

Briefing on Development Programme for Team Sports 2024-2027 held by Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (with photos)

The Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB) today (January 17) held a briefing at the Central Government Offices to introduce the Development Programme for Team Sports 2024-2027 (new round of programme), and to outline its funding scope, funding criteria and programme schedule. Around 60 participants including representatives from national sports associations (NSAs) of team sports, coaches and athletes attended the briefing.

The Commissioner for Sports, Mr Sam Wong, visited the eight team sports supported under the Development Programme for Team Sports 2018-2023 (previous round of programme) in November 2023, and exchanged views with the representatives of relevant NSAs, coaches and athletes on the development of each team sports and the needs of athletes.

With the endorsement of the Sports Commission, the CSTB launched a new round of programme in January 2024, which aims to provide additional funding support to the relative NSAs of eight team sports with a team size of five or above (namely basketball, volleyball, handball, men's water polo, hockey, baseball, softball and women's football). On top of national squads, the programme is extended to members of the second-tier squads. The goal is to improve the teams' performances in the 20th Asian Games Aichi-Nagoya 2026, and increase their chances of attaining elite status. The funding period for the new round of programme is from January 2024 to March 2027, which is expected to benefit about 430 athletes each year with an annual budget of around \$30 million.

The new round of programme has introduced targeted support including the provision of additional resources to develop second-tier squads, dedicated funding for the engagement of high-performance coaches and the strengthening of sports medicine support. The CSTB will review the effectiveness of the development programme after the 20th Asian Games Aichi-Nagoya 2026, including but not limited to the performances of each team sports at the Asian Games, as well as the development progress of second-tier squads. Depending on results of the review, the Government will exclude team sports that do not meet the standards from future funding plans to align with the long-term development direction of team sports. The Government will monitor the implementation of the programme.

The previous round of programme has provided funding support to about 250 athletes each year since its launch in 2018. The CSTB disbursed a total of over \$85 million subsidies to relevant NSAs and members of the national squads, with an annual expenditure of around \$20 million.

