

LegCo Panel on Manpower

Youth Sustainable Development and Engagement Fund

Purpose

This paper seeks Members' advice on the proposed ambit and operational arrangements of the Youth Sustainable Development and Engagement Fund (the Fund).

Background

2. In his 2004 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced the establishment of a fund to promote trial schemes and explore opportunities for training, placement and employment for young people as recommended by the Commission on Youth in its report titled "Continuing Development and Employment Opportunities for Youth". The Government has accordingly earmarked \$50 million for its establishment and the Fund is expected to last for two years.

Administration of the Fund

3. It is proposed that the Fund be administered by the Task Force on Continuing Development and Employment-related Training for Youth (Task Force) which is tasked to co-ordinate and evaluate the various youth training and employment programmes in Hong Kong. The Task Force was appointed by the Chief Executive for a term of two years from 1 March 2004 to 28 February 2006. Chaired by Dr Choi Yuen-wan, Philemon (Chairman of the Commission on Youth) and Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower, it comprises representatives from the social welfare sector, business sector, training and retraining bodies, sports sector, education and academic sector, young people as well as government departments. One of the terms of reference of the Task Force is to administer the Fund. At its first meeting held on 25 March 2004, the Task Force discussed the proposed modus operandi of the Fund, details of which are now set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Ambit of the Fund

Strategic focus of the Fund on pilot projects and services

4. The Government and non-governmental organisations have invested significant resources in providing a wide variety of projects and activities targeted at non-engaged youth. They include the following –

- (a) various pre-employment training programmes including the apprenticeship schemes, certificate and diploma courses provided by various training organisations such as Vocational Training Council, Construction Industry Training Authority and the Clothing Industry Training Authority;
- (b) “Project Yi Jin” co-ordinated by the Education and Manpower Bureau and run by training institutions under the Federation for Continuing Education;
- (c) the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme administered by the Labour Department;
- (d) the one-year trial Youth Self-employment Support Scheme as announced in the 2004 Policy Address;
- (e) special job attachment, employment start-up and enhanced employment programmes/projects, programme assistants and peer counsellors schemes provided by non-governmental organisations and coordinated by the Social Welfare Department;
- (f) projects related to the continuing development, employment and social participation of youth subsidised by the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund; and
- (g) activities and services targeted at non-engaged youth provided by various social welfare agencies and voluntary organisations.

5. To ensure effective use of limited resources, the Task Force proposed that the Fund should be strategically deployed to fill any service gaps not addressed by existing programmes or services. The aim should be to foster the promotion of opportunities for training, placement and employment for non-engaged youth.

Strategic project categories

6. Based on the recommendations of the Commission on Youth’s Report on Continuing Development and Employment Opportunities for Youth, the Task Force has identified a number of areas in which there may be opportunities to further develop pilot projects and services for the non-engaged youth. These areas are as follows –

- (a) programmes that aim to motivate non-engaged youth to seek self-improvement and work;
- (b) modern apprenticeship schemes;
- (c) sports-related training;
- (d) training for creative and cultural industries; and
- (e) training and employment programmes in the Mainland.

7. The Task Force proposed that initially the Fund should focus on pilot projects and services in these five strategic categories. To take the initiatives forward, five focus groups will be formed under the Task Force. Experts and service agencies from the respective fields will be invited to contribute ideas on suitable and useful projects to help fill existing service gaps. Young people will also join the focus groups to provide input from the users' perspective. Service agencies participating in the discussion with the focus groups will be invited to submit detailed proposals for consideration by the Task Force.

Vetting process of pilot projects and services

8. To streamline the vetting process, a vetting committee comprising four to six members of the Task Force will be set up. The vetting committee will be responsible for conducting initial assessment of individual project proposals submitted by the service agencies and drawing up funding recommendations to the Task Force for final endorsement. If things go well, we hope to approve pilot projects within the first nine months of the Fund's establishment, and a review will be conducted one year after the projects are launched. The funding criteria and information required to be submitted for consideration by the Task Force are set out at the Annex.

Other eligible projects and programmes

9. Apart from funding pilot projects and services which directly target at non-engaged youth, the Task Force decided that the Fund should also be used to support research projects on problems related to non-engaged youth and assessment of existing youth training and employment programmes, the outcome of which would help formulate appropriate long-term policies and initiatives to address the problem of non-engaged youth. The Task Force also noted that while many youth workers possess rich frontline social work

experience, further training could be provided to enhance their skills in motivating the non-engaged youth to seek employment or pursue education. The Task Force thus considered that the Fund should also be used to subsidise training programmes of this nature. The Task Force will seek advice from relevant stakeholders to further deliberate on how suitable training programmes for youth workers and research projects can be identified.

Amount of Sponsorship and Experimenting Period of Pilot Projects

10. To accommodate more pilot projects and to benefit more young people, the Task Force has proposed to set a ceiling of \$3 million per project. In addition, organisations or institutions which apply for the Fund are expected to bear at least 30% of the total expenditure of the projects to demonstrate their commitment. Each pilot project will be for a period of not more than one year. The Task Force will review these administrative details in the light of experience.

Monitoring Mechanism

11. Organisations receiving sponsorship by the Fund will have to submit a final evaluation report on the effectiveness of the projects, and a financial report with supporting records for auditing purposes. The Task Force will arrange visits to monitor the progress of the sponsored projects, and conduct a comprehensive review on the overall effectiveness of all the programmes in late 2005.

Financial Implications

12. The cash flow of the Fund will depend on the progress of its various programmes. For budgetary purposes, we assume the allocations and cashflow to be as follows –

	2004-05	2005-06	Total
	\$ million	\$ million	\$ million
(a) Personal development, training, placement and employment projects for non-engaged youth	20	20	40
(b) Programmes and activities designed for youth workers	2	2	4

(c) Research studies on the problem and needs of non-engaged youth and other relevant topics	2	2	4
(d) Administrative expenses	1	1	2
Total	25	25	50

Way Forward

13. We plan to seek Finance Committee’s approval on 30 April 2004. Subject to approval by the Finance Committee, we will create a non-recurrent commitment of \$50 million under Head 156: Government Secretariat : Education and Manpower Bureau for the establishment of the Fund.

Advice Sought

14. Members are invited to comment on the proposal to establish the Youth Sustainable Development and Engagement Fund.

Education and Manpower Bureau
April 2004

Funding Criteria and Information to be submitted by Interested Organisations

Funding Criteria

Funding will be project-based. The Task Force will assess the suitability for funding for individual programmes against the following criteria –

- (a) the programme has clear objectives and targets at non-engaged youth (especially those who have not benefited from the existing programmes and projects) or youth workers;
- (b) it can generate sustainable benefits to the continuing development, training, employment and meaningful engagement of non-engaged youth in longer-term;
- (c) it can bring in innovative ideas and strategies in addressing the problem of non-engaged youth;
- (d) it is non-profit-making, and financially and technically feasible;
- (e) the responsible organisation(s) possess(es) the relevant experience and expertise in the provision of personal development, training, placement and employment programmes for non-engaged youth; and
- (f) the project falls within one of the identified project categories.

2. In view of the fact that one of the objectives of the Fund is to encourage the responsible institutions and organisations to develop innovative and effective programmes and projects and to facilitate cross-sector collaboration, the Task Force will accord funding priority to those projects in receipt of support from or in collaboration with the business sector.

3. In addition, to allow more institutions and organisations be able to bring in innovative plans by making use of the Fund, the Fund will not subsidise programmes from individuals or the Government. This can also ensure that the Fund will not duplicate or replace financial resources for existing services run by the Government.

Information to be Submitted by Interested Organisations

4. We envisage that the interested organisations will be required to provide the following information, as far as possible, for vetting purpose –

- (a) details of the organisation (such as their aims and objectives, history, composition, experience and expertise in offering youth training and employment programmes);
- (b) the clear objectives of the proposed project, and how they can foster innovative ideas and strategies in tackling the problem of non-engaged youth;
- (c) target groups to benefit (such as the non-engaged youth, youth workers), expected number of beneficiaries, how they will identify and recruit the target group;
- (d) details of the project (including operational plan, budget and timeframe);
- (e) intended outcomes of the project with performance indicators;
- (f) any proposed additional monitoring and evaluation mechanism in addition to that required by the Task Force;
- (g) financial and staffing plan;
- (h) the possible future of the project, with particular focus on its sustainability;
- (i) contributions of resources from other parties; and
- (j) other components, such as training plans for staff and volunteers etc.