

BFAC appreciates HKSTP's work on Global Acceleration Academy

The following is issued on behalf of the Business Facilitation Advisory Committee Secretariat:

The Business Facilitation Advisory Committee held its 43rd meeting today (October 7). At the meeting, members received a briefing from the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTP) on its Global Acceleration Academy (GAA), which is an international business acceleration programme open to high-potential local and overseas start-ups and technology companies. Its aim is to support and foster seamless adoption of innovation and technology (I&T).

The Committee appreciated the efforts of the HKSTP in promoting the use of I&T in driving incubation, validation and implementation through the co-creation work of the GAA.

The Committee also received the work reports of its three task forces:

Wholesale and Retail Task Force (WRTF)

- The Fire Services Department provided updates on the latest progress of the amendments to the Dangerous Goods (General) Regulations and the Dangerous Goods (Application and Exemption) Regulation 2012 and the proposed amendments, including the control regime of Dangerous Goods in Consumer Packs. The proposed amendments are intended to align the local regulatory regime on Dangerous Goods (DGs) with international standards, such as the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code. The WRTF supported the proposed amendments, which could enhance the safety standard within the purview of the regulatory control of DGs in Hong Kong.
- The Trade and Industry Department (TID) briefed the WRTF on the Transshipment Cargo Exemption Scheme (TCES). Under the TCES, registered shipping companies and airlines, or their appointed freight forwarders, are exempted from the designated import/export licensing requirements in respect of specified types of transshipment cargo, subject to certain conditions. The TID also launched two trade facilitation measures in respect of the TCES under the "Be the Smart Regulator" Programme, namely the provision of end-to-end e-licensing services for new registration under the TCES and the extension of the validity period of TCES Certificates of Exemption from one year to two years. The WRTF welcomed the measures, which could help the transport industry save operating costs and administrative efforts.

Food Business and Related Services Task Force (FRSTF)

- The Labour Department (LD) briefed the FRSTF on the requirements under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, including liability for compensation for work injury and compulsory employees' compensation insurance, and the approach of arranging for employees to take no-pay leave, with a view to maintaining harmonious employment relations. The FRSTF was thankful for the LD's clear explanation on the regulatory requirements and the tips for the trade on good labour relations.
- The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), the Fire Services Department, the Buildings Department (BD) and the Independent Checking Unit of the Office of the Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) (ICU) devised measures to assist licence holders to obtain full licences before their provisional licences expire in order to meet the eligibility criteria for the Catering Business (Social Distancing) Subsidy Scheme under the second round of the Anti-epidemic Fund. The FRSTF expressed appreciation to the departments concerned for developing business facilitation measures to assist the trade in obtaining full licences.
- The BD and the ICU briefed the FRSTF on the Building (Minor Works) (Amendment) Regulation 2020 and the implementation details. The FRSTF appreciated the efforts of the two departments in briefing the trade on the new regulatory requirements prior to implementation, which would facilitate compliance.

Task Force on Business Liaison Groups (BLGTF)

- The FEHD briefed members on a number of business facilitation measures to assist the trade to obtain a full food business licence before the expiry of the provisional licence. The BLGTF was grateful for the FEHD's efforts in improving the licensing service for food business and supporting the trade.
- The Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) under the Home Affairs Department briefed members on its current enforcement actions against unlicensed guesthouses and the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation (Amendment) Ordinance 2020 which sought to improve the existing licensing regime, facilitate enforcement action and enhance deterrence against unlicensed hotels/guesthouses by measures such as introducing strict liability on owners/tenants of the premises, increasing the maximum penalty and empowering the OLA to apply for closure orders and search warrants. The BLGTF thanked the OLA for the measures to bring

about more effective enforcement against unlicensed premises which would be beneficial to the trades' business operation.

- The Drainage Services Department (DSD) and the Water Supplies Department (WSD) briefed members on the new arrangement of allowing trade operators to use secondary water meters installed and maintained by the WSD in lieu of private sub-meters for determining the Trade Effluent Surcharge payment required for the restaurants in existing hotels. The BLGTF thanked the DSD and the WSD for the measure, which would reduce the compliance burden of the trade.

The Committee also deeply appreciated the commitment and achievements of the bureaux and departments in continuously enhancing their business licensing services under the "Be the Smart Regulator" Programme.

Papers of the Committee meeting are available at www.gov.hk/en/business/supportenterprises/bf/advisory/index.htm for public access.