

Review on Civil Service Pay Level Survey and Starting Salaries Survey

The Government announced today (April 9) that the Acting Chief Executive-in-Council (CE-in-Council) has decided that the recommendations of the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service in relation to the review on the civil service Pay Level Survey (PLS) and Starting Salaries Survey (SSS) in its Report No. 59 should be accepted in full. This includes that the SSS will be conducted as and when necessary in future in response to specific circumstances.

The Standing Commission's major recommendations include the continued adoption of the existing methodologies for the PLS and the SSS but with enhancements, covering the adoption of a more precise job family categorisation; an increase in the number of organisations to be surveyed; and the request to organisations participating in the surveys to provide additional pay-related data for entry-level positions. As regards the frequency for the conduct of the surveys, the PLS will continue to be conducted at a six-yearly interval, while the SSS is recommended to be conducted as and when necessary in response to specific circumstances instead of triennially. The Standing Commission also recommends the continued adoption of the holistic approach, which takes into account a basket of relevant principles and considerations in considering how the future survey results should be applied.

As regards the SSS, in future, the Government will consider conducting it in response to specific circumstances including when the findings or observations of the PLS suggest that the conduct of the SSS is warranted; there are serious recruitment difficulties, severe deterioration in the appointment position or substantial changes to the regulatory framework of the entry ranks of the civil service grades under an individual Qualification Group (QG) or related QGs; or there are rapid and unforeseeable changes to the local economy that may have a significant and lasting impact on the employment market including the civil service in Hong Kong.

The Government agrees that, instead of a mechanical application of future survey findings, the holistic approach should continue to be adopted. Consideration and balancing of the relevant principles and factors can thus be made flexibly.

"The Government accepts the Standing Commission's recommendations in full, which will improve data sufficiency and representativeness of future surveys. The Government wishes to express its sincere gratitude to the Standing Commission for having conducted the review on the two surveys, its in-depth analysis on the subject and the various insightful recommendations it has come up with. The Government is also grateful to all the stakeholders for their valuable input," a spokesperson of the Civil Service Bureau said.

The Improved Civil Service Pay Adjustment Mechanism comprises three

types of pay surveys (i.e. the annual Pay Trend Survey and the above-mentioned PLS and SSS). In April 2017, the Government invited the Standing Commission to conduct a review on the PLS and the SSS, having regard to the recommendations made by the Standing Commission in the context of the 2013 PLS and the 2015 SSS respectively. The Standing Commission submitted Report No. 59 on the review to the Chief Executive on December 17, 2018. Upon consulting the staff side representatives and relevant stakeholders on the findings and recommendations in the Report, the Civil Service Bureau sought the Acting CE-in-Council's decision on the way forward today.