

Proposed Research Outline

Social Enterprise Policies of the United Kingdom, Spain and Hong Kong

1. Introduction

1.1 At its meeting held on 8 March 2007, the Subcommittee to Study the Subject of Combating Poverty proposed to undertake an overseas duty visit in August 2007 to the United Kingdom (UK) and Spain to study the operation of social enterprises. At the same meeting, the Subcommittee discussed a proposed work plan on the study of the development of social enterprises in Hong Kong, which is expected to be completed by November/December 2007.

1.2 Facilitating the forthcoming duty visit and the deliberation of the development of social enterprises in Hong Kong, the Research and Library Services Division (RLSD) proposes to conduct a research, focusing on the social enterprise policies and their implementation in the UK, Spain and Hong Kong.

2. Proposed places to be studied

2.1 The proposed study will cover the social enterprise policies and operation of the following places:

- (a) The UK;
- (b) Spain; and
- (c) Hong Kong.

2.2 The UK is selected because the UK government has established a distinct legal identity for social enterprises and carried out some pioneering works to improve social enterprises' access to finance. Spain is selected because the Spanish government uses social enterprises as a means to alleviate the unemployment problem and social enterprises are involved in the operation of almost all economic sectors in Spain. The Hong Kong Government has recently encouraged the development of social enterprises because it believes that the social enterprise concept is a vehicle to promote self-reliance among the unemployed.

3. Research outline

3.1 RLSD proposes the following outline for the study:

Part 1 — Introduction

3.2 This part provides the background information of the research and discusses the emergence of social enterprises in developed economies.

Part 2 — The United Kingdom

Part 3 — Spain

Part 4 — Hong Kong

3.3 Parts 2 to 4 present the political, economic and social background against which the social enterprise policies of the UK, Spain and Hong Kong are formulated respectively. The official definitions and scope of coverage of social enterprises in the selected places are elaborated. This is followed by a discussion of the various aspects of the social enterprise sector in the selected places, including its size and areas of activities and financing as well as problems encountered by the sector. Details of social enterprise cases will be illustrated, if appropriate. The measures adopted by the governments of the selected places to promote the growth of social enterprise are also discussed.

Part 5 — Analysis

3.4 This part compares the major characteristics of the social enterprise policies and their implementation in the UK, Spain and Hong Kong.

4. Completion date

4.1 RLSD proposes to complete the research report by June/July 2007.

Research and Library Services Division
Legislative Council Secretariat
16 March 2007