

Second round results of Public Policy Research Funding Scheme 2018-19 announced

The Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office (PICO) announced today (September 5) the results of the second round applications to the Public Policy Research (PPR) Funding Scheme in 2018-19.

The PPR Funding Scheme aims to promote public policy research and provide evidence-based research to facilitate public policy discussion. Applications are accepted throughout the year. For the second round exercise in 2018-19, PICO received 26 applications. On the advice of an assessment panel, PICO has decided to support seven projects with a total funding of about \$4.7 million.

Applications to the PPR Funding Scheme are assessed by an assessment panel, chaired by and comprising experienced academics, who will take into account comments of reviewers who are academics and experts outside the panel in considering the applications. Each application is considered on its merits and relevance to public policy development in Hong Kong. A declaration of interests system is in place to ensure that the assessments are fair and impartial.

Details of the funded projects have been uploaded to PICO's website (www.pico.gov.hk/en/PRFS).

Hong Kong Customs strives to combat sale of suspected illicit TV set-top boxes

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (September 4) conducted an operation to combat the sale of suspected illicit TV set-top boxes and seized a total of 131 suspected illicit TV set-top boxes with an estimated market value of about \$100,000. Four persons were also arrested.

Customs has kept on conducting patrols against infringing activities in various districts in Hong Kong and found some shops selling suspected illicit TV set-top boxes which could be used to watch pay TV programmes for free by means of bypassing copyright protection measures adopted by pay TV programme copyright owners.

After in-depth investigation with the assistance of copyright owners, Customs yesterday conducted an operation and raided three shops in Tsuen Wan where the suspected illicit TV set-top boxes were seized.

During the operation, Customs officers also arrested two men and two women, aged between 20 and 66. Two of them are shop owners while the other two are salespersons.

Investigation is ongoing. The arrested persons have been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs reminds traders that according to the Copyright Ordinance, a person commits an offence if the person sells or lets for hire a relevant device or provides relevant service for the purpose of a circumvention business. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for four years. Customs also reminds members of the public to watch pay TV programmes through legitimate means.

Customs will continue to step up street and Internet patrols to curb any form of infringing activity.

Members of the public may report any suspected infringing activities to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, September 5, 2018 is 104.5 (up 0.2 against yesterday's index).

Public views invited for consultation on requiring drivers to stop after road accidents involving injury to dogs or cats

The Food and Health Bureau and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) jointly launched a public consultation on July 3, 2018, to invite views from the public on the proposed amendment to section 56(4) of the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap 374) to require drivers to stop in

the case of a road accident which causes injury to a dog or a cat. The Consultation will end on September 30, 2018. Public views are welcomed.

At present, the Ordinance provides that a driver of a vehicle shall stop if an accident involving that vehicle occurs whereby damage is caused to, amongst others, an animal other than an animal in or on that vehicle or a trailer drawn thereby, and provide his or her particulars to any police officer or any person having reasonable grounds. If the driver for any reason does not give the particulars mentioned above, the driver must report the accident in person at the nearest police station or to any police officer as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any case not later than 24 hours after the accident. "Animal" is currently defined as any horse, cattle, ass, mule, sheep, pig or goat.

A spokesperson for the AFCD said, "The number of dogs and cats kept by the public has been increasing in recent years, and therefore the risk of dogs and cats getting injured in traffic accidents has also gone up. However, since dogs and cats are not covered by the Ordinance, drivers are not legally required to stop when they hit such animals. Public concern about animal welfare and health has been raised for cases in which the vehicle driver did not stop after an incident and left the scene without letting the animals receive attention.

"To better protect the health and welfare of cats and dogs, it is proposed that they shall be included in the definition of 'animal' in section 56 of the Ordinance."

Apart from cats and dogs, the Government also noted that there was opinion that wild animals, such as monkeys and wild pigs, should also be included in the legislation concerned to step up protection for them. The Government is open to this proposal and will take into account the comments received from this consultation exercise when making the final legislative proposal.

The consultation paper can be downloaded from the websites of the AFCD (www.pets.gov.hk/english/highlights/highlights.html) or the GovHK website (www.gov.hk/en/residents/government/publication/consultation/current.htm). Views on the consultation paper should be sent by post to the Office of the AFCD, 5/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Hong Kong, by fax to 2728 3182, or by email to amdd_aws@afcd.gov.hk on or before September 30, 2018.

[Update on cluster of Rhinovirus cases in Siu Lam Hospital](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on a cluster of patients infected with Rhinovirus in a male ward for severe intellectual disability, the spokesperson for Siu Lam Hospital gave the following update today (September 5):

One more 47-year-old patient in the ward presented with respiratory symptoms. Appropriate viral tests were arranged for the patient and the test results were positive for Rhinovirus. The patient concerned is being treated under isolation with stable condition.

Admission to the ward has been suspended and restricted visiting has been imposed. Infection control measures have already been stepped up according to established guidelines. All other patients in the ward are under close surveillance.

The case has been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.