

Announcement of second round results of Public Policy Research Funding Scheme 2023-24

The Chief Executive's Policy Unit (CEPU) announced today (November 22) the results of the second round of applications to the Public Policy Research Funding Scheme (PPRFS) in 2023-24.

The PPRFS is a government-financed funding scheme dedicated to supporting evidence-based local public policy research by higher education institutions and think tanks in Hong Kong. The CEPU is its Secretariat. As the Government's internal research unit, the CEPU is set up to enhance the Government's capabilities in research and advocacy on long-term and strategic issues. One of its tasks is to build up an external policy research capacity through measures including administering the PPRFS. This will be conducive to the achievement of the CEPU's objectives, including to advocate for and assist in the formulation of long-term and strategic policies from a forward-thinking perspective; to keep abreast of national development and analyse and suggest areas of significance in the integration into national development; to examine international relations and situations, and analyse opportunities and risks; and to grasp the sentiments of Hong Kong citizens to understand the general direction and focus of their concerns.

A total of 27 applications were received under the second round exercise in 2023-24. On the advice of the Assessment Panel, the CEPU has supported five projects with a total funding of about \$3.4 million. The five funded projects cover research areas relating to innovation and technology, livelihood issues, environmental sustainability, etc.

Applications to the PPRFS are accepted throughout the year and assessed by the Assessment Panel which comprises scholars with ample experience. Research quality and the relevance of the proposal to the public policy development needs of Hong Kong are the principal criteria of assessment. The Assessment Panel will also take into account comments of outside reviewers who are experienced scholars and experts during the assessment process, and suggestions and views of relevant government bureaux/departments. A declaration of interests system is in place to ensure that the assessments are fair and impartial.

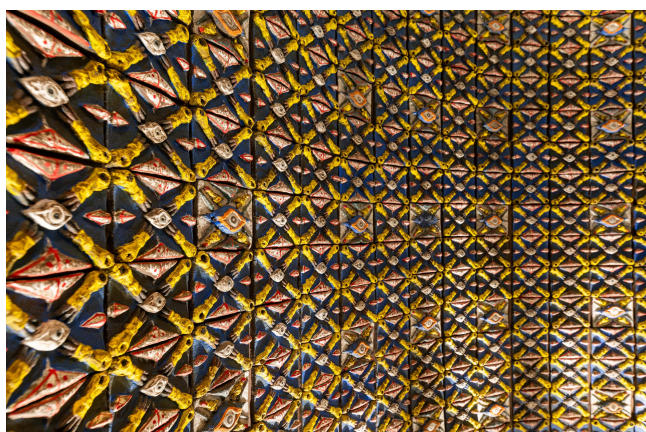
Details of the funded projects have been uploaded onto the CEPU's webpage (www.cepu.gov.hk/en/PRFS/ppr-granted.html).

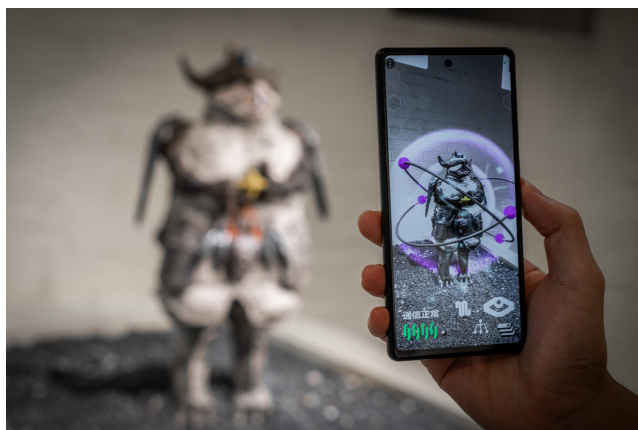
Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre showcases latest work of local emerging artist To Kai-on (with photos)

The Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre (vA!) will showcase the latest work of local emerging artist To Kai-on, "Dimensional Civilization Archeology Project: The Temple Hidden in Infinite Dimensions" from today (November 22).

The "Dimension Civilization Archeology Project" is an ongoing art project by To, with this artwork marking the latest phase of the project. The artist selected materials from sci-fi anime, tokusatsu and films, and crafted characters and props from these fictional pieces into fictional historical artefacts with traditional ceramic moulding techniques and an augmented reality game, simulating archaeological discoveries of our present time by future generations 1 000 years from now. These selected iconic works of pop culture are objects of admiration and fantasy from his childhood. To conjures up an imaginary archaeology and offers a future perspective with an augmented reality game to look back at today and perceive the interconnection between the past, present and future of civilisation.

The display of "Dimensional Civilization Archeology Project: The Temple Hidden in Infinite Dimensions" is presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, and organised by the vA!. The works will be on display from today until February 26 next year with free admission, at 1/F – 3/F of the vA! at 7A Kennedy Road, Central. For details of the exhibition, please visit the website at bit.ly/DCAP30E or call 2521 3008.





[Three LCSD museums continue to extend opening hours at weekends to support Night Vibes Hong Kong campaign](#)

â€‹To echo the Night Vibes Hong Kong campaign to promote night activities, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department will continue to extend the opening hours of three museums under the department.

The Hong Kong Museum of Art (HKMoA), the Hong Kong Science Museum (HKScM) and the Hong Kong Space Museum (HKSpM) will continue to extend their opening hours to 10pm on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays (except December 24 and 31 where special arrangements will be applied) (Note) until January 1 next year. Members of the public are welcome to visit various exhibitions in the museums. During the extended opening nights, the Space Theatre at the HKSpM will also feature an extra show.

For details, please visit the websites of the HKMoA at hk.art.museum, the HKScM at hk.science.museum and the HKSpM at hk.space.museum.

Note: To facilitate holiday celebrations and crowd control, on December 24, the three museums will close at 5pm. On December 31, the HKMoA will close at 7pm while the HKScM and the HKSpM will close at 9pm.

LCQ22: Pet hospice services

Following is a question by the Hon Lillian Kwok and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (November 22):

Question:

The Census and Statistics Department conducted a survey on the keeping of dogs and cats in 2018, and the data showed that the total number of dogs/cats kept by households had increased by almost 40 per cent as compared to that in 2005. It is learnt that the public demand for pet hospice services also increased during the period. However, following the Government's cessation of public cremation services for animals in 1999, members of the public can only choose to dispose of animal carcasses or patronize operators of animal hospice services. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it has compiled statistics on the respective numbers of households and persons keeping dogs and cats as well as the numbers of dogs and cats involved, in each of the past five years (set out in a table); among such dogs, the number of those which have been microchipped;
- (2) of the number of animal carcasses collected by the refuse collection points of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department as well as the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department in each of the past five years, with a breakdown by animal type;
- (3) as it has been learnt that quite a number of animal hospice service operators are providing pet cremation services in industrial buildings, which involves breaches of land lease, whether the Government will consider reviewing the requirements for such operators in the relevant lease conditions; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (4) of the number of complaints received by the Government relating to animal hospice service operators in each of the past five years; and
- (5) whether the Government will study the enactment of legislation to regulate the operation of animal cremation service operators so as to coordinate and manage premises for animal hospice services, and the establishment of a licensing mechanism for such operators; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

President,

Reply:

President,

Having consulted relevant government departments, the reply to the

question raised by the Hon Lilian Kwok is as follows:

(1) According to the most recent Thematic Household Survey on keeping of dogs and cats conducted by the Census and Statistics Department in 2018, some 241 900 households were keeping dogs or cats in Hong Kong, with an average household size of 2.9 members, representing 9.4 per cent of all households. A total of some 184 100 cats and 221 100 dogs were being kept.

Regarding the implantation of microchips, under the Rabies Regulation (Cap. 421A), dogs aged over five months are required to be implanted with microchips and licensed. According to the data of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), between 2018 and 2022, the numbers of dogs that are implanted with microchips and licensed are 164 851, 164 854, 160 950, 165 133 and 168 764 respectively.

(2) In the past five years (2018-2022), the numbers of animal carcasses collected by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) from its refuse collection points and through other means are tabulated as below –

| Year | No. of dog carcasses | No. of cat carcasses | No. of carcasses of other animals (Note 1) | Total |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|--|--------|
| 2018 | 5 343 | 8 192 | 12 258 | 25 793 |
| 2019 | 2 795 | 5 702 | 12 335 | 20 832 |
| 2020 | 1 890 | 3 689 | 11 625 | 17 204 |
| 2021 | 1 232 | 2 935 | 14 415 | 18 582 |
| 2022 | 732 | 1 444 | 9 837 | 12 013 |

Note 1: Including rabbits, tortoises, hamsters, snakes, and wild pigs, etc.

The AFCD does not provide animal carcass collection services. If animal carcasses are found during inspections by AFCD officers, they will be referred to the FEHD for follow-up.

(4) In the past five years (2018-2022), the numbers of complaints received by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), the FEHD, the Fire Services Department (FSD) and the Lands Department (LandsD) related to animal hospice service providers are tabulated as below:

| Departments | Matters of complaint | Numbers of complaints (Note 2) | | | | |
|-------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| | | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
| EPD | Emission of smoke or odour | 15 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 13 |
| FEHD | Sanitary nuisance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |

| | | | | | | |
|--------|--|----|----|---|----|----|
| FSD | Over-storage of dangerous goods or breach of fire safety | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| LandsD | Breach of lease conditions | 3 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | | 20 | 14 | 6 | 10 | 18 |

Note 2: As a single complaint may have been handled by more than one department, the figures reported by individual departments may overlap.

(3)&(5) As in other trades, animal hospice service providers have to comply with the relevant legislations and lease conditions. The relevant government departments may, according to their respective mandates, inspect premises of pet hospice services to check compliance with pertinent legislations and requirements, as well as lease conditions.

Upon receipt of complaints about sanitary nuisance from premises of pet hospice services, the FEHD will inspect the premises concerned and, where necessary, take enforcement actions under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132). For complaints about black smoke or odour emitted in the process of cremating pet carcasses, the EPD will carry out inspections and take enforcement actions according to the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (Cap. 311) as necessary. Inspections and enforcement actions as required may also be carried out by the FSD pursuant to the Fire Services Ordinance (Cap. 95) and the Dangerous Goods Ordinance (Cap. 295).

As regards lease conditions, the LandsD will conduct follow-up inspections on complaints received involving breach of lease conditions, and if verified, the LandsD will take lease enforcement actions, including issuing warning letters to the owners demanding purge of lease breaches within a specific timeframe. If the owners do not rectify the breaches in time, the LandsD may register the warning letter at the Land Registry (commonly known as "imposing an encumbrance"). For cases involving serious breaches which may pose serious or immediate threats to public safety, the LandsD may re-enter the relevant lots or vest the relevant interests in the Government.

Considering that existing legislations and lease conditions can already regulate issues such as air pollution, public health and fire safety, etc. that may arise from the operation of animal hospice service providers, the Government has currently no plan to introduce a licensing regime to regulate the relevant trade.

LCQ13: Operation of Hong Kong Investment Corporation Limited

Following is a question by the Hon Rock Chen and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, in the Legislative Council today (November 22):

Question:

In the 2022 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced the establishment of the Hong Kong Investment Corporation Limited (the Corporation) to further optimise the use of fiscal reserves for promoting the development of industries and the economy. However, there are views that the operation of the Corporation lacks transparency. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as the Financial Secretary indicated on February 28 this year that the Board of Directors of the Corporation had held in-depth discussion on issues such as the Corporation's corporate structure, governance, personnel arrangement, as well as administration and management, of the specific details of such discussion (in particular the standards and criteria considered in the aspects of corporate structure, governance, personnel arrangement and recruitment);

(2) as the Government indicated in reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on May 31 this year that the Board of Directors of the Corporation had "formulated the Corporation's investment strategies and criteria, and having regard to the different focuses of the funds under its management, devised appropriate strategies and asset allocation for investments in projects, corporates, funds, etc, as well as drawn up procedures and criteria in sourcing investment partners or targets", of the relevant specific details; and

(3) of the following information on the Corporation since its establishment: the investment ratio and the expected internal rate of return, the performance indicators of the funds under its management, and the benchmark returns set; how the Government assesses the returns of the funds under the management of the Corporation and the performance of its management echelon?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Hong Kong Investment Corporation Limited (HKIC), the reply to the three parts of the question is as follows:

(1) In the 2022 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced the establishment of the HKIC to consolidate the management of the Hong Kong

Growth Portfolio (HKGP), the Greater Bay Area Investment Fund (GBAIF), the Strategic Tech Fund (STF), and the Co-Investment Fund (CIF). The HKIC is tasked to identify investment opportunities and strategically promote the development of target industries, so as to enhance the long-term competitiveness and economic vitality of Hong Kong while generating investment return.

The Government announced the composition of the Board of Directors (Board) of the HKIC on February 15, 2023 and the Board has commenced operation. In accordance with the objectives of the HKIC, the Board has formulated guidance on such matters as the corporate structure, governance, personnel arrangement as well as administration of the HKIC. The guidance made reference to practices commonly adopted by public organisations.

The HKIC's first Chief Executive Officer took office on October 9, 2023 and is pressing ahead with various aspects of works related to investment, as well as administration and team building of the HKIC in accordance with the guidance formulated by the Board.

(2) Having regard to the objectives of the HKIC, and the respective focuses of the HKGP, GBAIF, STF and CIF, the Board provided comments on the investment strategies (including asset allocation) and the procedures and criteria in sourcing investment partners or targets. Relevant factors that were taken into consideration include whether the investment proposals fit the goals the HKIC are pursuing (such as whether the project could promote domestic industry development, increase Hong Kong's ability to attract enterprises and investment), the background, strategy and track record of the investment partners; the investment return and risk etc.

(3) Since 2021, a number of General Partners (GPs) have been appointed by batches under the HKGP to make strategic investments for it. The HKIC will continue to identify investment opportunities in accordance with the direction of improving Hong Kong's competitiveness, leading and supporting the vigorous development of strategic industries, so as to enhance Hong Kong's ability to attract enterprises and investment, enhance industrial structure, strengthen impetus for economic growth, create more high-quality career development opportunities for the public, and promote industrial co-operation and development between Hong Kong and cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

As the relevant investment involve market sensitive information, it is not appropriate to disclose the details. In accordance with the actual needs of the HKIC's investment operation, as well as factors such as whether individual projects have reached their maturity stage etc, the Board will formulate appropriate disclosure arrangements for the HKIC, which will make announcement at the appropriate time.