

Government announces mechanism for persons engaged in technological R&D co-operation-related activities in the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan to apply for exemption from compulsory quarantine arrangement

The Government announced today (May 18) the mechanism for persons engaged in technological research and development (R&D) co-operation-related activities in the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan to apply for exemption from the compulsory quarantine arrangement. The Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC) has started processing applications from today.

In accordance with section 4(1)(b) of the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C), the Chief Secretary for Administration may designate any person or category of persons for exemption from the compulsory quarantine arrangement if he is satisfied that the person's or persons' travelling is necessary for purposes relating to manufacturing operations, business activities or the provision of professional services in the interest of Hong Kong's economic development.

In accordance with the above-mentioned provision, the Chief Secretary for Administration has exempted the following category of persons from the compulsory quarantine arrangement.

An eligible enterprise or institution must be:

- (a) A public R&D institution in Hong Kong (i.e. the Hong Kong Applied Science and Technology Research Institute, the Automotive Platforms and Application Systems Research and Development Centre, the Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel, the Logistics and Supply Chain MultiTech Research and Development Centre, and the Nano and Advanced Materials Institute); or
- (b) A tenant/incubatee/grantee/occupant of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTPC) or Cyberport which conducts technological R&D work.

Each eligible enterprise or institution can have up to two personnel who are either the owner and/or full-time employee(s) to be exempted, and such persons have to travel to the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan for conducting one of the following R&D-related activities:

- (a) on-the-ground R&D work requiring collaboration with an enterprise or institution in the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan;
- (b) sourcing of essential materials or equipment which are required to sustain the technological R&D work carried out in Hong Kong by the eligible

enterprise or institution; or

(c) overseeing the operations of the eligible enterprise or institution's research facility(ies) in the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan.

An exempted person must undertake to fulfill the following requirements:

(a) he/she must only travel for the purpose of conducting the technological R&D activities as approved;

(b) he/she must only travel to and stay in the city in which the relevant facility(ies), enterprise(s) or institution(s) with the approved technological R&D activities is/are located;

(c) he/she must take every precautionary measure to ensure personal hygiene and avoid unnecessary social contact whilst in the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan; and

(d) after returning to Hong Kong, he/she will be subject to medical surveillance arranged by the Department of Health (DH) for a period of 14 days. He/she will be required to wear masks and check body temperature daily, as well as to report to the DH on any discomfort.

Details of the exemption arrangement and the application form are available on the ITC website (www.itc.gov.hk).

Tenants/incubatees/grantees/occupants of the HKSTPC or Cyberport should submit the completed application form with all required supporting documents to the ITC through the HKSTPC (ECQ@hkstp.org) or Cyberport (ECQ@cyberport.hk) as appropriate. Public R&D institutions should submit the completed application form with all required supporting documents directly to the ITC by email (ECQ@itc.gov.hk).

For enquiries, please contact the ITC (Tel: 2594 5602/2594 5932; email: ECQ@itc.gov.hk).

Currently, travellers to the Mainland and Macao would still be subject to the 14-day compulsory quarantine requirement imposed by the Mainland and Macao authorities. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is discussing with authorities in the Mainland and Macao on mutual recognition of COVID-19 testing results conducted by recognised medical laboratories, with a view to exempting the quarantine requirement for Hong Kong travellers to these places. Details of the arrangement will be announced when available.