

Further support to tourism industry under third round of Anti-epidemic Fund

The Finance Committee of the Legislative Council today (September 28) approved the third round of the Anti-epidemic Fund (AEF). Further to the first and second rounds of the AEF, the Government will continue to support the tourism industry to help tide it over the very challenging time.

The Tourism Industry Support Scheme under the third round of the AEF includes the following helping measures:

(1) to provide each licensed travel agent with a cash subsidy, directly proportional to the number of staff members they have, using a subsidy level (i.e. \$5,000) per travel agent staff member as the basis of calculation. Travel agents without any staff will also be receiving a one-off subsidy of \$5,000. Some 1 700 agents are expected to benefit from this scheme;

(2) to provide each travel agent's staff and freelance accredited practitioner whose main occupation is tourist guide or tour escort a one-off subsidy of \$15,000. Some 20 000 persons are expected to benefit from this scheme; and

(3) to provide each tour service coach driver a one-off subsidy of \$6,700. Some 3 400 drivers are expected to benefit from this scheme.

A spokesman for the Tourism Commission said that the disbursement arrangement for this round of helping measures will be simpler and faster, so as to disburse the subsidy as early as possible. Generally speaking, no application is required from eligible travel agents and practitioners who have received a subsidy under the second round of the AEF. The Government will send SMS notifications to them about the arrangement of the subsidy disbursement. They are required to contact the Tourism Commission if there is any update to their bank account information for receiving a subsidy on or before October 19, 2020. It is expected that the first payments can start to be made within a month's time upon setting up of the initiatives.

The details of the Tourism Industry Support Scheme are available at the Tourism Commission's website (www.tourism.gov.hk).