

Professional Services Advancement Support Scheme invites new round of applications

The Main Programme under the Professional Services Advancement Support Scheme (PASS) is inviting a new round of applications for project proposals starting today (September 1) from non-profit-distributing organisations such as professional bodies, trade and industrial organisations and research institutes.

The PASS, with a total allocation of \$200 million, aims at funding non-profit-making industry-led projects to increase exchanges and co-operation between Hong Kong's professional services and external counterparts, promote relevant publicity activities, and enhance the standards and external competitiveness of Hong Kong's professional services.

The maximum grant for each approved project under the Main Programme of the PASS is \$3 million or 90 per cent of the total eligible project cost, whichever is lower. A wide range of professional services, such as accounting, legal and dispute resolution, architecture, engineering, healthcare, information and communications technology, design and technical testing and analysis, are eligible for the Main Programme. Sector-specific projects and cross-sectoral projects are both welcome. Expenses directly incurred for implementing a project, such as manpower costs, venue and set-up costs, production and promotion costs, and the project team and active participants' travel and accommodation costs outside Hong Kong are typically eligible for funding support under the Scheme. Funding support may also be provided for travel and accommodation costs incurred by participants of relatively longer professional internships or attachment programmes outside Hong Kong which are funded by the Main Programme.

Up to early August 2023, near 100 projects had been funded under the Main Programme, including project deliverables in and outside Hong Kong. The deliverables include capacity-building programmes for enhancing the standards of local professionals, such as training programmes, workshops and study tours; outreach and promotional activities for showcasing the strengths of Hong Kong's professional services, such as roadshows, promotional seminars and participation in exhibitions outside Hong Kong; exchange activities for deepening interaction between Hong Kong professionals and their external counterparts, such as visits to other economies and international conferences and seminars held in Hong Kong; and research projects on potential external markets for Hong Kong professional services and development of best practice guidelines and manuals for professionals. Details about the Main Programme and its funded projects are available at www.pass.gov.hk/main/en/home/index.html.

Furthermore, with a view to stepping up the promotion of Hong Kong's

competitive edges and professional services to Mainland cities (including those in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area) and overseas markets, \$50 million has been set aside for the Professionals Participation Subsidy Programme (PSP) under the PASS to subsidise Hong Kong major professional bodies to participate in relevant activities organised by the Government (such as Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices) and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council after the pandemic situation has stabilised. Details of the PSP and its latest list of eligible activities are available at www.pass.gov.hk/psp. Hong Kong professionals from the eligible professional sectors under the PASS may make use of the PSP subsidy to join the relevant activities.

The Main Programme and the PSP receive applications for project and activity proposals all year round and they are processed on a quarterly basis. The deadline for the new round of applications is November 30, 2023. A briefing session will be held this month for organisations interested in applying for PASS funding. For registration for the briefing session or other enquiries, please contact the PASS Secretariat at 3655 5418 or pass@cedb.gov.hk.