

Payment System Report (Q4 2023)

According to payment statistics in Q4 2023¹, the payment systems functioned smoothly across the country. Statistics including the number of bank accounts, the volume of non-cash payments and the transaction volume in payment systems maintained growth in general.

I. Bank Accounts

The number of bank accounts edged up. At end-Q4, a total of 14.465 billion bank accounts² had been opened nationwide, increasing by 0.64 percent quarter on quarter (q-o-q).

The number of bank accounts opened by institutions edged up. At end-Q4, bank accounts opened by institutions nationwide registered 102 million, increasing by 2.15 percent q-o-q. Specifically, 71.9523 million were basic deposit accounts, 25.1867 million were general deposit accounts, 4.9928 million were special deposit accounts, and 204,800 were temporary deposit accounts, accounting for 70.31 percent, 24.61 percent, 4.88 percent and 0.20 percent, respectively, of the total number of bank accounts held by institutions.

The number of individual bank accounts witnessed a small growth. At end-Q4, bank accounts opened by individuals totaled 14.363 billion nationwide, increasing by 0.63 percent q-o-q.

II. Non-cash Payment Instruments

¹ Since 2015, the payment system has disclosed payment transaction data according to the financial industry standards of *Statistical Indicators of Payment Operations*.

² Bank accounts refer to RMB bank settlement accounts.

In Q4, a total of 152.253 billion non-cash payment transactions³ with an amount of RMB1338.75 trillion were processed by banks across the country, increasing by 19.11 percent and 10.27 percent year on year (y-o-y), respectively.

(I) Bank Cards

The number of bank cards edged up. At end-Q4, the number of bankcards opened increased by 0.63 percent q-o-q to 9.787 billion nationwide. Specifically, debit cards increased by 0.82 percent q-o-q to 9.02 billion; credit cards and debit-credit integrated cards decreased by 1.51 percent q-o-q to 767 million. The number of bankcards per capita⁴ was 6.93, among which the per capita number of credit cards and debit-credit integrated cards recorded 0.54. At end-Q4, the ATM terminals⁵ registered 845,500, down 1531 from end-Q3, and the number of ATMs per 10,000 persons recorded 5.99, decreasing by 0.18 q-o-q.

Bankcard transactions increased. In Q4, a total of 149.233 billion bankcard transactions⁶ with an amount of RMB259.64 trillion were processed across the country, increasing by 19.33 percent and 5.25 percent y-o-y, respectively. Specifically, cash deposits recorded 1.22 billion, or RMB8.60 trillion; cash withdrawals recorded 1.471 billion, or RMB7.92 trillion; transfers recorded 56.315 billion, or RMB207.57 trillion; and consumer payments recorded

³ Non-cash payment transactions of banks include commercial papers, bankcards and other settlement transactions. Specifically, other settlement transactions include credit transfer, direct debit, collection with acceptance and domestic L/C.

⁴ With respect to per capita indicators, the population refers to 1.41175 billion people on the Chinese mainland at end-2022, as released by the National Bureau of Statistics. The same applies hereinafter.

⁵ The ATMs include traditional self-service equipments such as self-service deposit machines, self-service withdrawal machines, cash recycling system (CRS) and self-service payment terminals placed by banking depository financial institutions, as well as new terminals and equipments such as self-service terminals, visual teller machine (VTM), and smart counters.

⁶ The volume of bankcard transactions refers to the sum of transactions denominated in the RMB and in foreign currencies.

90.228 billion, or RMB35.54 trillion. The consumer payment per bankcard registered RMB3,631.50 and that per transaction recorded RMB393.91.

The total bankcard credit line edged up. At end-Q4 , the total bankcard credit line⁷ was RMB22.66 trillion, increasing by 0.48 percent q-o-q. The outstanding balance of bankcard credit was RMB8.69 trillion, increasing by 0.67 percent q-o-q. The credit line per bankcard was RMB29,600, with the credit utilization rate⁸ standing at 38.34 percent. The credit card payment overdue by half a year or more⁹ totaled RMB98.135 billion, increasing by 4.69 percent q-o-q, accounting for 1.13 percent of the total outstanding balance.

(II) Commercial Papers

The transaction volume of commercial papers increased. In Q4, transactions of commercial papers totaled 24.6932 million or RMB27.66 trillion nationwide, increasing by 6.23 percent and 16.28 percent y-o-y, respectively. Specifically, there were 16.2249 million transactions or RMB17.70 trillion of checks, with the former decreasing by 1.16 percent y-o-y and the latter increasing by 2.42 percent y-o-y, respectively; 8.4068 million actual settlements or RMB9.88 trillion of commercial drafts, increasing by 24.12 percent and 53.55 percent y-o-y, respectively; 29,700 transactions or RMB30.967 billion of bank drafts, increasing by 19.95 percent and 30.46 percent y-o-y, respectively; 31,700 transactions or RMB52.51 billion of bank promissory notes, decreasing by 3.98 percent and 0.12 percent y-o-y, respectively.

⁷ Total bankcard credit line refers to the sum of credit lines of credit cards and debit-credit integrated cards.

⁸ The credit line utilization rate is the ratio of outstanding bankcard credit balance to total credit line.

⁹ The credit card payment overdue by half a year or more refers to the outstanding balance of the principal of a credit card whose minimum payment is overdue by more than 181 days (inclusive), excluding the written-off amount.

Transactions processed by the electronic commercial draft system¹⁰ grew fast. Q4 saw the following transactions processed by the electronic commercial draft system: 7.2320 million or RMB10.22 trillion acceptances, increasing by 7.83 percent and 47.28 percent y-o-y, respectively; 3.8702 million or RMB8.23 trillion discounts, increasing by 37.84 percent and 69.41 percent y-o-y, respectively; 6.3746 million or RMB23.39 trillion interbank discounts, increasing by 41.94 percent and 74.78 percent y-o-y, respectively; 1.097 million or RMB5.91 trillion pledged repos, with the former increasing by 23.72 percent y-o-y and the latter decreasing by 6.95 percent y-o-y, respectively; and 59,900 or RMB417.831 billion outright repos, decreasing by 53.60 percent and 18.05 percent y-o-y, respectively.

(III) Credit Transfers and Other Settlement Transactions

The volume of credit transfers and other settlement transactions increased.

In Q4, the number of settlement transactions including credit transfer, direct debit, collection with acceptance, and domestic L/C totaled 2.996 billion with an amount of RMB1051.45 trillion, increasing by 9.13 percent and 11.43 percent y-o-y, respectively. In particular, the credit transfer transactions recorded 2.909 billion, totaling RMB1025.77 trillion.

(IV) Electronic Payment

The volume of electronic transactions processed by commercial banks saw a small growth. In Q4, banks processed a total of 77.891 billion electronic payment transactions¹¹ in RMB862.92 trillion, increasing by 7.84 percent and

¹⁰ The data of the electronic commercial draft system are from the Shanghai Commercial Paper Exchange.

¹¹ Electronic payment refers to the transaction volume and value that cause changes in the balance of settlement account initiated by customers through such channels as online banking, telephone banking, mobile banking, ATM, POS, and other electronic payments. Specifically, online payment refers to the number and amount of payments initiated through bank settlement accounts by customers using electronic devices such as computers. Mobile payment refers to the number and amount of payments initiated by customers through bank settlement accounts

6.62 percent y-o-y, respectively. Specifically, the transaction volume of online payments decreased by 7.22 percent y-o-y to 24.512 billion and the total value increased by 6.25 percent y-o-y to RMB711.39 trillion; the transaction volume of mobile payments increased by 18.34 percent y-o-y to 49.392 billion and the total value increased 10.46 percent y-o-y to RMB134.06 trillion; the transaction volume of phone payment decreased by 4.03 percent y-o-y to 52 million and the total value decreased by 6.75 percent y-o-y to RMB2.13 trillion.

In Q4, non-bank payment institutions processed a total of 327.001 billion online payment transactions¹² with an amount of RMB87.08 trillion, increasing by 21.41 percent and 10.39 percent y-o-y, respectively, on a comparative basis.

III. Payment Systems

In Q4, the payment systems¹³ processed a total of 353.799 billion transactions in payments of RMB3,085.95 trillion, increasing by 20.99 percent and 14.24 percent y-o-y, respectively.

(I) PBOC CNCC Systems

In Q4, the PBOC CNCC systems processed 5.551 billion transactions in payments of RMB2,295.36 trillion, increasing by 3.59 percent and 18.04

using mobile devices such as mobile phones.

¹² The online payment transaction volume processed by non-bank payment institutions includes the volume of online payment involving bank accounts initiated by payment institutions and online payment of payment accounts. According to the revised *Statistics of Payment Business Data for Non-Banking Payment Institutions*, starting from January 2023, transfer business were included and duplicate calculation of cooperation business between payment institutions were removed.

¹³ The payment systems include the four PBOC CNCC (China National Clearing Center) systems, namely, HVPS (high-value real-time payment system), BEPS (bulk electronic payment system), IBPS (internet banking payment system), and CFXPS (China foreign exchange payment system), as well as intra-bank business systems of commercial banks, UnionPay interbank payment system, the payment & clearing system of City Commercial Bank Clearing, rural credit bank payment & clearing system, CIPS (Cross-border Interbank Payment System) and NetsUnion Clearing platform.

percent y-o-y, respectively. The daily processed transactions averaged 60.8557 million in volume and RMB35.81 trillion in value¹⁴.

The transaction value of the HVPS increased. In Q4, the HVPS processed 103 million transactions in payments of RMB2,164.62 trillion, increasing by 0.72 percent and 18.41 percent y-o-y, respectively. The daily processed transactions averaged 1.6329 million in volume and RMB34.36 trillion in value.

The transaction volume of BEPS grew fast. In Q4, the BEPS processed 1.205 billion transactions in payments of RMB49.75 trillion, increasing by 11.52 percent and 13.89 percent y-o-y, respectively. The daily processed transactions averaged 13.10 million in volume and RMB540.812 billion in value.

The transaction value of IBPS edged up. In Q4, the IBPS processed 4.241 billion transactions in payments of RMB74.74 trillion, increasing by 1.60 percent and 8.44 percent y-o-y, respectively. The daily processed transactions averaged 46.1006 million in volume and RMB812.424 billion in value.

The transaction volume of CFXPS grew fast. In Q4, the CFXPS processed 1.3782 million transactions in payments of USD882.044 billion (equivalent to about RMB6.25 trillion¹⁵), increasing by 16.57 percent and 54.39 percent y-o-y, respectively. The daily processed transactions averaged 22,200 in volume and USD14.227 billion (equivalent to about RMB100.762 billion) in value.

¹⁴ In Q4, HVPS operated for 63 business days, CFXPS operated for 62 business days and CIPS operated for 67 business days, while other payment systems operated for 92 business days. The actual operation business days are used for calculation of daily averages, and the same hereinafter.

¹⁵ The transaction value of CFXPS was calculated and then converted into the RMB using the exchange rate on the last trading day of the statistical period.

(II) Other Payment Systems¹⁶

The volume of transactions processed by the intra-bank business systems grew fast. In Q4, these systems processed 5.761 billion transactions, totaling RMB555.69 trillion, increasing by 20.40 percent and 2.16 percent y-o-y. On a daily basis, the systems processed 62.6174 million transactions, totaling RMB6.04 trillion.

The volume of transactions processed by the UnionPay interbank payment system¹⁷ increased. In Q4, the system processed 83.689 billion transactions, totaling RMB65.06 trillion, increasing by 29.60 percent and 2.11 percent y-o-y, respectively. On a daily basis, the system processed 910 million transactions, totaling RMB707.177 billion.

The volume of transactions processed by the payment and clearing systems of City Commercial Banks Clearing¹⁸ rose rapidly. In Q4, the systems processed 11.4409 million transactions, totaling RMB1.08 trillion, increasing by 36.53 percent and 36.94 percent y-o-y, respectively. On a daily basis, the system processed 124,400 transactions, totaling RMB11.75 billion.

The number of transactions processed by rural credit bank payment & clearing system¹⁹ decreased. In Q4, the system processed 605 million

¹⁶ According to the PBOC requirement of “breaking direct connection between the third party payment institutions and commercial banks”, all third-party payment institutions should join the system of UnionPay or NetsUnion, and the business between payment institutions and commercial banks, as well as the business between members of City Commercial Banks Clearing Co., Ltd. or Rural Credit Banks Funds Clearing Center and third-party payment institutions will not be included in transaction calculation for the intra-bank business systems of commercial banks, the payment & clearing system of City Commercial Banks Clearing, and rural credit banks payment & clearing system.

¹⁷ The data of the UnionPay interbank payment system are from China UnionPay Co., Ltd.

¹⁸ The data of the payment & clearing system of City Commercial Banks Clearing include the previous city commercial bank draft processing system and payment & clearing system. The data are from the City Commercial Banks Clearing Co., Ltd.

¹⁹ The data of rural credit banks payment & clearing system are from the Rural Credit Banks Funds Clearing Center.

transactions, totaling RMB667.812 billion, decreasing by 39.25 percent and 12.57 percent y-o-y, respectively. On a daily basis, the system processed 6.5732 million transactions, totaling RMB7.259 billion.

The volume of transactions processed by CIPS²⁰ grew fast. In Q4, the CIPS processed 1.8568 million transactions, totaling RMB34.99 trillion, increasing by 41.29 percent and 34.22 percent y-o-y, respectively. On a daily basis, the system processed 27,700 transactions, totaling RMB522.219 billion.

The number of transactions processed by NetsUnion Clearing platform²¹ rose rapidly. In Q4, the platform processed 258.181 billion transactions, totaling RMB133.09 trillion, increasing by 19.14 percent and 9.62 percent y-o-y, respectively. On a daily basis, the platform processed 2.806 billion transactions, totaling RMB1.45 trillion.

²⁰ The data of CIPS are from Cross-border Interbank Payment System Co., Ltd.

²¹ The data of the NetsUnion Clearing platform are from NetsUnion Clearing Co., Ltd. The data refer to the volume of online payment transactions initiated by payment institutions and processed by the NetsUnion Clearing platform via bank accounts.