

Further assistance from Arts and Culture Sector Subsidy Scheme under Anti-epidemic Fund

The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) announced today (December 24) that, since arts groups have been hard hit by the closure of performance venues of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) as a result of the fourth wave of the COVID-19 epidemic, the HAB will deploy its own resources to provide an additional subsidy of \$80,000 per arts group to the 44 arts groups funded by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC), 14 venue partners (VPs) under the LCSD and 41 Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme (ACDFS) grantees.

"To safeguard public health, performance venues of the LCSD have been completely closed since December 2 in accordance with the anti-epidemic requirements. We understand that this measure has seriously affected the programme arrangements and operation of arts groups," the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Caspar Tsui, said.

"Therefore, in addition to the appropriation from the Anti-epidemic Fund, I have decided to deploy the limited resources of the HAB to support about 100 arts groups funded by the HKADC, VPs under the LCSD and ACDFS grantees. A subsidy of \$80,000 will be provided to each of the arts groups."

On December 21, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved the proposal to inject \$6.4 billion into the Anti-epidemic Fund (AEF) to provide further relief to businesses and individuals hard hit by the tightening of social distancing measures. The AEF Steering Committee has approved the actual measures under the AEF today. Amongst the measures, the Government will once again provide further one-off assistance of \$7,500 to each eligible individual arts practitioner and freelancer who received the subsidy through application from the HKADC and the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong. It is expected that about 5 000 individual arts practitioners and freelancers will benefit.

The HAB expects that the above subsidy will be disbursed from January 2021.

As some companies in the performing industry had hired the venues of the LCSD to organise pop concerts, the HAB has included a measure to provide subsidies to companies in the performing industry which organised pop concerts in the third round of injection into the AEF. The Performing Industry Association (Hong Kong) Limited has confirmed the implementation details and will disburse a subsidy of \$100,000 to each of the eligible companies as soon as practicable.