

About 80 per cent of travel agents received payment of Anti-epidemic Fund

To assist travel agents to tackle the financial difficulties arising from the COVID-19 outbreak, the Government has established the Travel Agents Subsidy Scheme under the Anti-epidemic Fund. Each eligible travel agent may receive a one-off subsidy of \$80,000. As of now, the Travel Agents Registry (TAR) has received about 1 700 registrations, accounting for about 98 per cent of all licensed travel agents in Hong Kong. Among these registrations, about 80 per cent, i.e. some 1 350 travel agents, have received the payment.

"The scheme has been open for registration since the approval of the Anti-epidemic Fund by the Legislative Council Finance Committee on February 21 evening. With a simple and convenient registration procedure, the disbursement of subsidies had begun within two weeks, providing timely assistance to tide the tourism trade over during the difficult time," a spokesman for the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau said.

The spokesman appealed to those few remaining travel agents who have not yet registered to submit their registration to the TAR before the deadline today (March 13). The registration form and guideline can be downloaded from the website of the TAR (www.tar.gov.hk) or obtained from its office (Address: Room 4901, 49/F, Hopewell Centre, 183 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong).

The Government has also established the Licensed Guesthouses Subsidy Scheme under the Anti-epidemic Fund. Each eligible guesthouse with one to five licensed guestrooms may receive a one-off subsidy of \$50,000 and those with six or more licensed guestrooms may receive a one-off subsidy of \$80,000. Since the commencement of registration on February 21, more than 1 770 registrations have been received as at noon today. The registered licensed guesthouses account for 98 per cent of the total. At present, about 260 guesthouses have received the subsidy.

Registration for the Licensed Guesthouses Subsidy Scheme will end on March 20. The registration form and guideline can be downloaded from the website of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) under the Home Affairs Department (www.hadla.gov.hk) or obtained from the OLA's office (Address: 10th Floor, 14 Taikoo Wan Road, Taikoo Shing, Hong Kong).