

LCQ19: Incentive Scheme for Recurrent Exhibitions

Following is a question by the Hon Jimmy Ng and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Dr Bernard Chan, in the Legislative Council today (December 13):

Question:

To support the recovery of business events and strengthen Hong Kong's reputation as a premier international convention and exhibition hub, the Government launched a \$1.4 billion Incentive Scheme for Recurrent Exhibitions (ISRE) in July this year. It is expected that the ISRE would provide incentives to organisers of eligible recurrent exhibitions for more than 200 exhibitions held over the three-year period of the scheme. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of applications received and approved under the ISRE so far, with a breakdown by the type of exhibitions (i.e. eligible recurrent international exhibitions and other eligible recurrent exhibitions); of the average incentive amount for the approved applications, as well as the average time taken for vetting and approving each application;

(2) of the respective numbers of applications received and approved under the ISRE so far for the following types of exhibitions: (i) other recurrent exhibitions (e.g. recurrent exhibitions with less than five past editions or new exhibitions intended to be held recurrently), and (ii) exhibitions with any or all of the five past editions neither held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre nor the AsiaWorld-Expo; of the respective average incentive amounts for the approved applications for the types of exhibition under (i) and (ii);

(3) as there are views that with a total funding of \$1.4 billion under the ISRE as incentives for 200 exhibitions, the amount for each exhibition could be \$7 million on average, which is far below the cap of \$20 million for each exhibition, whether the authorities will increase the funding of ISRE; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether it will consider an extension of the implementation period or the regularisation of the ISRE; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Jimmy Ng is as follows:

To support the post-pandemic recovery and maintain the competitiveness of Hong Kong's convention and exhibition (C&E) industry, as well as consolidate and enhance Hong Kong's status as an international trade centre and C&E hub, the Government launched the \$1.4 billion Incentive Scheme for Recurrent Exhibitions (Incentive Scheme) in July this year to provide incentives to organisers of eligible recurrent exhibitions for three years.

In general, the Government will disburse the incentive to the organiser through the venue operator within 12 working days after receipt of duly completed application form and supporting documents.

During the five-month period ending November 30, 2023, a total of 32 applications for completed events were received under the Incentive Scheme, of which 31 have been approved, involving a total incentive of \$112 million. The remaining application is pending submission of supporting documents by the organiser and no application has been rejected.

Among the 31 approved applications:

*22 applications involves international recurrent exhibitions with an average incentive of about \$4.8 million; the remaining nine applications involve other recurrent exhibitions with an average incentive of about \$0.6 million.

*Eight applications involve recurrent exhibitions with less than five past editions or new exhibitions intended to be held recurrently, with an average incentive of about \$1.5 million; three applications involve exhibitions that one or all of the five past editions were not held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre nor AsiaWorld-Expo, with an average incentive of about \$5.6 million.

At present, the Incentive Scheme has been in operation for less than six months with less than 10 per cent of the funds utilised. The Government will closely monitor the utilisation of the funds of the Incentive Scheme and the needs of the industry, and will consider in due course whether there is a need to adjust the details of the Incentive Scheme.