

Countryside Conservation Funding Scheme approves 10 projects

The Secretariat of the Countryside Conservation Funding Scheme (CCFS) said today (September 2) that a total of 10 projects involving a total grant of around \$40 million have been approved in the new round of application. Together with the previous three rounds of application, a total of 27 projects involving a total amount of about \$140 million have been approved.

The CCFS supports non-profit-making organisations to organise diverse and innovative conservation and revitalisation projects in collaboration with villagers. The CCFS covers a wide spectrum of areas ranging from natural environment/habitats and non-graded built heritage to cultural and historic assets. All CCFS applications are considered and examined by the Advisory Committee on Countryside Conservation chaired by the Secretary for the Environment.

The 10 approved projects in this round of application cover a wide range of topics and sites, including different nature conservation activities in Lai Chi Wo such as ecologically friendly farming and maintenance of habitat diversity; environment and landscape improvement works; engagement of villagers in simple village work; and organisation of theatrical performances with countryside cultural elements. In addition, there are research projects on the exploration of the history, culture and livelihood stories of Yim Tin Tsai in Sai Kung; the use of an innovative approach to raise public awareness on the ecology of the Deep Bay Wetland Outside Ramsar Site; and the study and conservation of the architecture and Hakka living culture of Kuk Po village in Sha Tau Kok, as well as the collection and documentation of Kuk Po's history, culture and living footprint. Other projects involve the development of a revitalisation model led by the village community and villagers, and the setting up of an information platform in respect of countryside conservation and revitalisation.

These projects are expected to enhance ecological conservation and management work, revitalise local villages, increase public appreciation of village culture, promote eco-tourism and create more green job opportunities. The CCFS will continue to make the best use of public resources to promote the sustainable conservation and revitalisation of the remote countryside in a holistic approach and in synergy with the Lantau Conservation Fund. Details of the 10 approved projects are available on the CCFS webpage (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/conservation/ccfs/ccfs_approved_projects.html). Information on the next round of application will be announced on the CCFS webpage.

In order to achieve sustainable conservation and revitalisation in the remote countryside, the CCFS will introduce enhancement measures to facilitate the smooth implementation of the project and increase the

flexibility of the funding scheme so as to encourage different organisations to carry out diverse countryside conservation and revitalisation projects. These measures include the assignment of a subject officer to strengthen communication with the project organisations, extension of the public access periods of the restored built heritage, streamlining procurement procedures, and encouraging project organisations to conduct more conservation activities. Details are available in the Guide to Application on the CCFS webpage (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/conservation/ccfs/ccfs_application.html).