

LCQ3: Talent List

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hak-kan and a reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, in the Legislative Council today (July 12):

Question:

The Government promulgated on May 16 this year the updated Talent List (the List), aiming to reflect the latest shortage situation of talents in various professions and to apply it to three talent admission schemes. However, when the Panel on Manpower of this Council discussed the relevant subject at its meeting on June 20, many Members with professional backgrounds indicated that the Government had not consulted the professional or industry organisations to which they belonged on matters relating to the updating of the List. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the names of the organisations that the Government consulted in updating the List;

(2) as some Members of this Council have relayed that the professions and occupations set out in the updated List have failed to reflect the actual situation of the industries to which they belong, whether a mechanism is currently in place to allow the professional and industry organisations that were not consulted when the List was updated to reflect their views, and update the contents of the List again in time; if there is, whether the Government will take the initiative to seek the views of the relevant professions and industries; if there is not, how the Government deals with the issue that the updated List may not reflect the actual situation; and

(3) whether the Government has, under the existing policy, strengthened the training work correspondingly for local talents whose professions and occupations have been included in the List; if so, of the specific implementation details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The purpose of drawing up the Talent List by the Government is to identify quality talents in need in Hong Kong that are in shortage and are difficult to be nurtured locally in a short time. The Talent List is applied under the relevant talent admission schemes to enable employers to recruit outside talents to meet their needs, in support of Hong Kong's development into a high value-added and diversified economy. The Talent List has been applied to the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS) since its first promulgation in 2018.

To proactively trawl for outside talents, the 2022 Policy Address announced that the application of the Talent List would be expanded and that

the Talent List would be updated as soon as possible to reflect the latest shortage situation in various professions. The application of the Talent List has been extended to the General Employment Policy and the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals since December 28 last year. After review, the Government promulgated the updated Talent List on May 16 this year, with an expanded coverage from 13 to 51 professions. The expanded List helps us attract more high-quality talents supporting the high-quality economic and social development of Hong Kong.

In consultation with the relevant bureaux and departments, the consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Chan Hak-kan is as follows:

(1) In order to gather suggestions from various industry stakeholders for updating the Talent List, the Labour and Welfare Bureau and relevant bureaux and departments consulted stakeholders of industry organisations of various sectors, major business chambers, the Human Resources Planning Commission, etc. Consultations were conducted in different forms, such as meetings, written submissions and interviews to collect views. Industry stakeholders welcomed the review of the Talent List in face of severe manpower shortage in recent years. They hoped the Talent List would cover more professions to help them cope with the manpower shortage. Stakeholders from different sectors expressed views on the coverage of the Talent List. The Government duly considered these views and decided to substantially expand the Talent List to cover 51 professions under nine industry segments.

The organisations consulted by relevant bureaux and departments on the updated Talent List are listed in Annex.

(2) Applying the Talent List to talent admission is just one of the initiatives to alleviate manpower shortage. In considering whether to include a profession in the Talent List, the Government is guided by the important principles that: (1) inclusion of the relevant professions would support the development of Hong Kong's high value-added and diversified economy; (2) talents of the selected professions are not readily available locally; and (3) talents of the selected professions cannot be nurtured through local training in good time. As a measure to provide immigration facilitation for incoming talents, the Talent List must be clear, transparent, and stable, for employers to fully understand the relevant procedures and operations, such that it could function effectively. The Government will review and update the Talent List in a timely manner with regard to the local manpower situation. Relevant professionals may still apply to come to Hong Kong through various admission schemes even if their respective professions are not covered in the Talent List. Relevant bureaux and departments maintain close communication with industry stakeholders to understand their views on manpower demand. Professions with manpower shortage may be considered in the future review of the Talent List. In addition, the Government is conducting a new round of manpower projection and its main findings are expected to be ready in the third quarter of 2024. These findings will be very useful for the review of the Talent List in future.

(3) The primary objective of our manpower policy is to nurture local talents,

complemented by admission of outside talents, with a view to enriching the talent pool of Hong Kong and meeting our social and economic development needs. For professions on the Talent List, the required talents must have specific academic qualifications, professional training and work experience, and are not readily available in the local employment market. Local training and arrangements are generally available for these professions. It however takes time for talents of relevant professions to be nurtured.

Bureaux and departments have been providing local training for nurturing talents of their respective industries, including various types of internship programmes and training courses, and the provision of appropriate subsidies and allowances, to meet the manpower needs of relevant industries. If there is increasing manpower demand arising from the continuous development of the relevant professions, responsible bureaux and departments will work with local tertiary institutions and training organisations to explore offering relevant training courses, with a view to nurturing local talents.