

Box 5.2**Employment growth differentiated by employment status in recent years**

During 1998 to 2002, total employment expanded cumulatively by 3.5%, or by an annual average of 0.9%, from 3.12 million to 3.23 million. But the growth rate varied amongst persons with different employment status.

**Employed persons by employment status
(year-on-year rate of change (%))**

Within which :

	Total employment	Employees	Employers	Self-employed persons	Unpaid family work ers
1998	-1.3	-1.3	-4.4	4.2	-8.3
1999	-0.3	-0.9	-1.5	8.8	23.1
2000	3.1	3.4	-2.3	4.0	-11.9
2001	1.4	-0.1	5.4	24.7	3.9
2002	-0.6	-1.7	-2.4	14.4	10.6

The number of self-employed persons, whilst on a continuous uptrend in recent years, increased rather more distinctly in 2001 and 2002. Reduced vacancies in the corporate sector and growing tendency towards outsourcing induced more people to become self-employed. On the other hand, the number of employees was mostly on a decline, as overall labour demand slackened amidst moderate economic performance for most of the period and increased incidents of corporate downsizing and lay-offs. The number of employers also fell, amidst a more stringent business climate. As to unpaid family workers, the movements were more volatile, but the absolute number of people involved was rather small.

As a result, the proportion of employees in total employment fell over the period, from 89.7% in 1998 to 87.2% in 2002. So did the proportion of employers, from 5.2% to 5.0%. By contrast, the proportion of self-employed persons went up appreciably, from 4.6% to 7.2%. The proportion of unpaid family workers held broadly stable, at around 0.7%.