

Pilot Scheme for Electric Public Light Buses accepts second round of applications

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (August 5) announced that the Pilot Scheme for Electric Public Light Buses (e-PLBs) is open now for the second round of applications until August 26.

"We are conducting operational trials under the Pilot Scheme in phases. Same as in the first round of applications, Kowloon Tong (Suffolk Road) and Yue Man Square Public Transport Interchanges (PTIs) will continue to serve as trial points. Successful operators will be subsidised with 80 per cent of the vehicle price for each e-PLB joining the Pilot Scheme. It is expected that approval will be granted to all successful applications next month with a view to commencing the second round of trials in the fourth quarter this year," an EPD spokesperson said.

The spokesperson added that, drawing from the experiences gained from the first round of applications and the feedback from the operators and prequalified suppliers of e-PLBs, a number of enhancement measures will be adopted in the second round, including streamlining the release of subsidy. Operators of green minibuses may apply for the release of subsidy at 80 per cent of the vehicle price of the e-PLB to the relevant prequalified supplier directly from the Government. In addition, the participating operators are also required to charge the e-PLBs with pantograph and plug-in chargers separately during the trial period in accordance with the charging time proportion specified by the EPD to collect the relevant data for more effective assessment of the operation arrangements and performance of different charging modes.

Operators of green minibuses interested in taking part in the Pilot Scheme should submit their applications to the EPD before the deadline. Details about the Pilot Scheme and its application can be found on the EPD website (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/air/guide_ref/pseplb.html).

To promote the local application of e-PLBs, the Government has earmarked \$80 million for the implementation of the Pilot Scheme to test and assess the operation and performance of e-PLBs and the associated quick charging facilities. The EPD rolled out the first round of applications in October 2023, and signed agreements with two operators in December 2023 to subsidise each of them to buy one e-PLB to participate in the trials. The relevant e-PLBs have been undergoing the operational trials at the above two PTIs since the end of March this year.