

Government introduces enhancement measures for Distance Business Programme

The Innovation and Technology Commission today (August 18) introduced enhancement measures for the Distance Business Programme to further support enterprises to develop distance business during the epidemic.

"The Programme has received an overwhelming response since its launch, reflecting the enterprises' keen demand for developing distance business during the epidemic. In view of the extended epidemic situation, we decided to introduce a number of enhancement measures in response to the industry's needs and to enable enterprises to make the best use of the funding to adopt a variety of information technology (IT) solutions to develop distance business," a spokesman for the Commission said.

The enhancements are as follows:

1. From 9am on August 31, enterprises may submit a second application in which the categories of the IT solutions must be different from the approved categories in the first application. They may submit a second application after they have replied to the Secretariat on the result of the first application. The assessment criteria of the Programme remain unchanged. Each enterprise may receive aggregate funding of up to \$300,000;
2. The funding period for subscription-based IT solutions will be extended from six months to 12 months. This arrangement is also applicable to applications approved earlier;
3. The restriction that related entities being regarded as one single entity are not allowed to submit applications will be lifted; and
4. Social enterprises with certifications issued by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service for the Distance Business Programme will also be eligible.

The Distance Business Programme aims to provide funding support for enterprises to continue business and services during the epidemic through adoption of IT solutions. The Programme was opened for application on May 18 this year. As at 10am today, it had received an overwhelming response of 17 372 funding applications from enterprises, 95 per cent of which are from small and medium-sized enterprises. Of the 14 056 applications processed so far, 12 818 have been approved with total funding of more than \$540 million.

The application deadline for the Programme is October 31. Enterprises wishing to apply for the Programme's funding are advised to submit applications online as soon as possible. Details are available on the Programme's website (u.hkpc.org/dbiz). For enquiries, please contact the Programme Secretariat by phone on 2788 5070 during business hours (9am to

6pm, Monday to Friday (except public holidays)) or via email at dbiz@hkpc.org.