

LCQ20: Creation of time-limited jobs for architectural, surveying, town planning and landscape sectors

Following is a question by the Hon Tony Tse and a written reply by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Patrick Nip, in the Legislative Council today (June 3):

Question:

The second-round relief measures launched by the Government include the provision of \$6 billion to create around 30 000 time-limited jobs in both public and private bodies in the coming two years. Such jobs include (i) positions for seasoned professionals in the architectural sector, (ii) positions for technicians and supporting staff of construction projects as well as repair and maintenance works, and (iii) trainee positions for fresh graduates in professions such as building surveying, town planning, estate surveying and land surveying. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the details of the newly created positions in the four sectors of architecture, surveying, town planning and landscape, including (i) the number of positions, job nature and entry requirements (with a breakdown by sector), and (ii) the mode by which funding is provided by the Government; the latest progress for the implementation of such measures;

(2) of the specific approaches adopted by the Government for facilitating the creation of the aforesaid positions by the various public and private bodies, as well as the details; and

(3) of the measures put in place to ensure that the job contents of the trainee positions will be recognized by the relevant professional bodies as the graduate training contents required for acquiring the professional qualifications, so that the years of relevant working experience can be converted into the required number of graduate training hours?

Reply:

President,

With a view to relieving the worsening unemployment situation due to the epidemic, the Government has earmarked \$6 billion under the Anti-epidemic Fund to create around 30 000 time-limited jobs in both the public and private sectors in the coming two years for people of different skill sets and academic qualifications. The time-limited jobs created under this measure will normally not exceed 12 months. Bureaux and departments concerned are actively planning and implementing related preparatory and recruitment work.

Regarding the question raised by the Hon Tony Tse in relation to the time-limited positions created under the Anti-epidemic Fund in the sectors of architecture, surveying, town planning and landscape, our consolidated reply which is prepared in consultation with the Development Bureau (DEVB) as well as the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) is as follows:

(1) and (2) Relevant bureaux and works departments will create more job opportunities through expediting implementation of new plans and enhancing existing services. DEVB announced in April this year that it would create some 4 700 additional time-limited jobs for people of different fields, skill sets and academic qualifications, including professionals, technicians and logistic staff providing support. Among the 4 700 time-limited jobs, it is estimated that over 100 are for professionals in architectural, surveying, town planning and landscape architectural sectors and that over 300 are for technicians and other supporting staff members of these sectors. THB will also create time-limited jobs in the sectors of architecture, surveying, town planning and landscape to provide professional and technical support services for the quality control and the safety management system of public projects works sites, highway maintenance works and roadwork projects, highway vegetation maintenance and landscape works, etc.

The majority of these additional jobs would be created by procurement of services from private consultants or contractors through contractual arrangements. It increases the demand for manpower which in turn drives the private sectors to recruit more staff. Besides, the Government will arrange open recruitment of Non-Civil Service Contract positions in relevant departments. These additional jobs would be realised progressively, within 3 months at the soonest.

The Government is also very concerned about the "Hard to get hired" condition of graduates. For graduates in the architectural, surveying, town planning and landscape architectural sectors, DEVB and its family departments would provide an addition of over 40 professional training places in 2020, from 79 in 2019, representing an increase of over 50 per cent. This will not only provide more employment and training opportunities for graduates, but will also help to maintain the professional succession in the relevant sectors through training up successors and retaining abilities for future infrastructure development.

The unemployment rate has been soaring recently, especially in those sectors that are directly hit by the epidemic. For example, the unemployment rate of the construction sector has risen from 6.8 per cent for the period from December 2019 to February 2020 to the 10-year record high of 10 per cent for the period from February 2020 to April 2020. In view of the persistent impacts of the epidemic, it is inevitable that the labour market will continue to be under tremendous pressure in the short run. In this regard, the Government is actively exploring initiatives to swiftly create more jobs in meeting the needs of the sectors, thus improving employment and maintaining a vibrant economy.

(3) Different professional institutions will formulate the required professional training guidelines and training plans according to the

distinctive conditions of the sectors to ensure that the trainees can receive the appropriate professional training and practice. The professional training of Government departments meets the relevant requirements all along. The appointed trainees will receive practical training that meets the requirements of the relevant professional institutions under professional guidance, facilitating them to obtain the relevant professional qualifications. By expediting the implementation of new plans and enhancing existing services, bureaux and departments concerned help the private sector to create the necessary workload for their trainees such that the trainees can accumulate the relevant experience and complete the professional training.