidiaries) as defined under rules 14A.11(1) to (4) is/are (individually or together) entitled to exercise, or control the exercise of, 10% or more of the voting power at any general meeting of such company.

Note: An interest of a connected person of the listed issuer (other than at the level of its subsidiaries) in the company which is held through the listed issuer is to be excluded from the 10% referred to in this rule.

- (3) a listed issuer granting an indemnity or guarantee or providing financial assistance to and/or for the benefit of a connected person or any company falling under rule 14A.13(2)(a)(ii);
- (4) the granting of security over the assets of a listed issuer in respect of any financial assistance made to the listed issuer by a connected person or any company falling under rule 14A.13(2)(b)(ii).

Financial assistance transactions are governed by rules 14A.63 to 14A.66;

Options

- (5) the writing, acceptance, transfer, exercise or non-exercise of an option (as defined in rule 14.72) involving a listed issuer and a connected person. Options are governed by rules 14A.67 to 14A.71; and

Joint ventures

- (6) the entering into of any arrangement or agreement involving the formation of a joint venture entity in any form, such as a partnership or a company, or any other form of joint arrangement by a listed issuer and a connected person (see rule 14A.10(13)(f)). In this case, the size of a listed issuer's financial commitment will be calculated in the manner set out in rule 14.15(2).

Definition of continuing connected transaction

14A.14 Continuing connected transactions are connected transactions involving the provision of goods or services, which are carried out on a continuing or recurring basis and are expected to extend over a period of time. They are usually transactions in the ordinary and usual course of business of the issuer.

14A.15 Continuing connected transactions are governed by rules 14A.33 to 14A.41.

General rules

Categories

14A.16 The categories of connected transactions are:

- (1) connected transactions exempt from the reporting, announcement and independent shareholders' approval requirements (see rule 14A.31);
- (2) connected transactions exempt from the independent shareholders' approval requirements (see rule 14A.32);
- (3) continuing connected transactions exempt from the reporting, announcement and independent shareholders' approval requirements (see rule 14A.33);
- (4) continuing connected transactions exempt from the independent shareholders' approval requirements (see rule 14A.34); and
- (5) connected transactions, including continuing connected transactions, not falling under any of the categories set out in rules 14A.16(1) to (4).

14A.17 Transactions falling under rule 14A.16(5) are subject to the reporting, announcement and independent shareholders' approval requirements of this Chapter.

Independent shareholders' approval

14A.18 The Exchange will require that connected transactions and continuing connected transactions are made conditional on prior approval by the shareholders of the listed issuer in general meeting. The listed issuer must ensure that the following parties abstain from voting at the relevant meeting on resolution(s) approving the relevant transactions:

- (1) any connected person with a material interest in the transaction; and
- (2) any person falling within rules 14A.13(1)(b)(i) to (iv) that has a material interest in the transaction and its associates,

and a statement that such persons will not vote must be included in the relevant circular to shareholders. Pursuant to rule 14A.52, any vote at such meeting must be taken by poll.

14A.19 The listed issuer must comply with the independent shareholders' approval requirements set out in rules 14A.52 to 14A.54 and the contents requirements for the announcement and circular set out in rules 14A.56 and 14A.58 to 14A.60 respectively.

14A.20 The circular for the transaction as required under rule 14A.49 must be despatched to shareholders of the listed issuer at the same time or before the listed issuer gives notice of the general meeting to approve the transaction referred to in the circular.

Independent financial advice

14A.21 In relation to a connected transaction that is subject to independent shareholders' approval under this Chapter, the listed issuer must comply with the requirements set out in rules 13.39(6) and 13.39(7).

14A.22 The separate letter from the independent financial adviser required under rule 13.39(7)(b) must set out:

- (1) the reasons for the opinion;
- (2) the key assumptions made;
- (3) the factors taken into consideration in forming that opinion;
- (4) a statement as to whether the transaction is on normal commercial terms, in the ordinary and usual course of business, fair and reasonable and in the interests of the listed issuer and its shareholders as a whole; and
- (5) advice from the independent financial adviser to the independent board committee and independent shareholders (or, if applicable, to the independent shareholders only) on whether independent shareholders should vote in favour of the transaction.

14A.23 The agreement referred to in rule 14A.04 will be the basis on which the independent financial adviser will give its opinion to independent shareholders.

Methods of calculating the consideration

14A.24 The methods of calculating the consideration as set out in rule 14.15 also apply to connected and continuing connected transactions.

Aggregation of transactions

14A.25 The Exchange will aggregate a series of connected transactions and treat them as if they were one transaction if they were all completed within a 12-month period or are otherwise related. In such cases, the listed issuer must comply with the requirements for the relevant classification of the connected transactions when aggregated. Where a series of acquisitions of assets over a longer period is being aggregated under rule 14.06(6)(b) (i.e. they constitute a reverse takeover), the aggregation period under this rule 14A.25 for such acquisitions shall cover 24 rather than 12 months.

14A.26 Factors which the Exchange may take into account in determining whether connected transactions will be aggregated include whether the transactions:

- (1) are entered into by the listed issuer with the same party or with parties connected or otherwise associated with one another;
- (2) involve the acquisition or disposal of securities or an interest in one particular company or group of companies;
- (3) involve the acquisition or disposal of parts of one asset; or
- (4) together lead to substantial involvement by the listed issuer in a business activity which did not previously form a part of the listed issuer's principal business activities.

14A.27 The Exchange may consider aggregating all continuing connected transactions with a single connected person to determine in which category the aggregated transaction falls.

Exceptions

14A.28 Certain types of connected transactions, described in rule 14A.31, are exempt from all disclosure and independent shareholders' approval requirements. The connected transactions described in rule 14A.32 are not required to be approved by independent shareholders but must in every case be disclosed by way of an announcement published in the newspapers and must be reported on in the listed issuer's next published annual report and accounts.

14A.29 Certain types of continuing connected transactions, described in rule 14A.33, are exempt from all disclosure and independent shareholders' approval requirements. The continuing connected transactions described in rule 14A.34 are not required to be approved by independent shareholders but must in every case be disclosed by way of an announcement published in the newspapers when the listed issuer enters into the transaction. The transaction must also be reported on in the listed issuer's subsequent published annual report and accounts for the financial years during which the listed issuer undertakes the transaction pursuant to the relevant written agreement.

Exchange discretion

14A.30 The Exchange reserves the power to specify that an exemption will not apply to a particular transaction. The Exchange may also require, at its discretion, that any other connected transaction be made conditional on independent shareholders' approval and that the same requirements in rules 14A.18 to 14A.23 will apply.

Connected transactions (other than those involving financial assistance or the granting of options) exempt from the reporting, announcement and independent shareholders' approval requirements

14A.31 The following connected transactions will be exempt from all the reporting, announcement and independent shareholders' approval requirements contained in this Chapter:

Intra-group transactions

- (1) a transaction between a listed issuer and a non wholly-owned subsidiary or between its non wholly-owned subsidiaries where no connected person(s) of the listed issuer (other than at the level of its subsidiaries) as defined under rules 14A.11(1) to (4), is/are (individually or together) entitled to exercise, or control the exercise of, 10% or more of the voting power at any general meeting of any of the subsidiaries concerned (see also rules 14A.11(5) and (6));

Note: An interest of a connected person of the listed issuer (other than at the level of its subsidiaries) in the subsidiary which is held through the listed issuer is to be excluded from the 10% referred to in this rule.

De minimis transactions

- (2) a connected transaction on normal commercial terms where :
 - (a) each of the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio) is less than 0.1%;
 - or

- (b) each of the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio) is equal to or more than 0.1% but less than 2.5% and the total consideration is less than HK\$1,000,000;

Note: This exemption does not apply to the issue of new securities by a listed issuer to a connected person, which is governed by rule 14A.31(3).

Issue of new securities

- (3) where a listed issuer issues new securities to a connected person and:
 - (a) the connected person receives a pro rata entitlement to securities in its capacity as shareholder; or
 - (b) securities are issued under a share option scheme which complies with Chapter 17 or securities that are issued under a share option scheme in existence before the securities of the listed issuer first commenced dealing on the Exchange for which approval for listing was granted at the time such dealing first commenced; or
 - (c) the connected person is acting as underwriter or sub-underwriter of an issue of securities by the listed issuer, provided that rules 7.21(2) and 7.26A(2) have been complied with; or

Notes: 1 The entity whose issue of securities is being underwritten or sub-underwritten by a connected person must make full disclosure of the terms and conditions of the underwriting in the listing document.

2 Excess application and the taking up of pro rata entitlements in respect of a rights issue or open offer are not connected transactions. Rules 7.21(1) and 7.26A(1) provide that, where securities not subscribed by allottees are to be disposed of by means of excess application forms, such securities must be available for subscription by all shareholders and allocated on a fair basis. An intention to so offer such securities must be fully disclosed in the rights issue or open offer announcement, listing document and any circular.

3 If a listed issuer which is a holding company acts as underwriter or sub-underwriter of an issue of securities by its subsidiary that is also a listed issuer, such transaction is also connected for the listed holding company if the listed subsidiary is a connected person under rules 14A.11(5) or 14A.11(6). In this case, the listed issuer which is a holding company is subject to connected transaction requirements unless exempted under rules 14A.31(1) or 14A.31(2). The exemption under this rule is applicable to the listed subsidiary but not the listed holding company.

- (d) securities are issued to a connected person within 14 days after such connected person has executed an agreement to reduce its holding in that class of securities by placing securities to a third person who is not its associate. The securities must be issued at a price not less than the placing price. The placing price may be adjusted for the expenses of the placing.

The number of securities issued to the connected person must not exceed the number of securities placed by it;

Note: Under rule 13.28, the listed issuer is required to make an announcement containing details of the placing and subscription of shares by the connected person.

Stock Exchange dealings

- (4) a transaction falling within rule 14A.13(1)(b)(i), which comprises a dealing in securities listed on the Exchange or a recognised stock exchange by a listed issuer in the ordinary and usual course of its business. If the transaction is not carried out on the Exchange or a recognised stock exchange, this exemption will still apply if no consideration passes to or from a connected person. This exemption will not apply if the purpose is to confer a direct or indirect benefit upon a controller(s) or associate of a controller who is also a substantial shareholder in the relevant company;

Purchase of own securities

- (5) any purchase by a listed issuer of its own securities from a connected person on the Exchange or a recognised stock exchange or under a general offer made in accordance with the Code on Share Repurchases. Where the purchase is on the Exchange or a recognised stock exchange, this exemption will not apply if the connected person knowingly sells its securities to the listed issuer;

Directors' service contracts

- (6) the entering into of a service contract by a director of the listed issuer with the listed issuer;

Note: A director's service contract to which rule 13.68 applies is subject to independent shareholders' approval under that provision.

Consumer goods or consumer services

- (7) the acquisition as consumer or realisation in the ordinary and usual course of business of consumer goods or consumer services by a listed issuer from or to a connected person of the listed issuer on normal commercial terms. Such goods and services:-

- (a) must be of a type ordinarily supplied for private use or consumption;
- (b) must be for the acquirer's own consumption or use, and not be processed into products of the acquirer or for resale or otherwise for the purpose of or in connection with any business or contemplated business of the acquirer (whether for consideration or otherwise);

Note: Examples include utilities provided by a listed issuer to a connected person, meals consumed by a connected person at a restaurant owned by the listed issuer and the acquisition of groceries for its own use by a connected person from a listed issuer involved in the retailing of groceries.

- (c) must be consumed or used by the acquirer in the same state as when they were acquired;

- (d) must be of a total consideration or value that is or represents less than 1% of the total revenue or total purchases, as the case may be, of the listed issuer as shown in its latest published audited accounts or, where consolidated accounts have been prepared, its latest published audited consolidated accounts; and
- (e) the transactions concerned must be on terms no more favourable to the connected person than those available to independent third parties or no less favourable to the listed issuer than those available from independent third parties (as the case may be); and

Note: Listed issuers are encouraged to consult the Exchange at an early stage to determine whether a transaction falls within the scope of this rule.

Sharing of administrative services

- (8) the sharing of administrative services between a listed issuer and a connected person on a cost basis. The cost of the services must be identifiable and allocated to the parties involved on a fair and equitable basis. Examples include company secretarial services, legal services and staff training services.

Connected transactions (other than those involving financial assistance or the granting of options) exempt from the independent shareholders' approval requirements

14A.32 A connected transaction on normal commercial terms where:

- (1) each of the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio) is less than 2.5%; or
- (2) each of the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio) is equal to or more than 2.5% but less than 25% and the total consideration is less than HK\$10,000,000

is only subject to the reporting and announcement requirements set out in rules 14A.45 to 14A.47 and is exempt from the independent shareholders' approval requirements of this Chapter.

Note: This exemption does not apply to the issue of new securities by a listed issuer to a connected person, which is governed by rule 14A.31(3).

**Continuing connected transactions
exempt from the reporting, announcement and
independent shareholders' approval requirements**

14A.33 The following continuing connected transactions will be exempt from the reporting, announcement and independent shareholders' approval requirements of this Chapter:

Consumer goods or consumer services

- (1) the provision of consumer goods or consumer services as set out in rule 14A.31(7);

Sharing of administrative services

- (2) the sharing of administrative services as set out in rule 14A.31(8); and

De minimis transactions

- (3) a continuing connected transaction on normal commercial terms where:
- (a) each of the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio) is on an annual basis less than 0.1%; or
 - (b) each of the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio) is on an annual basis equal to or more than 0.1% but less than 2.5% and the annual consideration is less than HK\$1,000,000.

**Continuing connected transactions
exempt from the independent shareholders' approval requirements**

14A.34 A continuing connected transaction on normal commercial terms where:

- (1) each of the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio) is on an annual basis less than 2.5%; or
- (2) each of the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio) is on an annual basis equal to or more than 2.5% but less than 25% and the annual consideration is less than HK\$10,000,000

is only subject to the reporting and announcement requirements set out in rules 14A.45 to 14A.47 and is exempt from the independent shareholders' approval requirements of this Chapter.

Non-exempt continuing connected transactions

14A.35 When an issuer enters into a continuing connected transaction not falling under rule 14A.33, it must:

- (1) in respect of each connected transaction, enter into written agreement(s) with the connected person. The agreement must set out the basis of the calculation of the payments to be made. The period for the agreement must be fixed and reflect normal commercial terms and, except in special circumstances, must not exceed 3 years. Special circumstances are limited to cases where the nature of the transaction requires the contract to be of a duration longer than 3 years. In such cases, the independent financial adviser will need to explain why a longer period for the agreement is required and to confirm that it is normal business practice for contracts of this type to be of such duration;

Note: Examples of bases of calculation of the payments to be made include the sharing of costs, price per unit for on-going purchases, annual rental for a lease, and percentage of total construction cost for a management fee.

- (2) in respect of each connected transaction, set a maximum aggregate annual value ("cap"), the basis of which must be disclosed. This annual cap must be expressed in terms of monetary value rather than a percentage of the issuer's annual revenue as derived from its latest published audited accounts or, where consolidated accounts have been prepared, its latest published audited

consolidated accounts. The cap must be determined by reference to previous transactions and figures which are readily ascertainable from published information of the issuer. If there are no previous transactions, the cap must be made based on reasonable assumptions, details of which must be disclosed;

Note: Reference to annual revenue and other bases may help to determine the monetary value of the cap.

- (3) comply with the reporting and announcement requirements described in rules 14A.45 to 14A.47; and
- (4) comply with the independent shareholders' approval requirements described in rule 14A.48 for transactions not falling under rule 14A.34.

14A.36 The listed issuer must re-comply with rules 14A.35(3) and (4) in the following circumstances:-

- (1) if the cap in rule 14A.35(2) is exceeded; or
- (2) when the relevant agreement is renewed or there is a material change to the terms of the agreement.

Annual review of continuing connected transactions

14A.37 Each year the independent non-executive directors of the listed issuer must review the continuing connected transactions and confirm in the annual report and accounts that the transactions have been entered into:

- (1) in the ordinary and usual course of business of the listed issuer;
- (2) either on normal commercial terms or, if there are not sufficient comparable transactions to judge whether they are on normal commercial terms, on terms no less favourable to the listed issuer than terms available to or from (as appropriate) independent third parties; and
- (3) in accordance with the relevant agreement governing them on terms that are fair and reasonable and in the interests of the shareholders of the listed issuer as a whole.

14A.38 Each year the auditors must provide a letter to the listed issuer's board of directors (with a copy provided to the Exchange at least 10 business days prior to the bulk printing of the listed issuer's annual report), confirming that the continuing connected transactions:

- (1) have received the approval of the listed issuer's board of directors;
- (2) are in accordance with the pricing policies of the listed issuer if the transactions involve provision of goods or services by the listed issuer;
- (3) have been entered into in accordance with the relevant agreement governing the transactions; and
- (4) have not exceeded the cap disclosed in previous announcement(s).

- 14A.39 The listed issuer shall allow, and shall procure that the counterparty to the continuing connected transactions shall allow, the auditors sufficient access to their records for the purpose of reporting on the transactions as set out in this rule. The listed issuer's board of directors must state in the annual report whether its auditors have confirmed the matters stated in rule 14A.38.
- 14A.40 A listed issuer shall promptly notify the Exchange and publish an announcement in the newspapers if it knows or has reason to believe that the independent non-executive directors and/or the auditors will not be able to confirm the matters set out in rules 14A.37 and/or 14A.38 respectively. The listed issuer may have to re-comply with rules 14A.35(3) and (4) and any other conditions the Exchange considers appropriate.
- 14A.41 Where a listed issuer has entered into an agreement involving continuing transactions and such transactions subsequently become continuing connected transactions for whatever reason (e.g. due to a party becoming a director of the listed issuer), the listed issuer must, immediately upon it becoming aware of this fact, comply with all applicable reporting and disclosure requirements of this Chapter in respect of all such continuing connected transactions. Upon any variation or renewal of the agreement, the listed issuer must comply in full with all applicable reporting, disclosure and independent shareholders' approval requirements of this Chapter in respect of all continuing connected transactions effected after such variation or renewal.

Waivers

Exchange discretion

- 14A.42 The Exchange may consider granting waivers from all or any of the requirements of this Chapter. In particular, the Exchange will consider granting waivers for the following transactions:
- (1) a transaction which is connected only because of the interest of a non-executive director of the listed issuer where the Exchange is satisfied that:
 - (a) such director does not control the listed issuer; and
 - (b) his principal business interest is not the listed issuer.

Where a waiver is given from the requirement to obtain independent shareholders' approval pursuant to this rule 14A.42(1), the Exchange may require a letter from the listed issuer's auditor or a financial adviser acceptable to the Exchange stating that in their opinion the transaction is fair and reasonable so far as the shareholders of the listed issuer are concerned. The Exchange will normally also require that:

 - (i) an announcement containing brief details of the transaction be published in the newspapers as soon as possible thereafter; and
 - (ii) details of the transaction be included in the listed issuer's next published annual report and accounts;
 - (2) where the listed issuer guarantees (or gives an indemnity in respect of) the obligations of (i) a non wholly-owned subsidiary described in rule 14A.11(5) or any of its subsidiaries described in rule 14A.11(6) or (ii) a company falling under rule 14A.13(2)(a)(ii), to a third party creditor and the guarantee or indemnity is joint and several, if:

- (a) the guarantee is required in connection with a government or public sector contract awarded by tender;
 - (b) each of the shareholders of the non wholly-owned subsidiary or company has given a similar joint and several guarantee or indemnity to the third party; and
 - (c) each of the other shareholders of the non wholly-owned subsidiary or company has agreed to indemnify the listed issuer for a percentage of the liability guaranteed or indemnified at least in proportion to its percentage equity interest in the subsidiary or company and the Exchange is satisfied that such shareholder indemnity is of sufficient substance; or
- (3) upon an application by a new applicant, specific continuing connected transactions. Such waivers will be from the announcement and independent shareholders' approval requirements of this Chapter. General waivers will not be granted. The applicant's sponsor is required to state in the listing document whether the continuing connected transactions for which the waivers are sought are in the ordinary and usual course of business of the listed issuer, on normal commercial terms, are fair and reasonable and in the interests of the shareholders as a whole. In addition, the issuer is required to comply with rules 14A.35(1), 14A.35(2), 14A.36, 14A.37, 14A.38, 14A.39 and 14A.40.

Shareholders' meeting waiver

14A.43 Where independent shareholders' approval of a connected transaction is required, such approval shall be given by a majority vote at a general meeting of the shareholders of the listed issuer unless the following conditions are met, in which case a written independent shareholders' approval may be accepted in lieu of holding a general meeting: —

- (1) no shareholder of the listed issuer is required to abstain from voting if the listed issuer were to convene a general meeting for the approval of the connected transaction; and
- (2) the written independent shareholders' approval has been obtained from a shareholder or closely allied group of shareholders who (together) hold more than 50% in nominal value of the securities giving the right to attend and vote at that general meeting to approve the connected transaction.

Notes: 1 *The Exchange will take into account the factors set out in rule 14.45 in determining whether a group of shareholders constitutes a "closely allied group of shareholders".*

2 *Where a listed issuer discloses price sensitive information to any shareholder in confidence to solicit the written independent shareholders' approval, the listed issuer must be satisfied that such shareholder is aware that he must not deal in the listed issuer's securities before such information has been made available to the public.*

Waiver conditions

14A.44 In granting any waiver, the Exchange may impose conditions whenever it considers appropriate.

Reporting requirements

14A.45 The following details of the connected transaction must be included in the listed issuer's next published annual report and accounts:

- (1) the transaction date;
- (2) the parties to the transaction and a description of their connected relationship;
- (3) a brief description of the transaction and its purpose;
- (4) the total consideration and terms (including, where relevant, interest rates, length of repayment and security); and
- (5) the nature and extent of the connected person's interest in the transaction.

14A.46 An issuer which has entered into a continuing connected transaction not falling under rule 14A.33, must disclose the information set out in rule 14A.45 in its subsequent published annual report and accounts for the financial years during which the issuer undertakes the transaction under the written agreement entered into pursuant to rule 14A.35(1).

Announcement requirements

14A.47 Issuers proposing to enter into a connected transaction or a continuing connected transaction which is subject to announcement requirements must:—

- (1) notify the Exchange as soon as possible after the terms of the transaction have been agreed;

Note: Under rule 13.09, a listed issuer's notification obligations in respect of information expected to be price-sensitive arise as soon as that information is the subject of a decision.

- (2) send to the Exchange a draft announcement. Once the announcement has been amended to take account of the Exchange's comments, the listed issuer must cause such announcement to be published in the newspapers on the next business day; and

Notes: 1 Pursuant to rule 13.54(2), the listed issuer must forward to the Exchange 7 copies of such announcement as cleared by the Exchange at the same time as it is issued.

2 Where the connected transaction is also a share transaction, major transaction, very substantial disposal, very substantial acquisition or reverse takeover, rule 14.37 (requirement for short suspension of dealings) also applies where the required announcement has not been published before trading begins on the next business day.

- (3) comply with rules 14A.45 or 14A.46 (the reporting requirements).

Independent shareholders' approval requirements

14A.48 Listed issuers proposing to enter into a connected transaction or a continuing connected transaction which is subject to independent shareholders' approval must:

- (1) comply with rules 14A.45 or 14A.46 (the reporting requirements) and 14A.47 (the announcement requirements); and
- (2) comply with the requirements set out in rules 14A.49 to 14A.54 (the circular and independent shareholders' approval requirements).

Shareholders' circular

14A.49 The listed issuer must also send a circular, which complies with rules 14A.58 to 14A.62, to the shareholders and arrange for its publication in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 2 of the Exchange Listing Rules within 21 days after publication of the announcement, unless the Exchange directs otherwise. A listed issuer shall despatch to its shareholders any revised or supplementary circular and/or provide any material information that has come to the attention of the directors after the issue of the circular (by way of announcement published in the newspapers) on the transaction to be considered at a general meeting not less than 14 days before the date of the relevant general meeting. The meeting must be adjourned before considering the relevant resolution to ensure compliance with the 14-day period requirement under this rule by the chairman or, if that is not permitted by the issuer's constitutional documents, by resolution to that effect (see also rule 13.41).

Note: The listed issuer must assess the scale of revisions or updating required and materiality of the new information, revisions or updating required that has come to its attention after publication of the circular, when deciding whether to issue a revised or supplementary circular or publish an announcement in the newspapers. Where the revisions or updating required are significant, the listed issuer must consider carefully whether it would be better to publish a revised or supplementary circular rather than provide particulars of the changes in an announcement. The listed issuer should not overwhelm or confuse investors with lengthy announcements describing changes to information contained in the original circular.

14A.50 Drafts of the circular, in anticipated final form, must be submitted to the Exchange for review as soon as practicable after publication of the announcement. The listed issuer may not issue the circular until the Exchange confirms that it has no further comments.

14A.51 The circular must (subject to rule 14.87) be in English and Chinese.

Independent shareholders' approval

14A.52 The transaction and, in the case of a continuing connected transaction, the cap, must be made conditional on approval by independent shareholders at the time when the listed issuer enters into the transaction. Any vote taken at a meeting held to seek approval of a connected transaction or a continuing connected transaction or associated cap must be taken by poll. The listed issuer shall announce the results of the poll in the manner prescribed under rule 13.39(5).

14A.53 The Exchange will consider waiving the requirement to hold a shareholders' meeting and permitting independent shareholders' approval to be given in writing in the circumstances set out in rule 14A.43.

14A.54 The Exchange will require any connected person with a material interest in a proposed transaction, and any shareholder with a material interest in such transaction and its associate(s), to abstain from voting at the relevant general meeting on the relevant resolution(s).

Board minutes

14A.55 For a connected transaction not falling under rule 14A.31 or a continuing connected transaction not falling under rule 14A.33, listed issuers must provide the Exchange with a copy of the minutes of the board meeting approving the transaction and, in the case of a continuing connected transaction, the cap as soon as possible after the meeting. The minutes must clearly reflect:

- (1) whether or not the directors consider the transaction to be on normal commercial terms and in the ordinary and usual course of business of the listed issuer;
- (2) the views of the independent non-executive directors; and
- (3) whether any directors have a material interest in the transaction and have abstained from voting at the board meeting.

Contents of announcements

14A.56 The announcement for connected transactions and continuing connected transactions must contain at least the following:

- (1) the information set out in rules 14.58 to 14.60 (contents of announcements – share transaction, discloseable transaction, major transaction, very substantial disposal, very substantial acquisition and reverse takeover) and the views of the independent non-executive directors on the transaction if no independent shareholders' approval is required for the transaction;
- (2) a description of the connected relationship between the parties to the transaction and the nature and extent of the connected person's interest in the transaction;
- (3) a statement that the transaction is subject to independent shareholders' approval, if applicable;
- (4) in the case of continuing connected transactions, the amount of the cap for the purpose of rule 14A.35(2);
- (5) where the transaction involves the purchase of assets by the listed issuer, the original purchase cost of the asset to the connected person;
- (6) where appropriate, the original acquisition cost of the assets which will be sold to connected persons where the listed issuer has held such assets for a period of 12 months or less;
- (7) where the transaction is a connected transaction approved or to be approved by way of written independent shareholders' approval from a shareholder or a closely allied group of shareholders pursuant to rule 14A.43, details of the shareholder or the closely allied group of shareholders (as the case may be), including the name of the shareholder(s), the number of securities held by each such shareholder and the relationship between the shareholders; and

- (8) where applicable, the information required in rule 14.62 if the announcement contains a profit forecast in respect of the listed issuer or a company which is, or is proposed to become, one of its subsidiaries.

Guaranteed profits or net tangible assets

14A.57 Where a listed issuer acquires a company or business from a connected person and the profits or net tangible assets or other matters regarding the financial performance of that company or business are guaranteed by the connected person, the listed issuer must (unless expressly exempted by the Exchange) publish an announcement in the newspapers if the profits or net tangible assets or other matters regarding the financial performance are less than the amount guaranteed. Any such announcement must include details of:

- (1) the shortfall and the adjustment, if any, of the consideration for the transaction;
- (2) whether the connected person has fulfilled its obligations under the guarantee;
- (3) whether or not the listed issuer has exercised any option to sell the company or business back to the connected person or other rights it held under the terms of the guarantee, and the reasons for its decision; and
- (4) the opinion of the independent non-executive directors as to whether:
 - (a) the connected person has fulfilled its obligations; and
 - (b) the decision to exercise or not to exercise any option to sell the company or business back to the connected person or other rights under the guarantee is fair and reasonable and in the interests of the shareholders as a whole.

Note: An option under the terms of the guarantee is also subject to the requirements of rules 14A.67 to 14A.71.

Contents of circular

General principles

14A.58 All circulars sent by a listed issuer to holders of its listed securities must:

- (1) provide a clear and adequate explanation of its subject matter and demonstrate the advantages and disadvantages of the transaction for the listed issuer;
- (2) where practicable, include an arithmetical evaluation in the circular; and
- (3) where independent shareholders' approval is required, contain:
 - (a) all information necessary to allow the holders of securities to make a properly informed decision;
 - (b) a heading drawing attention to the importance of the document and advising holders of securities, who are in any doubt as to what action to take to consult appropriate independent advisers;
 - (c) a separate letter from the independent board committee, if applicable (see rule 14A.21); and

- (d) a separate letter from the independent financial adviser (see rule 14A.22).

Note: If all the independent non-executive directors have a material interest in the relevant transactions or arrangements, no independent board committee can be formed. In that event, the independent financial adviser shall make its recommendation to the independent shareholders only in its letter set out in the circular to shareholders.

Specific disclosure in circular

14A.59 The circular must contain at least:

- (1) a prominent and legible disclaimer on the front cover in the form set out in rule 14.88;
- (2) full details of the transaction including:
 - (a) the date of the transaction and the identity and activities of the parties to the transaction including the identity and activities of the ultimate beneficial owner of the disposing or acquiring party;
 - (b) a general description of the nature and the value (being the book value and valuation, if any) of any assets concerned. If any of the assets are securities, the circular must include the name of the company in which the shares are or were held and a general description of its activities;
 - (c) a description of the terms and conditions of the consideration and a statement of the total consideration, explaining how this is being or is to be satisfied;
 - (d) the name of the connected person concerned;
 - (e) a statement of the nature of the connected person's relationship with any controller and the name and office held by that controller; and
 - (f) the nature and extent of the interest of the connected person in the transaction;
- (3) the information regarding the listed issuer specified in the following paragraphs of Appendix 1, Part B:
 - 1 — name
 - 2 — directors' responsibility
 - 5 — expert statements
 - 8A — procedures for demanding a poll by shareholders
 - 10 — securities to be issued (if applicable)
 - 29(2) — requirements if there is a profit forecast (see rule 14.61 for the definition of "profit forecast")
 - 32 — no material adverse change
 - 39 — directors' service contracts
 - 40 — directors' interests in assets
 - 43(2)(a) & (c) — documents on display
- (4) information regarding interests of directors and chief executive in the listed issuer required under paragraphs 34 and 38 of Appendix 1, Part B, and Practice Note 5;

- (5) where independent shareholders' approval is required, a statement that any connected person with a material interest in the transaction, and any shareholder with a material interest in the transaction and its associates, will not vote and the information required under rule 2.17;
- (6) an independent valuation if the primary significance of the asset being acquired or disposed of is its capital value (for example, real property);
- (7) where independent shareholders' approval is required, a letter from the independent board committee as required under rule 14A.58(3)(c) and its recommendation to the independent shareholders as required under rule 14A.21;
- (8) a copy of the independent financial adviser's opinion letter referred to in rule 14A.22;
- (9) in the case of a continuing connected transaction, details of the cap for the purpose of rule 14A.35(2) and an explanation of how and the basis upon which it was calculated;
- (10) where a listed issuer acquires a company or business from a connected person who provides a guarantee of the profits or net tangible assets or other matters regarding the financial performance of that company or business,
 - (a) a statement that:-
 - (i) the listed issuer will publish an announcement in the newspapers if the profits or net tangible assets or other matters regarding the financial performance are less than the amount guaranteed and will include details in its next published annual report and accounts; and
 - (ii) the independent non-executive directors of the listed issuer will provide an opinion in the listed issuer's next published annual report and accounts as to whether the connected person has fulfilled its obligations under the guarantee; and
 - (b) details of any option granted to the listed issuer to sell the company or business back to the connected person and/or other rights granted to the listed issuer;

Note: An option under the terms of the guarantee is also subject to the requirements of rules 14A.67 to 14A.71.
- (11) information as to the competing interests (if any) of each of the directors of the listed issuer and his/her respective associates (as would be required to be disclosed under rule 8.10 if each of them were a controlling shareholder);
- (12) where appropriate, details of any guarantee and/or other security given and required as part of the transaction;
- (13) reasons for entering into the transaction and the benefits which are expected to accrue to the listed issuer as a result of the transaction;
- (14) where the transaction involves the purchase of assets by the listed issuer, the original purchase cost of the asset to the connected person;

- (15) where appropriate, the original acquisition cost of the assets which will be sold to connected persons where the listed issuer has held such assets for a period of 12 months or less;
- (16) if the transaction involves a disposal of an interest in a subsidiary by a listed issuer, a declaration as to whether the subsidiary will continue to be a subsidiary of the listed issuer following the transaction;
- (17) (a) where appropriate, a business valuation report on a business or company being acquired or disposed of and/or traffic study report in respect of any infrastructure project or infrastructure or project company. Such report(s) must clearly set out:
 - (i) all fundamental underlying assumptions including discount rate or growth rate used; and
 - (ii) a sensitivity analysis based on the various discount rates and growth rates;
- (b) where any business valuation is based on a profit forecast, the accounting policies and calculations for the underlying forecasts must be examined and reported on by the auditors or reporting accountants. Any financial adviser mentioned in the circular must also report on the underlying forecasts; and
- (18) any additional information requested by the Exchange.

**Additional information to be included in circular
where connected transaction is also a Chapter 14 transaction**

- 14A.60 Where a connected transaction is also a share transaction, discloseable transaction, major transaction, very substantial disposal, very substantial acquisition or reverse takeover, the circular must also contain the information required by Chapter 14 for that type of transaction.
- 14A.61 Where a notice of meeting to approve any proposed transaction has been sent to shareholders and subsequently the transaction becomes a connected transaction, the listed issuer shall publish a further announcement in the newspapers. The listed issuer must ensure that the following parties abstain from voting at that meeting on resolution(s) approving the transaction:
- (1) any connected person with a material interest in the transaction; and
 - (2) any shareholder with a material interest in the transaction and its associates.
- 14A.62 The listed issuer shall also send a supplementary circular to its shareholders. Both the announcement and the circular shall state that the transaction has become a connected transaction and identify the parties that are required to abstain from voting. The listed issuer must also include in the circular the opinion of the independent board committee and an independent financial adviser (in the form of a separate letter) on the transaction and the other information mentioned in rules 14A.58 and 14A.59.

Financial assistance

General

14A.63 Any transaction involving a connected person, or any company falling under rule 14A.13(2)(a)(ii) or 14A.13(2)(b)(ii), and financial assistance which is not exempted under rules 14A.65 or 14A.66 is subject to the reporting, announcement and independent shareholders' approval requirements of this Chapter.

Treatment of attributable interest in calculating proportionate financial assistance

14A.64 In calculating proportionate financial assistance to any company falling under rule 14A.13(2)(a)(ii), the Exchange will not consider the listed issuer's attributable interest in the company receiving the financial assistance. For example, where a principal purpose or effect of the transaction is for the granting by a non wholly-owned subsidiary of the listed issuer of financial assistance on normal commercial terms (or better to the listed issuer) to a company falling under rule 14A.13(2)(a)(ii), the Exchange will calculate the proportionate financial assistance from the listed issuer's point of view by reference to the equity interest of the group company which directly holds the interest in the company receiving the financial assistance.

Exempt from reporting, announcement and independent shareholders' approval requirements

14A.65 The following connected transactions are exempt from the reporting, announcement and independent shareholders' approval requirements of this Chapter:-

- (1) financial assistance provided by a listed issuer in its ordinary and usual course of business for the benefit of a connected person, or any company falling under rule 14A.13(2)(a)(ii), on normal commercial terms (or better to the listed issuer);
- (2) financial assistance provided by a listed issuer for the benefit of a connected person:
 - (a) in the ordinary and usual course of business of the listed issuer but not on normal commercial terms (or better to the listed issuer); or
 - (b) not in the ordinary and usual course of business but on normal commercial terms (or better to the listed issuer),

and where (i) each of the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio) is less than 0.1% or (ii) each of the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio) is equal to or more than 0.1% but less than 2.5% and the total value of the assistance plus any preferential benefit to the connected person is less than HK\$1,000,000;

- (3) financial assistance provided by a listed issuer for the benefit of any company falling under rule 14A.13(2)(a)(ii):
 - (a) in the ordinary and usual course of business of the listed issuer but not on normal commercial terms and where (i) each of the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio) is less than 0.1% or (ii) each of the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio) is equal to or more than 0.1% but less than 2.5% and the total value of the assistance plus any preferential benefit to the relevant company is less than HK\$1,000,000; or

- (b) not in the ordinary and usual course of business but on normal commercial terms (or better to the listed issuer), provided that:
 - (i) the assistance being provided is in proportion to the listed issuer's equity interest in the company. In addition, any guarantees given by the listed issuer must be on a several (and not a joint and several) basis; or
 - (ii) the assistance being provided is not in proportion to the listed issuer's equity interest in the company or the guarantees given by the listed issuer are not on a several basis (whether on a joint and several basis, or otherwise), and (A) each of the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio) is less than 0.1% or (B) each of the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio) is equal to or more than 0.1% but less than 2.5% and the total value of the assistance plus any preferential benefit to the relevant company is less than HK\$1,000,000; or
- (4) financial assistance provided by a connected person, or any company falling under rule 14A.13(2)(b)(ii), for the benefit of a listed issuer on normal commercial terms (or better to the listed issuer) where no security over the assets of the listed issuer is granted in respect of the financial assistance.

Exempt from independent shareholders' approval requirements

14A.66 The following connected transactions are only subject to the reporting and announcement requirements set out in rules 14A.45 and 14A.46 and rule 14A.47 respectively:

- (1) financial assistance provided by the listed issuer in the ordinary and usual course of business for the benefit of a connected person, or any company falling under rule 14A.13(2)(a)(ii), not on normal commercial terms (or better to the listed issuer), where (i) each of the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio) is less than 2.5% or (ii) each of the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio) is equal to or more than 2.5% but less than 25% and the total value of the assistance plus any preferential benefit to the connected person or the relevant company is less than HK\$10,000,000; or
- (2) financial assistance provided by the listed issuer not in the ordinary and usual course of business but on normal commercial terms (or better to the listed issuer) for the benefit of:
 - (a) a connected person; or
 - (b) any company falling under rule 14A.13(2)(a)(ii) if the assistance being provided is not in proportion to the listed issuer's equity interest in the relevant company or any guarantees given by the listed issuer are not on a several basis,

and (i) each of the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio) is less than 2.5% or (ii) each of the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio) is equal to or more than 2.5% but less than 25% and the total value of the assistance plus any preferential benefit to the connected person or the relevant company is less than HK\$10,000,000.

Options

14A.67 The definitions set out in rule 14.72 also apply to this Chapter.

14A.68 The grant, acquisition, transfer, or exercise of an option involving a listed issuer and its connected person will be treated as a connected transaction and classified by reference to the percentage ratios (other than the profits ratio). The termination of an option by a listed issuer will be treated as a transaction and classified by reference to the percentage ratio (other than the profits ratio), unless the termination is in accordance with the terms of the original agreement entered into by the listed issuer and does not involve payment of any amounts by way of penalty, damages or other compensation. The de minimis ratios under rules 14A.31(2) and 14A.32 apply to such connected transactions. The listed issuer must comply with the connected transaction requirements of the relevant classification and other specific requirements of rules 14A.69 to 14A.71.

14A.69 The following apply to an option involving a listed issuer and a connected person, the exercise of which is not at the listed issuer's discretion:

- (1) on the grant of the option, the transaction will be classified as if the option had been exercised. For the purpose of the percentage ratios, the consideration includes the premium and the exercise price of the option;
- (2) on the exercise or transfer of such option, such exercise or transfer must be announced by means of an announcement which is published in the newspapers as soon as reasonably practicable if the grant of the option has previously been announced pursuant to the requirements of this Chapter; and
- (3) if the grant of the option has previously been announced pursuant to the requirements of this Chapter, the listed issuer must as soon as reasonably practicable upon:
 - (a) the expiry of the option;
 - (b) the option holder notifying the grantor that the option will not be exercised; or
 - (c) the transfer by the option holder of the option to a third party

(whichever is the earliest) announce such fact by means of an announcement which is published in the newspapers.

14A.70 The following apply to an option involving a listed issuer and a connected person, the exercise of which is at the listed issuer's discretion:

- (1) on the acquisition by, or grant of the option to, the listed issuer, only the premium will be taken into consideration for the purpose of classification of the transaction. Where the premium represents 10% or more of the sum of the premium and the exercise price, the value of the underlying assets, the revenue attributable to such assets and the sum of the premium and the exercise price will be used for the purpose of the percentage ratios;
- (2) on the exercise of such option by the listed issuer, the exercise price, the value of the underlying assets and the revenue attributable to such assets will be used for the purpose of the percentage ratios. Where an option is exercised in stages, the

Exchange may at any stage require the listed issuer to aggregate each partial exercise of the option and treat them as if they were one transaction; and

- (3) non-exercise of the option or transfer of the option to a third party will be treated as if the option was exercised. The exercise price, the value of the underlying assets, the revenue attributable to such assets and (if applicable) the premium for transferring the option will be used for the purpose of the percentage ratios.

14A.71 For the purpose of rules 14A.69(1) and 14A.70(1), where, on the grant of the option, the actual monetary value of the premium, the exercise price, the value of the underlying assets and the revenue attributable to such assets have not been determined, the listed issuer must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Exchange the highest possible monetary value, which will then be used for the purpose of classification of the transaction. Failure to do so may result in the transaction being subject to all connected transaction requirements under this Chapter. The listed issuer must inform the Exchange of the actual monetary value of each of the premium, the exercise price, the value of the underlying assets and the revenue attributable to such assets as soon as it has been determined. If the actual monetary value results in the transaction falling within a higher classification of the transaction as a result, the listed issuer must publish an announcement in the newspapers stating this fact as soon as reasonably practicable and comply with the additional requirements of such higher classification.