

Strategic Public Policy Research Funding Scheme 2018-19 opens for application

The Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office (PICO) today (June 8) announced that the Strategic Public Policy Research (SPPR) Funding Scheme 2018-19 is now open for application.

The SPPR Funding Scheme, together with the Public Policy Research (PPR) Funding Scheme, both managed by the PICO, are unique in Hong Kong in that they are the only government-subsidised funding schemes dedicated to fostering and supporting public policy research in Hong Kong. The total annual provision for the two schemes is \$30 million. Both schemes aim to promote public policy research and evidence-based research to facilitate public policy discussion. Specifically, the SPPR Funding Scheme aims to support longer-term public policy research on strategic themes, build up research capacity, and facilitate collaboration among institutions/think tanks on the strategic themes. Applications for the PPR Funding Scheme are accepted throughout the year, while applications for the SPPR Funding Scheme are invited once a year.

Nine strategic themes have been identified for the SPPR Funding Scheme 2018-19, namely (a) Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area; (b) Belt and Road Initiative; (c) Economic and Trade Co-operation Zones; (d) Big Data and/or Smart City; (e) Re-industrialisation; (f) Sharing Economy; (g) Land and Housing Strategy; (h) Youth Development; and (i) Challenges of Population Ageing.

A sum ranging from \$3 million to \$5 million may be granted to each successful SPPR project for a research period of three to five years.

The SPPR Funding Scheme 2018-19 is open for application until August 3, 2018.

Assessments will be conducted by an Assessment Panel set up by the PICO which is chaired by and comprises experienced academics. The Panel will determine the assessment criteria and details of the two funding schemes. Applications will be assessed by the Panel as well as local and non-local reviewers, who are academics and experts outside the Panel. Suggestions and views of relevant government bureaux/departments will also be sought for reference by the Panel. A declaration of interests system is in place to ensure that the assessments are fair and impartial.

Research quality and the strategic relevance to the public policy development of Hong Kong are the primary considerations in evaluating research proposals under the SPPR Funding Scheme. In considering a research proposal, the Assessment Panel will also take into account factors such as

deliverables of the research, the research team's capability, the feasibility and practicality of the proposal, the implementation schedule, and the proposed budget. Institutional support towards capacity building in public policy research (e.g. infrastructure support or matching funds) and any external funding sources and support will also be taken into consideration.

Details of the SPPR Funding Scheme including eligibility criteria, the strategic themes, composition of the Assessment Panel, application method and other related information, are available on the PICO website (www.pico.gov.hk/en/PRFS).

Government to sell site in Yau Tong by public tender

The Lands Department (LandsD) announced today (June 8) that a site, New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 6593 at Ko Chiu Road, Yau Tong, Kowloon, in the 2018-19 Land Sale Programme will be disposed of by public tender. The tender invitation for the lot will commence on June 15 and close on August 10.

New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 6593 has a site area of about 3,680 square metres and is designated for non-industrial (excluding godown, hotel and petrol filling station) purposes. The minimum gross floor area and the maximum gross floor area are 19,872 square metres and 33,120 square metres respectively.

Land sale documents including the Form of Tender, the Tender Notice, the Conditions of Sale and the sale plan of the lot will be available for downloading from the LandsD website (www.landsd.gov.hk), and the sale plan will be available for distribution and inspection by the public from June 15, when the particulars of the tender will also be gazetted.

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (June 8) released the latest grading of water quality for 37 gazetted beaches and one non-gazetted beach (Discovery Bay) that are open for swimming.

Twenty-five beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), 12 as Fair (Grade 2)

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Grade 2 Beaches

Grade 2 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach
Approach Beach

Hoi Mei Wan Beach
Kadoorie Beach

Butterfly Beach	Lido Beach
Casam Beach	Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach
Castle Peak Beach	Silverstrand Beach
Clear Water Bay First Beach	Ting Kau Beach

Grade 4 beach is:

Discovery Bay

Compared with the grading released last week, Cafeteria New Beach has been upgraded from Grade 2 to Grade 1, and Lido Beach and Ting Kau Beach from Grade 3 to Grade 2. Silverstrand Beach has been changed from Grade 1 to Grade 2 and Discovery Bay from Grade 1 to Grade 4.

"The deterioration of water quality at Discovery Bay was due to the heavy rain yesterday (June 7), while the changes in other beaches are generally within the normal range of fluctuation of the bacteriological water quality of the beaches," the EPD spokesman said.

The EPD spokesman also reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a storm or heavy rainfall.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the department's websites on Beach Water Quality (www.beachwq.gov.hk and www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

[Speech by CE at Swedish Midsummer and National Day Celebration \(English only\)](#)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the Swedish Midsummer and National Day Celebration today (June 8):

Consul General (Consul General of Sweden in Hong Kong, Ms Helena Storm), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

What a pleasure to be here today in celebration of Sweden's national day and its midsummer festival, the country's most traditional of holidays. First of all, my gratitude to the Consul General and your team for opening this fantastic celebration to the people of Hong Kong. It provides an excellent opportunity for our people to appreciate the rich culture of Sweden through the music, dance, food and many other things on offer this afternoon.

I am also delighted that the celebration is taking place in the courtyard at PMQ. The Former Police Married Quarters, PMQ is one of eight Conserving Central projects, half of which are now up and running. Just two weeks ago, I took part in the opening of the nearby Central Police Station Compound – now called Tai Kwun Centre for Heritage and Arts. I must say I am thrilled to see Hong Kong's past rise again – revitalised and, as this good afternoon attests to, radiating life, purpose and good will.

Ladies and gentlemen, I can say very much the same about Hong Kong and Sweden. Our two economies, our two peoples, are finding good reasons to come together. Less than two years ago, the Karolinska Institutet's Ming Wai Lau Centre for Reparative Medicine opened here, setting in motion what I am confident will be a long and mutually rewarding collaboration between us in science and technology, as well as the creative industries. Indeed, Prince Carl Philip visited Hong Kong just six months ago, here to inaugurate the Swedish Pavilion at Business of Design Week, as well as to launch the first edition of #SwedenTalks_HK, a creative exchange that we very much look forward to building on.

The Prince is definitely not the only person from Sweden to visit us. Thanks to our mutual visa-free arrangement and direct flight connection, arrivals from Sweden to Hong Kong grew by about 25 per cent cumulatively in the past three years. And I am sure our people-to-people bond will continue to grow, especially amongst young people, with our bilateral Working Holiday Scheme commencing operation in January this year.

Ladies and gentlemen, when it comes to ties between Hong Kong and Sweden, there is a great deal more to say. But I would stop here now, so that I will have more time to tour the booths here and to learn how to make a Swedish flower crown from the Consul General.

I wish the people of Sweden a most happy and memorable national day, and everyone here an enjoyable afternoon, actually till 10pm tonight. Thank you very much.

Speech by CE at Swedish Midsummer and National Day Celebration (English only)

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