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Citi launches Octopus credit card in Hong Kong

Citi is launching a combined contactless Octopus travel and credit card in Hong Kong.

Customers can use the Octopus function at over 50,000 terminals to travel on public transport and make low value contactless payments at participating retail outlets. The card automatically reloads the Octopus feature when it runs low.

The card also incorporates the Octopus rewards scheme, which enables users to collect and spend points given by participating merchants. In addition, users can earn cash rebates through their credit card spending which will be credited for Octopus usage.

Citi's involvement with Octopus follows recent similar partnerships with the Delhi Mass Rapid Transit System (DMRT), the Singapore Mass Rapid Transit System, and the New York City Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

Neil Gardner, director, cards business, Citibank Global Consumer Group, says of the Octopus initiative: "This co-brand card puts the two of us at the forefront of the e-money market and we are very confident that the card will be well received by the market as it is a unique transport-retail payment card that allows customers to manage all their needs."

Prudence Chan, CEO, Octopus Cards, adds: "For the first time, customers can enjoy a two-in-one card with unprecedented convenience and benefits."

Launched in 1997, there are now over 17 million Octopus cards in circulation, with more than 10 million transactions, worth HK\$85 million, are processed every day.

In 2006 Citi teamed with MasterCard and the Metropolitan Transit Agency to trial contactless payments technology at ticket barriers on the New York subway. The test programme - which currently includes readers in 80 fare gates at 30 stations - is set to be expanded later this year. The bank is also working on similar projects in Delhi and Singapore.

Last year Barclaycard launched a similar card after winning a deal with TranSys - the consortium which runs the Oyster card system - that gives it the exclusive rights to place Oyster on its Visa cards in London.