

Youth Development Commission convenes seventh meeting

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, chaired the seventh meeting of the Youth Development Commission (YDC) held online today (January 12).

Members noted the new initiatives on youth development in the Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address. Amongst them, the Government has launched the Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme to support Hong Kong young people to seize the career development opportunities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). Through the scheme, the Government encourages enterprises with operations in both Hong Kong and GBA Mainland cities to recruit and deploy local university graduates to work in the GBA Mainland cities. Participating enterprises will be paid a monthly allowance of \$10,000 for each graduate employed for up to 18 months. The Scheme will offer 2 000 places, including around 700 for innovation and technology posts. The scheme was launched last Friday (January 8) and has started to accept applications and submission of job vacancies from enterprises.

Furthermore, the YDC has introduced the Funding Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area to subsidise non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide entrepreneurial support and incubation services that befit the needs of young people starting their businesses in Hong Kong and GBA Mainland cities, including helping them settle in entrepreneurial bases, and to further meet their initial capital needs. In response to the Policy Address measure to raise the funding of the current-round funding scheme, the YDC discussed and agreed to introduce the following enhancement measures:

(1) To raise the funding of the start-up capital component by one-third on a pro rata basis, i.e. to raise the funding limit from \$4.5 million to \$6 million, while the matching fund from the NGO shall remain the same (i.e. at \$1.5 million). At the same time, the funding limit for each youth start-up shall also remain at \$600,000, thereby enabling the funded NGOs to deploy their funds flexibly to benefit more eligible start-ups; and

(2) To raise the funding of the service component by 10 per cent, i.e. to raise the funding limit from \$1 million per year to \$1.1 million per year (i.e. the maximum funding available for each NGO will be increased from \$3 million to \$3.3 million), thereby providing sufficient resources for the NGOs to provide services to additional youth start-ups. The YDC will also raise the funding for the NGOs to provide entrepreneurial support to start-ups, with a view to strengthening their corporate governance, adaptability and digital competence.

Mr Cheung said, "The GBA development is an important strategy for the further reform and opening up of the country, as well as a key way forward

for Hong Kong's economic recovery after the epidemic. The GBA would provide Hong Kong young people with a new runway for employment and entrepreneurship."

In addition, the YDC agreed to introduce a new thematic funding scheme under the Youth Development Fund to subsidise eligible NGOs to collaborate with schools to provide systematic, quality and sizeable local outdoor adventure training activities for young people. At the meeting, members agreed that the new scheme could nurture young people's resilience and positive thinking, and guide their healthy development through adventure activities. Members provided specific opinions and suggestions on the elements of funded activities of the new scheme, target youth participants and requirements for NGOs. The Task Force on Youth Development Fund and Programmes would follow up and implement relevant details. Subject to the developments of the epidemic, the new scheme is expected to be launched in the first half of 2021.

Members noted the progress of various youth development projects under the YDC. In response to the discussion and suggestions at the YDC's first policy thematic meeting held in August last year, the YDC had agreed to further enhance the Funding Scheme for Youth Life Planning Activities (2019-22) and introduced the Intensive Support Service for Secondary School Students and Leavers in November last year. Under the support service, the 24 currently funded NGOs were provided with one-off additional funding for a period of one year to provide comprehensive, in-depth and sustainable counselling services, particularly for secondary school students who have yet to have a clear progression or employment path as well as students in need. The relevant services are expected to be rolled out in the first quarter this year.

The YDC held two online workshops last Thursday (January 7) to discuss the multiple pathways and development opportunities in the GBA for young people. The YDC will also conduct the second policy thematic meeting via Facebook live webcast on January 19 to further discuss the multiple pathways and development opportunities for young people after their graduation. Please refer to [YDC's Facebook page](#) for more details.