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Mastercard Expands Virtual Card Platform with New Security Controls, Embedded Payments Network and Single API Access

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- New issuer controls, enhanced clearing controls and expanded embedded payments capabilities help enterprises and financial institutions manage virtual card programs with greater security, visibility and scale.
- Citi first to launch new capabilities

PURCHASE, N.Y.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Mastercard today announced a series of enhancements to Mastercard In Control® – the industry-leading virtual card number (VCN) platform according to Kaiser Associates – reinforcing its position as a global leader in secure, scalable B2B payments. New innovations include advanced virtual card controls that help reduce risk across the full payment lifecycle, and one scalable connection to Mastercard's growing embedded partner network — enabling enterprises, financial institutions and platforms to manage payments with greater confidence, flexibility and efficiency.

Mastercard's VCN ecosystem now includes issuers, direct platforms and corporates transacting across 43 countries and 174 currencies, underscoring its ability to support global expansion while maintaining consistency and oversight.

"As payments become more digitized and embedded into business workflows, expectations for performance, security and control are higher than ever," said Marc Pettican, Global Head of Corporate Solutions at Mastercard. "We're expanding our virtual card capabilities to deliver more unified and scalable experiences — helping partners simplify how they implement and scale virtual card programs with greater security, control and consistency."

"Kaiser's analysis shows that virtual card providers increasingly compete on operational proof: platform maturity, configurable controls, ERP connectivity, and implementation paths that reduce friction for issuers and corporates," said Spencer Dunham, Vice President of Financial Services & Payments Practice at Kaiser Associates. "Against that backdrop, Mastercard's In Control capabilities and Commercial Connect API give banks a differentiated foundation for scaling virtual card programs with greater control and less integration friction."

Reducing risk and strengthening control across the payment lifecycle

As virtual card use **grows across industries and regions**, Mastercard continues to strengthen security at every stage of a transaction. Mastercard data shows that fraud rates are less than one-fifth on virtual cards compared to non-virtual cards, with that number being even lower when those virtual cards are issued through Mastercard In Control.

Mastercard is building on this with two distinct solutions that improve control across the virtual card lifecycle:

- IssuerEnforced Controls — a new capability — applies at the point of virtual card number creation and allows issuers to set baseline guardrails, such as spend limits, transaction limit caps, and validity periods, helping ensure complaint controls are in place from the start and reducing fraud risk across virtual card programs.
- Clearing Controls — **introduced** last year, now with new enhancements — extend control validation beyond authorization into the clearing stage. New enhancements enable corporates and platforms to block invalid transactions, apply more precise controls, and better manage payment timing, while supporting centralized policy management as programs scale.

Citi is already live with both Issuer Enforced and Clearing Controls and is expected to be the first issuer to roll out these VCN capabilities globally, later this year.

Together, these capabilities are underpinned by Mastercard's network-level security, tokenization, and fraud monitoring, complemented by enterprise-grade cybersecurity solutions — delivering stronger, end-to-end protection across every stage of the transaction.

Delivering a more unified, scalable experience for virtual card programs

Commercial Connect API, the market's only single-API front door according to Kaiser Associates, is simplifying how customers control and scale virtual card capabilities. The solution addresses long-standing industry challenges, as **69% of companies** struggle to integrate payment and business systems.

New enhancements to the platform include:

- Expanded card controls, including the ability to apply multiple control sets at the real card level — enabling

controls to be enforced across all transactions and associated virtual cards without handling sensitive credentials
- Simplified integration and accelerated access to end-to-end payment capabilities by enabling virtual card creation and payment initiation in one seamless step

These capabilities offer businesses a more consistent way to integrate, control and scale their virtual card programs — helping them reduce operational complexity, accelerate time to value and innovate faster within a single, unified experience.

Embedding payments into the systems businesses already use

Since Mastercard launched its embedded VCN program in March 2025, dozens of partners across expense management, ERP and accounts payable systems — as well as travel, hospitality, healthcare and e-commerce platforms — have signed up for a simpler, more unified corporate payment experience. As just one example, SAP recently enabled their partnership through the program – a foundational step in scaling embedded virtual cards.

The program's integration model – recognized by Kaiser Associates as industry-leading – reduces onboarding complexity for issuers, platforms, and corporates.

Mastercard is also expanding its ecosystem through strategic partnerships and innovative use cases. For example, Mastercard and **HSBC** have launched a mobile virtual card solution in the UAE, enabling tokenized VCNs in digital wallets.

Mastercard was recently recognized as Emburse's Innovation Partner of the Year, further reinforcing its role in embedding virtual cards into procurement and expense workflows to drive greater visibility and efficiency for businesses worldwide.

Continued traction across vertical-specific use cases like travel — including partnerships such as **Juniper Travel**, **HBX Group**, and **TravelSoft** — demonstrates the growing role of VCNs as a flexible, integrated payment solution across industries.

Enterprise-grade stability for e-commerce flows

With Mastercard In Control, e-commerce flows are supported in real time on a platform designed to be always available, fast, and resilient. The platform offers smooth, secure, and dependable payment experiences that customers can trust — at e-commerce scale.

To learn more about Mastercard's virtual card capabilities, connect with the team **here.**

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Hear from our partners:

- “As virtual card adoption accelerates, our clients need smarter, stronger tools to manage risk. Our deep collaboration with Mastercard makes Citi the first issuer to deliver these advanced security capabilities to the market on a global scale, further reinforcing our industry leadership in this space. This is a direct reflection of our commitment to helping clients streamline payments and operate more securely and efficiently around the world.” - Scott Southall, Global Head of Citi Commercial Cards & Domestic Payments, Citi
- “Our partnership with Mastercard helps Emburse make virtual cards a seamless part of everyday business workflows, giving customers greater security, control and visibility while simplifying how they manage and scale B2B payments.” - Kalie Phillips, Vice President, Product Management at Emburse
- “Mobile virtual cards represent an important evolution in how businesses manage payments, combining the control and security of virtual cards with the convenience of mobile wallets. Our collaboration with Mastercard has enabled us to bring this capability to customers in the UAE, providing greater flexibility in how they make payments while maintaining the controls and security businesses expect. We see significant potential for mobile virtual cards as more organizations look for simpler, more secure and digitally enabled ways to manage business payments.” Saket Nailwal, Regional Head of Commercial Cards, MENAT, HSBC
- "Our partnership with Mastercard marks an important step toward Autonomous Finance, embedding virtual card payments directly into the workflows our customers already run. Putting AI to work automates accounts payable, giving finance teams greater visibility and control at scale, helping organizations strengthen working capital and make it easier to realize the benefits of secure, automated commercial payments, wherever they run SAP.“ - Thomas Mehlkopf, General Manager and Head of Treasury and Working Capital Management CoE at SAP SE
- “Travel has unique payment requirements, with complex booking journeys and multiple stakeholders involved in every transaction. At HBX Group, we are connecting bookings and payments more intelligently to simplify payment processes across the travel value chain. That's why our collaboration with Mastercard is so important: by combining our deep travel expertise with the scale and security of a global payments network, we can help deliver more seamless payment experiences for our partners.” - Sofoklis Limniotis, Strategy & Solutions Director, HBX Group

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About Mastercard

Mastercard powers economies and empowers people in 200+ countries and territories worldwide. Together with our customers, we're building a resilient economy where everyone can prosper. We support a wide range of digital payments choices, making transactions secure, simple, smart and accessible. Our technology and innovation, partnerships and networks combine to deliver a unique set of products and services that help people, businesses and governments realize their greatest potential.

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