

Anti-epidemic Fund begins disbursing subsidies to arts and culture sector

A spokesperson for the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) said today (March 20) that to assist the arts and culture sector to tackle the difficulties arising from the COVID-19 epidemic, the Government allocated \$150 million under the Anti-epidemic Fund for launching the "Arts and Culture Sector Subsidy Scheme" to support various arts organisations and freelance arts workers. The first batch of subsidies has been disbursed to the venue partners of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, grantees of the HAB's Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme, and the Hong Kong Maritime Museum this week. The HAB will also arrange funding disbursements to the nine major performing arts groups in March. These arts groups will make use of the subsidies to pay the salaries of their staff, contractors and freelance workers as much as possible.

The HAB has also entrusted the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) to disburse subsidies. The HKADC has launched the "Support Scheme for Arts and Cultural Sector" in March and has released \$80,000 to 40 HKADC-grantees, as well as \$15,000 to about half of the HKADC-funded/-commissioned project grantees. The HKADC plans to complete funding disbursements to about 200 project grantees in March. These arts groups will also make use of the subsidies to pay the salaries of their staff, contractors and freelance workers as much as possible. This Scheme will also cover non-HKADC-funded projects and freelancers. Relevant application forms are now uploaded to the HKADC's website at www.hkadc.org.hk.

The HAB is now discussing with the Hong Kong Arts Festival Society and the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong regarding the details of the relief fund.