

# Countryside Conservation Funding Scheme approves seven projects and introduces enhancement measures

The Secretariat of the Countryside Conservation Funding Scheme (CCFS) said today (February 20) that seven projects involving a total grant of around \$40 million have been approved in the latest round of application. Enhancement measures will also be introduced to the CCFS to provide more flexibility and increase the amount of grants for the projects in order to attract more non-profit-making organisations and more diverse proposals for taking part in the conservation effort of Hong Kong's remote countryside.

All CCFS applications are considered and examined by the Advisory Committee on Countryside Conservation (ACCC) chaired by the Secretary for the Environment. Topics covered in the seven projects approved in this round of application included the conservation of the ecological condition of fishponds in Ramsar Site, promotion of a fishpond conservation culture and an enhancement of habitats for butterflies. Also included were the design of walking trails comprising historic churches and village cultural experiences, feasibility studies on water transportation to remote countryside areas, research studies on the architecture and landscape of Hakka villages, as well as an assessment and formulation of guidelines in relation to the revitalisation of villages such as Lai Chi Wo. The ACCC expects that these projects will enhance the conservation management of areas with high ecological value, revitalise local villages and promote eco-tourism.

To encourage different conservation and revitalisation projects to be carried out in the countryside, the EPD, in consultation with the ACCC, will introduce enhancement measures which include increasing the number of application assessments to three rounds every year on a need basis and increasing the funding cap for specific types of projects from \$2 million to \$3 million. The enhancement measures are expected to provide more flexibility, encourage more diverse and innovative countryside conservation projects or activities as well as create additional green job opportunities.

Details of the seven approved projects are available on the CCFS webpage ([www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/conservation/ccfs/ccfs\\_approved\\_projects.html](http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/conservation/ccfs/ccfs_approved_projects.html)). Details of the next round of application will be announced on the CCFS webpage on February 26.