SIE Fund launches "Smart Silver" Digital Inclusion Programme for Elders (with photos)

The Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund (SIE Fund) officially launched its "Smart Silver" Digital Inclusion Programme for Elders today (December 13) at Lok Fu Place, starting a new chapter in the pursuit of digital inclusion for the elderly. Among the guests were 75 elderly volunteers who joined others to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government announced in the 2024-25 Budget that the SIE Fund would allocate $100 million to provide elderly people aged 60 or above with digital training courses and technical support in the coming three years. Following an open invitation for proposals and evaluation, the SIE Fund has appointed 12 non-governmental organisations and is providing them with funding support to take forward the "Smart Silver" Digital Inclusion Programme for Elders (the Programme) across all 18 districts. Under the Programme, the appointed organisations will set up community-based help desks at suitable locations to provide regular and fixed-point training on digital technologies and technical support for elderly people aged 60 or above, particularly singleton or doubleton elders living in old districts and public housing. It covers topics such as smartphone operation know-how, the use of digital government services (e.g. "iAM Smart" and other common government mobile applications) and cybersecurity. The Programme is expected to benefit more than 100 000 elders. For details about the Programme and service hours of the help desks, please visit www.it2.gov.hk/smart_silver/.

Officiating at the launching ceremony, the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, said "The Government has been working vigorously to promote digital inclusion. The Digital Policy Office (DPO) has introduced a series of initiatives to encourage elderly people to learn and use technologies." He stated that all initiatives have been well received and that the Government will continue to press ahead with its work to help more elders.

The Chairperson of the SIE Fund Task Force, Mr Kevin Orr, invited all parties to pitch in. He said, "Digital technology has become an integral part of everyday lives while the SIE Fund has been actively promoting digital inclusion. Through cross-sector collaboration, a caring society with digital inclusion can be built where elderly people can explore the digital world on their own and enjoy active ageing."

The prize presentation ceremony of the Elderly IT Stars Recognition Scheme was also held today. Thirteen "Elderly IT Stars" were presented with awards from the Commissioner for Digital Policy, Mr Tony Wong. All awardees

were outstanding participants of either the ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly or the Enriched ICT Training Programme for the Elderly organised by the DPO. The Recognition Scheme aims at recognising elderly persons who have made use of digital technologies to demonstrate their commitment to improve their quality of life, bringing a positive impact to their friends and the community, and promoting a sense of worthiness among elders.

The organiser is promoting the Government's digital inclusion initiatives for elders with game booths set up at Lok Fu Place for two consecutive days (December 13 and 14), and introducing related services through information booths. The "iAM Smart" mobile registration team will also help members of the public register for "iAM Smart+" to enjoy the convenience of one-stop e-government services.

The SIE Fund was inaugurated in 2013 and is overseen by the SIE Fund Task Force under the Commission on Poverty. The Task Force Secretariat is established in the DPO under the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau. The SIE Fund acts as a catalyst for social innovation in Hong Kong. By facilitating social innovation and cultivating social entrepreneurship, the Fund aims to make an impact in alleviating poverty and social exclusion, promoting social integration, and enhancing the well-being and cohesion of society.