

Pilot Transport Support Scheme

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Supplementary Note

Purpose

This paper addresses the questions raised by the Chairman of the Finance Committee in relation to the processing of applications under the Transport Support Scheme (the TSS) by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on several specific areas including (i) the progress of discussion with NGOs; (ii) the number of NGOs that will be engaged under the Scheme; and (iii) whether the NGOs are located within the four pilot districts.

Progress of discussion with NGOs

2. The Commission on Poverty (CoP) intends that NGOs with experience in delivering training and employment assistance be engaged to assist in the processing of applications under the Scheme, so that they may also offer advice to eligible applicants on training opportunities and provide employment assistance as appropriate.
3. The use of the training bodies (TBs) of the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) to disburse the Job Search Allowance and Cross-district Transport Allowance under the Scheme will serve the above purpose and ensure timely launch of the Scheme as the TBs in the three designated districts already have experience in handling applications for a transport allowance for graduate retrainees and are well positioned to share their experience with the TBs in the new designated district (Tuen Mun). Moreover, the TBs will provide more service outlets to facilitate convenient access by the target groups under the Scheme.
4. A TSS Working Group consisting of representatives from the Labour Department (LD), the Social Welfare Department, the ERB and the CoP Secretariat has been set up to deliberate on the implementation issues of the TSS.
5. The TSS Working Group held a briefing session for NGOs serving the four designated districts viz. Islands, North, Yuen Long and Tuen Mun on 29 March 2007. Out of the 17 TBs of the ERB serving the four districts, representatives from 14 NGOs attended. An overview of the key features and

the workflow of the Scheme, the role of NGOs in the Scheme, and the division of labour between the LD and the NGOs was delivered at the briefing session. In addition, the meeting also discussed the financial arrangements (including the proposed administration costs). Views on how to smoothen the workflow in processing applications were also exchanged. For those unable to attend, subsequent telephone follow-ups were also made to communicate to them the gist of the discussion at the briefing session.

Engagement of NGOs under the Scheme

6. On 10 April 2007, ten out of 17 NGOs confirmed in writing their interest in participating in the implementation of the Scheme. As at 23 April 2007, these ten NGOs together can provide a network of 22 service centres to serve the Scheme. The remaining seven NGOs declined our invitation for the time being, mainly due to their insufficient manpower.

Location of NGOs

7. Of the 22 service centres, 21 are located within the four pilot districts including Tung Chung. The remaining service centre, which is located in Sheung Wan, will serve those needy unemployed persons and low-income employees who live in other parts of the Islands District.

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