

EPD and ferry operators sign Pilot Scheme for Electric Ferries subsidy agreement (with photo)

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) signed a subsidy agreement for the Pilot Scheme for Electric Ferries (Pilot Scheme) with the Sun Ferry Services Company Limited and the Fortune Ferry Company Limited today (November 29).

The Government announced the Clean Air Plan for Hong Kong 2035 and the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050 in June and October this year respectively, outlining the strategies and targets for enhancing air quality, combating climate change and achieving carbon neutrality for Hong Kong. One of the key measures is to promote the use of new energy ferries.

A spokesman for the EPD said that the Pilot Scheme aims to test the technical and commercial viability of using electric ferries in Hong Kong. The Government has earmarked \$350 million to subsidise the participating ferry operators for the construction of electric ferries and the associated charging facilities, as well as the operational, maintenance and repair expenditures incurred by the operation of the electric ferries during a 24-month trial period. The four in-harbour ferry routes participating in the Pilot Scheme are the ferry route plying North Point and Hung Hom by the Sun Ferry; the ferry route plying Sai Wan Ho and Kwun Tong by the Coral Sea Ferry Service Company Limited; the ferry route plying Central and Tsim Sha Tsui by the "Star" Ferry Company Limited; and the water taxi plying Kai Tak, Hung Hom, Tsim Sha Tsui, Central and West Kowloon by the Fortune Ferry.

To implement the Pilot Scheme, the Government has established an inter-departmental working group (IWG) to work out the details of the Pilot Scheme, oversee its progress and evaluate the performance of the electric ferries. The EPD has also engaged a consultant to help design the electric ferries and the associated charging facilities, and assist the ferry operators to prepare tenders for the construction of electric ferries. Meanwhile, an expert panel comprising a local naval architect, academics and the IWG members has been set up to assess the design proposals of the electric ferries.

On the other hand, the EPD has engaged an engineering consultant to work with the power companies and relevant government departments to prepare the engineering design of the charging facilities for the electric ferries. The Government will invite tenders for the construction of charging facilities at the ferry piers. The trial of electric ferries is tentatively scheduled for commencement in 2023.

"The subsidy agreement will specify the Government's subsidy and set out the ferry operators' responsibilities for the relevant liabilities in respect of operation, management, repair and insurance. After signing the subsidy

agreements, the ferry operators will invite tenders for the construction of electric ferries. The Government and the two remaining in-harbour ferry operators are finalising the details of the agreement with a view to signing the subsidy agreement as soon as possible," the spokesman added.

