Public Sector Trial Scheme funds 63 projects for combating COVID-19 (with photos)

A spokesman for the Innovation and Technology Commission said today (October 30) that the assessment for the special call under the Public Sector Trial Scheme for projects to combat the COVID-19 epidemic has been completed. A total of 63 projects have been approved with total funding of over $102 million. Trials of the research and development (R&D) outcomes in the public sector have commenced progressively.

Lasting from March 9 to April 10, the special call aimed to support product development and application of technologies for the prevention and control of the epidemic. It was well received with 332 applications. The 63 approved projects, coming from local universities, R&D centres, designated local public research institutes and technology companies conducting R&D activities in Hong Kong, fall under a number of categories relating to epidemic prevention and control, including COVID-19 virus detection or diagnosis methods, masks and other protective equipment, disinfection equipment and products, body temperature checking devices and virus transmission tracking devices.

"The local public sector has rendered strong support for this call. Fifty-seven public organisations are involved in the trials of the approved projects. We will continue to follow up on the progress of the projects for early realisation and commercialisation of the R&D outcomes, thereby bringing about anti-epidemic benefits for the community," the spokesman said.

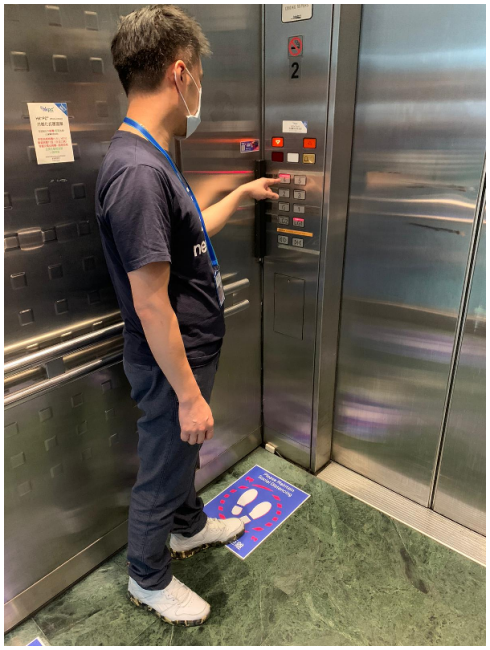
Fung Kai Care & Attention Home for the Elderly is one of the public organisations joining the trial scheme. The trial project in which it has participated is the Centralized Nano Bubble System for Surface Cleaning and Sanitization. Developed by the Nano and Advanced Materials Institute, the System splits ozone into nano bubbles. Fluid carrying such bubbles can be used for sanitisation and reduction of the spread of bacteria and viruses. The Superintendent of Fung Kai Care & Attention Home for the Elderly, Dr Kwok Man-wah, said, "Fluid carrying ozone nano bubbles is cost-effective and ready for use anytime. It is free of flammable or irritating chemicals, and ideal for disinfecting elderly homes. We are pleased to participate in the trial scheme. By employing the system, we hope to strengthen the protection of the health of our residents and employees amid the epidemic."

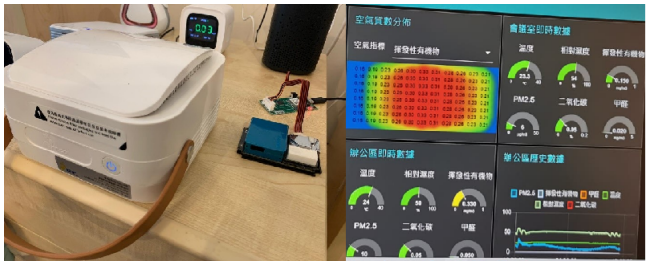
The University of Hong Kong is another public organisation participating in the trial scheme, including the trial project of a COVID-19 diagnostic kit developed by ImmunoDiagnostics Limited. The technology company expects that the kit, with a short turnaround time, will be able to assist organisations such as medical institutions and testing laboratories in conducting rapid COVID-19 testing. Professor Chen Zhiwei of the Department of Microbiology of the University of Hong Kong said, "The special call supports various anti-

epidemic technologies from laboratories to be applied in the community or clinical settings, bolstering the fight against COVID-19 in Hong Kong. We are delighted to join the trial scheme and look forward to contributing to the fight through sharing of our data and experience."

In addition, the School of Nursing of the University of Hong Kong has taken part in the trial project of a fast-track vented enclosure developed by City University of Hong Kong. Made of breathable protective materials, the enclosure aims to prevent viruses from spreading through air in hospitals, thereby minimising the possibility of cross-infection between medical staff and patients. Professor Janet Wong of the School said, "We are happy to provide a trial site and post-trial comments for the project. We hope the project will further protect the safety of medical staff and benefit the medical sector."

The special call aimed to fund trials of R&D outcomes in the local public sector relating to detection, diagnosis or surveillance of the COVID-19 virus, or reduction of the risks of infection and its spread. The list of the approved projects is available in the annex and on the website of the Innovation and Technology Fund (www.itf.gov.hk/en/funding-programmes/facilitating-technology/psts/psts-covid-19/index.html).



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