

Survey on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)' Credit Conditions for Third Quarter 2018

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) published today (November 7) the results of Survey on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)' Credit Conditions for the third quarter of 2018.

Regarding SMEs' perception of banks' credit approval stance relative to 6 months ago, 77 per cent of respondents perceived similar or easier credit approval stance in the third quarter of 2018, compared with 72 per cent recorded in the previous quarter (Chart 1 in the Annex). 23 per cent of respondents perceived more difficult credit approval stance in the third quarter of 2018, as compared to 28 per cent in the previous quarter.

Of those respondents with existing credit lines, 98 per cent reported that banks' stance on existing credit lines was easier or unchanged in the third quarter of 2018, up from 94 per cent recorded in the previous quarter (Chart 2 in the Annex). 2 per cent of respondents reported tightened banks' stance in the third quarter of 2018, down from 6 per cent in the previous quarter.

The Survey also gauged the results of new credit applications from SMEs. 3.1 per cent of respondents reported that they had applied for new bank credit during the third quarter of 2018. For respondents who already know their application outcomes, 94 per cent reported fully or partially successful applications; the proportion of respondents that reported fully successful applications increased to 83 per cent from 67 per cent in the survey of the previous quarter (Chart 3 in the Annex). The proportion of respondents that reported unsuccessful application increased from 2 per cent to 6 per cent. It should be noted that owing to a small sample size (i.e. 3.1 per cent of surveyed SMEs), the results on new credit applications from SMEs could be prone to large fluctuations. Care should be taken when interpreting the survey results.

About Survey on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)' Credit Conditions

In light of the importance of SMEs to the Hong Kong economy and concerns about potential funding difficulties facing SMEs over the past few years, the HKMA has appointed the Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC) to carry out this Survey, starting from the third quarter of 2016. This Survey is conducted on a quarterly basis, covering about 2 500 SMEs from different economic sectors each time. The results of this Survey can help monitor the development of SMEs' access to bank credit from a demand-side perspective.

The results of this Survey should be interpreted with caution. Similar to other opinion surveys, views collected in this Survey may be affected by changes in sentiment due to idiosyncratic events that occurred over the Survey period, which can make the results prone to fluctuations. Readers are advised to interpret the results together with other economic and financial information. In addition, views collected are limited to the expected direction of inter-quarter changes (e.g. "tighter", "similar" or "easier") without providing information about the magnitude of these changes.

Detailed tables and technical information of this Survey are published on the website of the HKPC (smecc.hkpc.org).

Persons in custody at Shek Pik Prison attain good examination results

A total of 107 persons in custody in Shek Pik Prison (SPP) of the Correctional Services Department (CSD) were presented with certificates at a ceremony today (November 7) in recognition of their study efforts and academic achievements.

The 107 persons in custody awarded certificates today had passed 236 papers with 164 distinctions and credits and achieved a total of 845 university credit points. Among them, eight persons in custody were awarded Bachelor Degrees of Business Administration, a Bachelor Degree of Business Administration in China Business and Bachelor Degrees of General Studies by the Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK). Two persons in custody attained good academic results and were presented with scholarships by the OUHK.

In 2018, a total of 199 persons in custody at SPP passed 306 papers in various distance learning courses and public examinations organised by the OUHK, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, the British Council and the City and Guilds International Limited.

Examinations passed covered a variety of subjects including Chinese language, English language, mathematics, economics, business finance, business statistics, business administration, software applications, Putonghua, accounting and book-keeping.

Officiating at the ceremony, the Honorary President of the Prisoners' Friends' Association (PFA) and member of the Legislative Council, Mr Michael Tien, said that the CSD endeavours to conduct suitable rehabilitation programmes to help persons in custody turn over a new leaf as well as reintegrate into society. Over the years, the PFA has long been supporting the rehabilitation work of the CSD and co-operating in fostering offender rehabilitation. The PFA's volunteers help persons in custody to cope with

imprisonment by providing regular visits and correspondence.

During the ceremony, persons in custody at SPP staged a dance performance, while a band formed by persons in custody also sang to convey gratitude to their family members and all those helping them in rehabilitation.

Also attending the ceremony were the Commissioner of Correctional Services, Mr Lam Kwok-leung; representatives of non-governmental and community organisations; community leaders; and family members of certificate recipients.

Situated on Lantau Island, SPP is a maximum security institution with a capacity of 426 penal places for male adult persons in custody.

LCQ13: Lifeguards employed by Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Following is a question by Hon Chan Hak-kan and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah, in the Legislative Council today (November 7):

Question:

Regarding the training received and the duties carried out by the two types of lifeguards (i.e. civil service lifeguards and seasonal lifeguards) employed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of occasions last year on which duties involving skin-diving and scuba-diving were carried out by the two aforesaid types of lifeguards, and a breakdown of the details of such duties by (i) name of the public swimming pool complex (complex)/beach where they were on duty and District Council (DC) district to which the complex/beach belonged, and (ii) the diving depth involved;

(2) among the two types of lifeguards, of the respective numbers and percentages of those who currently possess related diving qualifications, with a breakdown of such numbers by (i) name of the complex/beach where they are on duty and (ii) DC district to which the complex/beach belongs;

(3) given that LCSD indicated in 2016 that it would study ways to ensure that all newly recruited lifeguards should complete the three-stage induction training programme (induction training) (including skin-diving rescue), of the progress of such work, and the current number of civil service lifeguards who have not yet completed such training and, among those lifeguards, the

number of those who need to perform life-saving duties;

(4) whether LCSD has provided diving training (other than induction training) for in-service lifeguards; if so, of the number of relevant courses organised each month in the past three years, as well as the respective numbers of applicants, those admitted and those passing the relevant tests; whether the lifeguards are required to receive such training and complete the training by a certain deadline, as well as the consequences for their non-compliance;

(5) whether LCSD will (i) require newly recruited lifeguards to possess related diving qualifications upon appointment or within a specific period after appointment, and (ii) encourage in-service lifeguards to obtain the relevant qualifications; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(6) whether there were lifeguards who had not yet completed the induction training being promoted to senior lifeguards in the past three years; if so, of a breakdown of the number of such lifeguards by the type of training which they had not completed;

(7) whether LCSD has deployed lifeguards on duty at beaches who have not yet received relevant training to perform scuba-diving duties; if so, how LCSD ensures that such lifeguards know how to operate the diving equipment;

(8) whether, in respect of the diving duties to be performed by lifeguards, LCSD has (i) formulated standard workflows, safety codes and contingency procedures, (ii) kept relevant work records, and (iii) deployed manpower to manage and maintain the diving equipment;

(9) of the number of times for which oxygen tanks for scuba diving were refilled in the past three years, with a breakdown by (i) name of complex/beach and (ii) DC district to which the complex/beach belonged;

(10) of the number of cases of lifeguards performing diving rescues in the past three years and, among such cases, (i) the respective numbers of those in which the victims were drowned and those in which the victims were rescued, as well as (ii) the number of those in which there was a delay in rescue due to the lifeguards not possessing diving skills;

(11) whether the duties of LCSD's lifeguards include cleaning up oil spill, rubbish, faeces, blood and vomit within the area of the complex/beach concerned; if so, (i) of the respective numbers of cases in which lifeguards performed such types of cleaning duties in the past three years, with a breakdown by name of the complex/beach and by DC district to which the complex/beach belonged, and (ii) whether LCSD has provided training, guidelines and equipment for lifeguards in respect of such duties, and formulated infection prevention measures; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(12) as some lifeguards have indicated that they do not have a clear understanding about their scope of duties, whether LCSD will consider setting out the duties of lifeguards in detail; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(13) given that the duties of lifeguards cover the areas of life-saving, first aid, crowd control, customer services, assisting in law enforcement, etc., but the entry requirement on academic qualification for lifeguards is mere completion of Primary Six, whether LCSD will consider raising the entry requirement on academic qualification for lifeguards; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) currently provides lifeguard services at 44 public swimming pools, 38 gazetted beaches and five water sports centres. As at August 1, 2018, there were 1 959 lifeguards comprising 174 senior lifeguards and 1 785 lifeguards in LCSD. Of those 1 785 lifeguards, 687 lifeguards were non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff employed on a seasonal basis to augment the lifeguard manpower during the swimming season. As regards the 13-part question on the responsibilities, qualifications and training, departmental guidelines and future development of the lifeguard grade, my reply is as follows:

(1), (7), (10), (11) and (12) The major responsibilities of civil service lifeguards include performing lifesaving and first aid duties, assisting in law enforcement and maintenance of order and assisting in cleansing work. While the major responsibilities of full-time NCSC seasonal lifeguards include ensuring swimmers' safety, performing lifesaving duties, maintenance of order and assisting in cleansing work. Details of the major responsibilities of lifeguards are clearly spelt out in recruitment advertisements and annual staff report of lifeguards. Besides, when newly-appointed lifeguards report for duty, they will be briefed on their duties and work by staff of the department.

As regards rescue operations, lifeguards normally deploy skills taught and assessed in the training associated with the lifeguard qualifications (including underwater search by skin diving, etc.) in drowning incidents. Upon receiving a report of missing swimmer in beach water, lifeguards will carry out rescue operation and call the Police for assistance in the light of the circumstances. In addition to skin diving used in underwater search operations, trained and qualified lifeguards may carry out emergency underwater search for drowning victim(s) using scuba diving equipment under the supervision and instruction of senior lifeguards and assist in the rescue operation upon arrival of the diving personnel of the Fire Services Department where necessary. Lifeguards on duty at beaches without relevant training will not be deployed to carry out scuba diving in rescue and search operations. As skin diving forms one of the basic skills and responsibilities of lifeguards' daily lifesaving work, LCSD does not maintain relevant statistics. Details on the scuba diving work undertaken by lifeguards in 2017 are at Annex I. In the three cases of missing swimmers in the past three years, in addition to the use of skin diving, scuba diving was also carried out in the search operations. Despite having made all-out efforts in these rescues, the goal of saving the victims did not achieve. LCSD has no record of delayed rescue pertaining to the lack of

diving knowledge/skills on the part of lifeguards.

Contractors are normally hired by LCSD for other tasks requiring diving for prolonged periods, e.g. underwater inspection or maintenance of facilities, etc. For instance, two professional contractors have been hired for inspection and maintenance of shark prevention nets respectively. The inspection contractor will deploy professional divers to conduct inspections to ensure proper maintenance of the shark prevention nets by the maintenance contractor. LCSD staff at the beaches may, as and when necessary, require the contractors concerned to conduct comprehensive inspection or carry out comprehensive maintenance of the shark prevention nets above and under water in accordance with the contract requirements. The diving tasks required for the inspection of the seabed conditions and the clearance work in the aftermath of the passage of Typhoon Mangkhut are undertaken by the outsourced contractors.

One of the major responsibilities of lifeguards is to assist in cleansing work. To keep pool water clean, officers-in-charge of swimming pools will deploy lifeguards to carry out cleansing work once refuse, faeces or vomitus is found. When LCSD is notified by the Marine Department of any oil spill incident near beach area or when venue staff find signs of oil contamination of beaches, officers-in-charge of beaches will lead and direct lifeguards and venue staff to assist in handling the incident, including monitoring whether beaches will be contaminated with oil spills, assisting and advising swimmers to go back to the shore, preventing dispersion of oil to beaches and assisting to clean up the contaminated sand, etc., in accordance with LCSD's emergency response plan for handling oil pollution. LCSD provides appropriate personal protective equipment for lifeguards to carry out these tasks. Besides, guidelines have also been drawn up for the tasks concerned (including preventive measures against infectious diseases) with relevant training provided for lifeguards.

Statistics relating to the number of cases involving handling of oil spills, waste, faeces and vomitus in the past three years broken down by public swimming complexes/beaches and the District Council district of the swimming complexes/beaches are at Annex II.

(2) to (6) It is LCSD's requirement that all serving lifeguards and lifeguards to be recruited shall possess the Pool Lifeguard Award and Beach Lifeguard Award issued by the Hong Kong Life Saving Society (HKLSS). The Pool Lifeguard Award and Beach Lifeguard Award issued by HKLSS are internationally recognised lifesaving qualifications by the International Life Saving Federation (ILSF). As underwater rescue by skin diving is already an item to be assessed for the relevant Lifeguard Awards, all lifeguards have already possessed the skin diving skills for underwater rescue operation. On the other hand, scuba diving is not required to be assessed for the relevant Lifeguard Awards, and LCSD does not require lifeguards to possess any qualification on scuba diving.

To enhance the knowledge and skills of lifeguards, LCSD provides induction course on advanced skills on skin diving rescue to newly recruited civil service lifeguards every year. Besides, the department also provides

skills enhancement programmes to serving lifeguards, including courses on advanced skills on skin diving rescue and scuba diving rescue. Civil service lifeguards posted to beaches and water sports centres have priority in joining scuba diving rescue courses. As at August 1, 2018, 942 and 392 civil service lifeguards of LCSD have received advanced training in skin diving rescue and training in scuba diving respectively.

Diving trainings provided for civil service lifeguards of LCSD in the past three years is in Table 1.

LCSD has been providing adequate training places for courses on scuba diving rescue for civil service lifeguards. The actual number of training places depends on the number of applicants for the courses. At present, applications from lifeguards to enrol in training courses due to operational needs are all accepted. LCSD will continue providing sufficient training places to meet its actual operational needs.

The requirement for serving lifeguards to take a mandatory training course (that is the integrated refresher course on Lifeguard Award) has been strictly implemented by LCSD. Moreover, the department will continue to provide sufficient training places to enable newly recruited lifeguards to complete the induction training programme as soon as possible so that they may practise their job skills and refresh their lifesaving knowledge and skills. At present, 119 civil service lifeguards in LCSD are yet to complete the induction training programme within three years after appointment. LCSD has arranged for all of them to complete the training programme this winter and issued letters to urge them to make best use of the training opportunities provided by the department to complete the programme. LCSD will actively monitor the situation and arrange for newly appointed lifeguards to complete the induction training programme as soon as possible.

According to the records of LCSD, there has been no successful application from lifeguards who have not completed the required induction training programme (Note 1) for the post of senior lifeguards for the past three years.

(8) and (9) LCSD has departmental guidelines on beach management, which require officers-in-charge of beaches to brief newly posted lifeguards on their duties in detail to ensure that all lifeguards are familiar with the use of lifesaving facilities and equipment of the beach and that they know well the safety rules for swimmers as well as the accident-prone areas. Senior lifeguards are required to give instructions on the use of lifesaving equipment. Besides, the guidelines also require all lifeguards to participate in regular rescue drills (including diving training) and drills for rescue plans at their workplace to ensure that they are familiar with the corresponding rescue operation under different circumstances.

Currently, officers-in-charge of swimming pools and beaches maintain and arrange for maintenance of diving equipment and gears at their venues. The courses on scuba diving provided by the department have already covered areas on the relevant safety rules, points to note, maintenance and repair requirements for equipment concerned, etc. Information on the frequency of

refilling of diving cylinders at swimming pools, beaches and water sports centres of LCSD in the past three years are at Annex III.

(13) The major responsibility of civil service lifeguards (including Artisan (Beach/Swimming Pool) and Artisan (Lifeguard at Water Sports Centre) is to provide lifesaving and related services. Hence, it is LCSD's requirement that applicants for the post shall possess a valid Beach Lifeguard Award and/or Pool Lifeguard Award issued by the Hong Kong Life Saving Society (HKLSS) (the internationally recognised lifesaving qualifications) to prove that they possess internationally recognised competence to perform lifesaving and lifeguard duties. Besides, LCSD also provides induction training to newly appointed lifeguards and opportunities for serving lifeguards to refresh and enhance skills through various trainings arranged every winter. LCSD will review the entry requirements for Artisan (Beach/ Swimming Pool) and Artisan (Lifeguard at Water Sports Centre) from time to time to meet the actual operational needs.

Note 1: The induction training programme was implemented since 2009. Lifeguards appointed before 2009 were not required to undergo the induction training. According to the records, 10 lifeguards appointed before the launch of the induction training programme were successful in their application for the post of senior lifeguards.

[Hong Kong's latest foreign currency reserve assets figures released](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (November 7) that the official foreign currency reserve assets of Hong Kong amounted to US\$423.1 billion as at the end of October 2018 (end-September 2018: US\$426.4 billion) (Annex).

Including unsettled foreign exchange contracts, the foreign currency reserve assets of Hong Kong at the end of October 2018 amounted to US\$415.5 billion (end-September 2018: US\$418.8 billion).

The total foreign currency reserve assets of US\$423.1 billion represent about seven times the currency in circulation or 45 per cent of Hong Kong dollar M3.

At present, four press releases relating to the Exchange Fund's data are issued by the HKMA each month. Three of these releases are issued to

disseminate monetary data in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS). The fourth press release, on the Exchange Fund's Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account, is made in accordance with the HKMA's policy of maintaining a high level of transparency. For the month of November 2018, the scheduled dates for issuing the press releases are as follows:

November 7	SDDS International Reserves (Hong Kong's Latest Foreign Currency Reserve Assets Figures)
November 14	SDDS Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank (Analytical Accounts of the Exchange Fund)
November 30	SDDS Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity
November 30	Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account

[LCQ3: Regulation and promotion of street performances](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Ma Fung-kuok and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah, in the Legislative Council today (November 7):

Question:

It has been reported that since the abolition of the pedestrian precinct in Mong Kok in August this year, people who frequently staged street performances in the pedestrian precinct in the past have run into problems on all sides when trying to move to other areas. Some performers moving to Tsim Sha Tsui Pier have clashed with those performers who have all along been based there. Last month, the court granted an interim injunction to the management company of Times Square banning street performers from staging performance in the public space of Times Square. On the other hand, the "Open Stage" scheme administered by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has remained unpopular due to excessive restrictions on performers. Regarding the regulation and promotion of street performances, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of complaints about street performances in

various pedestrian precincts and public spaces received by the Government since the abolition of the Mong Kok pedestrian precinct, and how such numbers compare with the relevant numbers for the same period last year;

(2) whether it has assessed the impacts of the street performers of the Mong Kok pedestrian precinct moving to other districts; what measures the Government has taken to step up the management of relevant public spaces, with a view to providing space for street performances while not affecting the daily lives of the residents concerned and ensuring smooth pedestrian flows;

(3) whether measures are in place to encourage private organisations to formulate guidelines or mechanisms to facilitate performers to apply for staging performance in the public spaces under their management; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) of the respective numbers of applications for staging performance received, approved and rejected by LCSD under the Open Stage scheme in the past five years, and the number of cases in which the performers whose applications were approved did not show up;

(5) whether it will review the Open Stage scheme and make improvements (e.g. incorporating more venues into the scheme and reducing user restrictions), with a view to attracting more performers to join the scheme; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(6) whether it is aware of the policies and measures adopted by cities such as Taipei, Tokyo and Singapore pertaining to street arts performances; whether it will, by making reference to the experience of such cities and the arrangement made by the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority for street performances within the District, introduce a licensing system for street performances; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

(1) The Yau Tsim Mong District Council passed a motion to request the Government to terminate the pilot scheme of the pedestrian precinct at Sai Yeung Choi Street in Mong Kok in May 2018. The number of complaints about street performances received by the Government from May to September 30, 2018, and that of the same period in 2017, are tabulated below*:

	May to September (2018)	May to September (2017)
General street performances#	46	25
Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) @	246	282

*Some residents might have complained to more than one Government department. Hence, the figures in the table may involve repeated cases.
#These numbers are consolidated from figures provided by four major relevant Government departments, including Home Affairs Department/District Offices, Environmental Protection Department (EPD), Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, and the Lands Department. The Police do not keep record on the number of complaints relating to street performances.
@The number has included all venues under management of LCSD, such as parks, the piazza outside the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, etc.

(2) and (6)The Government respects the freedom of expression, including arts performances. At present, the Government and residents are in general taking a tolerant attitude towards street performances that are not causing complaints over noise, environmental hygiene, street obstruction, or public order. As long as there is no contravention of the law, there is no regulation of the content and artistic level of the performances. Indeed, the matters relating to street performances are subjected to the prevailing laws in Hong Kong such as Summary Offences Ordinance (Cap. 228), Noise Control Ordinance (Cap. 400), and Crimes Ordinance (Cap. 200).

The original intent of designating the Mong Kok pedestrian precinct was to deal with the rising pedestrian flow back then. After the Transport Department abolished the Sai Yeung Choi Street South pedestrian precinct in Mong Kok on August 4, 2018, some have suggested that street performance should be regulated by means of a licensing mechanism. Our study reveals that places outside Hong Kong have different registration / licensing regimes for street performers. Around the world, not every major city manages street performance through a registration / licensing mechanism.

Hong Kong is a small place with a high population, and is one of the most densely-populated cities in the world. There may be far fewer suitable locations for street performance as compared to other places. Even if a registration / licensing mechanism is introduced, the public may hold different views on designating performance space in densely-populated areas or streets (such as pedestrian precincts). In fact, regulation of street performance involves a wide range of complicated issues relating to content of the performance, coverage, standard as well as its implementation. It involves territory-wide considerations as well as the actual situation in districts and legal considerations.

Furthermore, the Government understands the community's request for the provision of additional performance venues in Hong Kong and is striving to explore new venues. At present, LCSD has 16 performance venues of varying sizes and capacities situated at accessible locations all over the territory. In order to continuously upgrade our cultural hardware, the Government has set aside \$20 billion for the improvement and development of cultural facilities in the coming ten years. Currently, the cultural and performance facilities under planning and construction by the Government include the construction of the East Kowloon Cultural Centre in Ngau Tau Kok, the implementation of pre-construction activities of the proposed New Territories East Cultural Centre, the planning of the development of Yau Ma

Tei Theatre (Phase II), the planning of the expansion of the Hong Kong City Hall, and the renovation of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, etc. It is expected that the construction of the East Kowloon Cultural Centre will be completed by 2020.

At present, some outdoor venues in Hong Kong are available for public performance. For example, the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD), located in Yau Tsim Mong District, launched the "Street Performance Scheme" in 2015 to encourage street entertainment within WKCD so that the general public may enjoy art performances in its shared public space. However, this type of arrangement might not be suitable for other places in Hong Kong. Several arts and cultural facilities in WKCD will successively come on stream in the next few years. The first performing arts venue, Xiqu Centre, will come into operation in late 2018. The Art Park has begun to open by phases for public enjoyment since early this year. Located in the centre of the Art Park, Freespace, comprising a black box theatre and an outdoor stage, will open in 2019. The construction works of the Lyric Theatre Complex is also progressing in full speed.

(3) "Public Open Space in Private Developments" (POSPDs) are open spaces in private developments under private management where the general public are entitled to access, use and enjoy such spaces. POSPDs can generally accommodate a wide range of passive and active activities to cater for the diverse needs and interests of different users. In 2011, the Development Bureau promulgated the "Public Open Space in Private Developments Design and Management Guidelines" (the Guidelines). The Guidelines are advisory in nature, and aim to strike a reasonable balance between the owners' rights under the lease conditions or the terms of the Deed of Dedication and the reasonable use and enjoyment of the public space by the public, and to provide a set of good practices. According to the Guidelines, owners may choose to permit non-commercial / charitable activities, such as musical performances, entertainment performances, and / or charitable activities, on the POSPD on a voluntary basis and subject to the provisions in the contractual documents. The Guidelines also lay out advice regarding the management of such non-commercial and charitable activities. For instance, the owners / management companies should state clearly the procedure of applications and the rules and regulations for conducting such activities in the POSPD, and the potential users should submit applications to the owners / management companies of the POSPD for approval. If the non-commercial or charitable activities do not comply with the lease conditions or the terms of the Deed of Dedication, the owners should first approach the Lands Department for a waiver under the lease and / or the Buildings Department for the necessary permission under the Deed of Dedication (as the case may be). The owners / management companies also have the right to set site-specific rules and requirements on matters such as the appropriateness of conducting such activity on the site, installation of temporary structures, the use of equipment, duration of the exhibition, and crowd control measures, etc.

(4) and (5) The "Open Stage" is an outdoor performance scheme at Sha Tin Town Hall of LCSD. Applicants are only required to pass an audition to become eligible for registration of performance session(s). The audition panel

includes representatives of the cultural sector, Sha Tin District Council, and Sha Tin Town Hall. Eligible performers need not attend any audition again.

The statistics required are tabulated as follows –

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Applications received	4	11	13	8	26	62
Applicants passing the audition to become eligible performers / groups*	2	8	9	6	7	32
Applicants failing to pass the audition*	0	2	1	1	11	15
Eligible performers / groups failing to register for performance after qualification#	0	1	3	0	1	5

* Some applicants did not show up for audition under the "Open Stage"

Some eligible performers / groups did not register for performance after audition due to subsequent change of their members' composition or the content / format of their performance(s).

Performances under the "Open Stage" are publicised at LCSD's website and in the vicinity of Sha Tin Town Hall. LCSD will continue to look for appropriate publicity channels to make known the scheme to more performers. The rules and regulations for use of the venue now applicable to the "Open Stage" scheme are set to the minimum to facilitate the needs of the performers. For example, performers and the content of their performances shall be similar to what have been auditioned, performers may accept but cannot actively solicit any donations in appreciation of their performances. With respect to noise control, performers are only required to observe the requirements set out at the Noise Control Guidelines for Holding Open Air Entertainment Activities issued by EPD. While there is no plan for LCSD to extend the scheme to other venues, it will consider such an opportunity should there be suitable venues in the future.

Apart from the "Open Stage", LCSD has from time to time put up cultural activities such as concerts, Cantonese operas and dance performances at the plaza of its performance venues, bringing arts to the community.