

Professional Services Advancement Support Scheme invites new round of applications

â€‹The Main Programme under the Professional Services Advancement Support Scheme (PASS) is inviting a new round of applications for project proposals starting today (December 1) from non-profit-distributing organisations such as professional bodies, trade and industrial organisations and research institutes.

PASS, with a total allocation of \$200 million, aims at funding non-profit-making industry-led projects to increase exchanges and co-operation between Hong Kong's professional services and external counterparts, promote relevant publicity activities, and enhance the standards and external competitiveness of Hong Kong's professional services.

The maximum grant for each approved project under the Main Programme of PASS is \$3 million or 90 per cent of the total eligible project cost, whichever is lower. A wide range of professional services, such as accounting, legal and dispute resolution, architecture, engineering, healthcare, information and communications technology, design and technical testing and analysis, are eligible for the Main Programme. Sector-specific projects and cross-sectoral projects are both welcome. Expenses directly incurred for implementing a project, such as manpower costs, venue and set-up costs, production and promotion costs, and the project team and active participants' travel and accommodation costs outside Hong Kong are typically eligible for funding support under the Scheme. Funding support may also be provided for travel and accommodation costs incurred by participants of relatively longer professional internships or attachment programmes outside Hong Kong which are funded by the Main Programme.

Up to early November 2024, over 110 projects had been funded under the Main Programme, including project deliverables in and outside Hong Kong. The deliverables include capacity-building programmes for enhancing the standards of local professionals, such as training programmes, workshops and study tours; outreach and promotional activities for showcasing the strengths of Hong Kong's professional services, such as roadshows, promotional seminars and participation in exhibitions outside Hong Kong; exchange activities for deepening interaction between Hong Kong professionals and their external counterparts, such as visits to other economies and international conferences and seminars held in Hong Kong; and research projects on potential external markets for Hong Kong professional services and development of best practice guidelines and manuals for professionals. Details about the Main Programme and its funded projects are available at www.pass.gov.hk/main/en/home.

Furthermore, with a view to stepping up the promotion of Hong Kong's competitive edges and professional services to Mainland cities (including

those in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area) and overseas markets, \$50 million has been set aside for the Professionals Participation Subsidy Programme (PSP) under PASS to subsidise Hong Kong major professional bodies to participate in relevant activities organised by the Government (such as Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices) and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council after the pandemic situation has stabilised. Details of the PSP and its latest list of eligible activities are available at www.pass.gov.hk/psp. Hong Kong professionals from the eligible professional sectors under PASS may make use of the PSP subsidy to join the relevant activities.

The Main Programme and the PSP receive applications for project and activity proposals all year round and they are processed on a quarterly basis. The deadline for the new round of applications is February 28, 2025. A briefing session will be held this month for organisations interested in applying for PASS funding. One-on-one consultations are also available upon request for discussing preliminary project ideas or projects currently in the planning stage. For registration for the briefing session, scheduling a consultation session or other enquiries, please contact the PASS Secretariat at 3655 5418 or pass@cedb.gov.hk.

Four more trial projects on hydrogen fuel technology given agreement-in-principle by Inter-departmental Working Group on Using Hydrogen as Fuel (with photos)

A spokesman for the Environment and Ecology Bureau (EEB) said that the Inter-departmental Working Group on Using Hydrogen as Fuel (Working Group) led by the EEB has given agreement-in-principle to four more applications of trial projects on hydrogen fuel technology at its meeting last Friday (November 29).

The relevant projects involve:

(a) an application submitted by Sinopec (Hong Kong) Limited, which involves production of hydrogen with solar energy at the restored Pillar Point Valley Landfill in Tuen Mun;

(b) an application jointly submitted by China State Construction Engineering (Hong Kong) Limited, Hong Kong Nation-Synergy International Hydrogen Power Technology Co., Limited and Sinopec (Hong Kong) Limited to try out a 19-

seater hydrogen fuel cell (HFC) minibus and a 55-seater HFC coach for providing shuttle service commuting the construction site for workers, and three HFC forklift trucks to be used at the construction site;

(c) an application jointly submitted by Kingroad Logistics Limited, Allenbus Automotive Technology Co., Limited and Hong Kong Hydrogen Fuel Cell Company Limited to try out a HFC medium goods vehicle for cross-boundary transport; and

(d) an application submitted by Sinopec (Hong Kong) Limited to test out a HFC light goods vehicle for transport application at its oil terminal in Tsing Yi.

The spokesperson for the EEB stated, "The Working Group has promptly initiated the examination process upon receipt of detailed information of the trial projects. Following the applicants' enhancement on the designs and technical details according to feedback from government departments to ensure that the trial projects can be carried out smoothly and safely, the Working Group has given agreement-in-principle to the four applications at its meeting on November 29."

To date, the Working Group has given agreement-in-principle in stages to a total of 18 applications of hydrogen energy trial projects. Among them, Citybus Limited's HFC double-decker bus has already commenced daily passenger service across the territory. Sinopec (Hong Kong) Limited completed the construction of Hong Kong's first public hydrogen refuelling station at Au Tau, Yuen Long last month. Expected to commence operations in about two months' time, the station could supply hydrogen to the three HFC street-cleaning vehicles that are about to launch their trial. After the meeting, the Chairperson of the Working Group, the Under Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Miss Diane Wong, along with other members of the Working Group, visited the trial of hydrogen fuelled light rail vehicle currently being conducted by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTR) this morning (December 1). The project involves a hydrogen-powered train being tested on the sections of existing Tuen Mun Light Rail network during nighttime non-service hours and running as a non-revenue train, in order to collect data for assessing the technical feasibility of hydrogen energy as a clean energy option for the MTR network.

The Working Group will continue to make reference to the operational data and experience collected from all local trials, in order to provide advice for the continuous enhancement of the safety and technical guidelines on the local application of hydrogen energy.

The Government announced the Strategy of Hydrogen Development in Hong Kong (the Strategy) in June this year. To facilitate on-going implementation of the Strategy, it is suggested to expand the roles and functions of the Working Group, in order to assist the implementation of the various measures set out in the Strategy more effectively, including (1) continuing to review and approve trial projects; (2) co-ordinating the development and continuous enhancement of the relevant technical standards and guidelines for hydrogen application under different scenarios having regard to the local context; (3)

advising on the pathway for wider application and commercialisation of hydrogen energy trial projects; (4) providing support for local infrastructure development and manpower training for hydrogen application; (5) assisting in the promotion of the popularisation of hydrogen application; and (6) regularly reviewing progress of implementing the Strategy. Also, the Labour Department (LD) has agreed to become a new member of the Working Group upon its invitation, with a view to assess trial applications related to hydrogen-powered mobile machinery more effectively.

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) is now working with the Department of Justice on the amendments to the Gas Safety Ordinance to include safe regulation on hydrogen fuel and it is targeted to introduce a bill into the Legislative Council next year. The EMSD is also actively facilitating training for professionals in hydrogen technology and is currently discussing with the Vocational Training Council and suppliers of hydrogen fuel systems to establish relevant safety training courses for practitioners in the hydrogen fuel trade. With a view to promoting the development of green hydrogen applications in Hong Kong in the longer run, and to support Hong Kong's development in the field of green energy, the consultant engaged by the EMSD is conducting study for formulating the approach of hydrogen standard certification suitable to Hong Kong.

The spokesman said, "The EMSD reported to the Working Group that the study would be conducted with reference to Mainland and international experiences and the latest developments on hydrogen standard certification, aiming at formulating the approach of hydrogen standard certification suitable to Hong Kong by 2027. In terms of promotion and education, the EMSD actively organises science outreach events and seminars to enhance public awareness and understanding of the development of hydrogen energy."

The spokesman supplemented, "To promote the green transformation of land transport, 'The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address' announced the earmarking of funding under the New Energy Transport Fund to launch the Subsidy Scheme for Trials of HFC Electric Heavy Vehicles. We will announce the details of the acceptance of invitations under this scheme in due course."

The spokesman further supplemented, "The Government is also committed to promoting hydrogen development through regional collaboration. The Pearl River Delta Air Quality Management and Monitoring Special Panel under the Hong Kong-Guangdong Joint Working Group on Environmental Protection and Combating Climate Change has suggested to cover demonstration projects of cross-boundary delivery vehicles transiting into HFC vehicles in its working plan for 2025. The EMSD has also been maintaining close communication with the State Administration for Market Regulation and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China on the technical level. In addition, the EEB will also have further exchanges with the Mainland authorities regarding cross-boundary issues involving the development of hydrogen energy."

The Working Group is formed by the EEB, the Transport and Logistics Bureau, the Development Bureau, the Security Bureau, the Environmental

Protection Department, the EMSD, the Fire Services Department, the Transport Department, the Marine Department, the Planning Department, the Lands Department, the Buildings Department, the Architectural Services Department and the LD.



[District governance: Scheme helps ease parental pressure](#)

The Government strives to enhance the efficacy of district governance and actively follows up on various district initiatives. One of them is the School-based After School Care Service Scheme that targets to enhance support for parents.

Funded by the Community Care Fund, this well-received scheme has been expanded in the 2024-25 school year to cover over 110 primary schools in 18 districts, benefitting over 5 000 students.

News.gov.hk visited one of the participating primary schools to learn more about the after-school activity arrangements and spoke to one of the service operators as well as parents and students about the benefits of joining the scheme.

The story is available at www.news.gov.hk/eng/feature today (December 1) in text and video format.

Liquor Licensing Board to meet on Tuesday

The following is issued on behalf of the Liquor Licensing Board:

The Liquor Licensing Board will meet on Tuesday (December 3) to consider two applications for transfer and renewal of liquor licences.

The applications are (not in order of discussion):

Kowloon:

LOS ANGEL in Tsim Sha Tsui

New Territories:

Twelve Flavors (ST) in Sha Tin

The meeting will be held at 9.45am in the conference room, Room 102, 1/F, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

Application arrangements for Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions for 2025/26 academic year

The Education Bureau (EDB) reminded 2025 DSE candidates who wish to pursue further studies on the Mainland that the online application for the Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions (Admission Scheme) is open for application today (December 1).

According to the Admission Scheme arrangements for the 2025/26 academic year announced by the Ministry of Education (MoE), a total of 145 Mainland higher education institutions (listed in the Annex) will consider admission applications of Hong Kong students taking part in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination 2025 based on their HKDSE results, thus exempting them from taking the Joint Entrance Examination for Universities on the Mainland. The MoE has commissioned the Co-Office of the Mainland Chinese Universities and Colleges of the People's Republic of China for the Joint Examinations and Enrolment of the Students from Hong Kong,

Macao, Taiwan and Overseas Chinese-Resident Areas and Countries (the Joint Enrolment Office) to accept online applications and conduct admission screenings, and has entrusted the China Education Exchange (HK) Centre (HKCEEC) on matters such as eligibility vetting and publicity.

The application and related procedures for the Admission Scheme are conducted online. Applicants should access the website of the Education Examinations Authority of Guangdong Province (eea.gd.gov.cn) from December 1 to 31 this year and click on "Admission of Hong Kong Students Taking the HKDSE Examination" under the menu of "Application and Examination" to submit their applications and upload the following:

1. a scanned copy of one's Hong Kong identity card;
2. a scanned copy of a valid Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Residents or a Residence Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Residents; and
3. a digital passport photo.

Applicants can log on to the online application system to confirm application verification results before January 10, 2025. As for cases in which applicants provided supplementary information as requested by the system, they can log on and check the latest verification results before January 23, 2025. Applicants passing the application verification should settle fees and complete the application confirmation process according to the instructions provided in the online application system before January 31, 2025. Applicants will be assigned a candidate number for identification purposes and can log on to the online application system to check the candidate number before February 14, 2025.

Applicants must complete the application confirmation process before proceeding to the admission stage. In addition, applicants may upload their Student Learning Profiles via the online application system before June 14, 2025. Schools may upload relevant information for the School Principal Nomination Scheme via the same system from February 15 to June 14, 2025.

Institutions may arrange interviews/practical exams based on the application information submitted by applicants. Applicants should look out for the institutions' arrangements and announcements. Institutions will announce the admission results after the release of the HKDSE Examination results, and arrange an online supplementary enrolment (i.e. offer of surplus admission quotas) based on the enrolment situation. Details of the admission arrangements and enrolment notice will be announced in due course.

A handbook (Chinese version only) jointly published by the EDB, HKCEEC and Hok Yau Club provides comprehensive information on the Admission Scheme and pursuing studies on the Mainland, including information on all institutions participating in the Admission Scheme, programmes offered, strategy on programme choices, and accounts of experiences by graduates of the Mainland universities. The handbook is now being distributed free of charge at the Mainland Higher Education Expo 2025/26 held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre while stocks last. The e-version of the handbook as well as other details of the Admission Scheme have also been uploaded onto the EDB's website (www.edb.gov.hk/admissionscheme).

Furthermore, eligible Hong Kong students enrolled in undergraduate programmes of designated Mainland institutions can apply for means-tested subsidies or non-means-tested subsidies under the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme (MUSSS). Application details for the MUSSS for the 2025/26 academic year will be announced in mid-2025.