

BFAC notes Government's efforts in facilitating contract compliance for construction industry

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

The Business Facilitation Advisory Committee held its 51st meeting today (June 28). At the meeting, the Development Bureau (DEVB) briefed members on the findings of a Business Impact Assessment related to the latest ideas on payment arrangement for construction works in Hong Kong. The Committee noted the DEVB's continuous efforts to enhance the overall development of the construction sector.

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

Wholesale and Retail Task Force (WRTF)

- The Hong Kong Productivity Council, the implementation agent of the Chinese Medicine Development Fund (CMDF), briefed the WRTF on the Proprietary Chinese Medicine Registration Supporting Scheme (A3 Scheme) under the CMDF. The A3 Scheme aims to provide eligible local licensed proprietary Chinese medicines (pCms) manufacturers or wholesalers with subsidy and technical support for the application for Certificate of Registration of pCm, including the engagement of consultants to provide relevant expert advice and subsidisation of the conduct of necessary laboratory testing for pCm products. As at mid-March 2023, the A3 Scheme has approved approximately 650 applications, benefitting 130 qualified and licensed local manufacturers or wholesalers of pCm. The WRTF welcomed the setting up of the relevant funding scheme under the CMDF and considered it conducive to supporting the development of Chinese medicine and enhancing the overall standard of the sector.
- The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) introduced to the WRTF the System for Small Volume Exemption (SSVE) which facilitates the application and renewal for exemption from nutrition labelling by the trade. Since 2014, the trade can submit Small Volume Exemption application electronically. The CFS has further enhanced the IT systems and launched the SSVE under the Food Trader Portal in December 2022. The system provides new online payment function, and formal approval letter will be issued to applicants automatically upon confirmation of online transaction. As at the end of March 2023, over 3 200 new and renewal products had been processed by the SSVE, and 94 per cent of the products were processed via online submission. The WRTF appreciated the CFS's implementation of the SSVE

which provides the trade with business facilitation e-services.

Food Business and Related Services Task Force (FRSTF)

- The FEHD reported on the implementation progress of the two new initiatives, namely, introducing a Professional Certification System (PCS) for food business-related full licences and relaxing the restrictions on types of food items sold by light refreshment restaurants, to the FRSTF. Their implementation has been generally smooth since commencement on March 1, 2023. Upon acquiring sufficient experience, the FEHD will review the effectiveness of the new measures and consider extending the PCS to other food business licences. The FRSTF welcomed the two new initiatives, and suggested the FEHD enhancing the publicity.
- The FEHD also briefed the FRSTF on the "Quick Reference Guide to Application for Restaurant Licences" published in December 2022, which provides information on the criteria for issuing restaurant licences and the application procedures in simple and easy-to-understand illustrations. The FRSTF welcomed the new Quick Reference Guide and expressed appreciation to the FEHD for their efforts in developing business facilitation measures to assist those who intend to open a restaurant to understand the relevant licensing requirements more easily.
- To further assist an applicant holding a provisional food business licence to obtain a full licence in a timely manner, the FEHD also briefed the FRSTF on the specific action timetable for each licence application in the notification letter for approval for a provisional food business licence. In parallel, the time allowed for a food business licence applicant to comply with all licensing requirements for a full licence has been revised to three months after the expiry of the provisional licence. The FRSTF expressed its understanding on the revision of the time allowed to comply with all licensing requirements and suggested the FEHD further digitise the process of licence applications between departments with a view to shortening the lead time.

Task Force on Business Liaison Groups (BLGTF)

- The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) briefed the BLGTF on the e-services provided for the application for Permit to Use and Operate for Amusement Rides, including e-submission, e-payment, e-tracking and e-licence, which can enhance the efficiency of the whole

application process. The BLGTF thanked the EMSD for implementing the e-services which facilitate the trade in licence applications.

- The EMSD and the Buildings Department (BD) also briefed the BLGTF on the Feed-in Tariff (FiT) Scheme and the facilitation measures for the installation of solar photovoltaic system by the private sector. The BLGTF appreciated the efforts of the EMSD and the BD for the clear explanation of the FiT Scheme and the relevant facilitation measures which help encourage the private sector to consider investing in renewable energy.

The Committee expressed appreciation of the commitment and achievements of the bureaux and departments in continuously implementing the business facilitation measures under the "Be the Smart Regulator" Programme to enhance their business licensing services.

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