

# 立法會 *Legislative Council*

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## **Panel on Home Affairs**

**Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat  
for the meeting on 12 December 2014**

## **Signature Project Scheme**

### **Purpose**

This paper provides background information on the Signature Project Scheme ("SPS") and summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by Legislative Council ("LegCo") Members on the subject.

### **Background**

#### Objective and nature of SPS

2. To fulfill the aspiration of District Councils ("DCs") for carrying out projects of a larger scale in order to meet the specific needs of their districts, the Chief Executive announced in his 2013 Policy Address that a one-off allocation of \$100 million would be earmarked for each district to initiate one to two SPS projects. All the projects have to be proposed, discussed and agreed by DCs before they are put to implementation. The DC concerned must be satisfied that the project will address local needs or be able to highlight the characteristics of the district, having a visible and lasting impact in the community.

3. An SPS project may be works or non-works in nature, or a mixture of both. All SPS projects will be subject to a lower limit of \$30 million and an upper limit of \$100 million. To enhance creativity and flexibility, DCs may partner with relevant non-profit-making organizations ("NPOs"), business organizations, statutory bodies or government departments to implement the SPS projects.

#### Timeframe and funding approval procedure

4. The Administration had initially set 31 March 2013 as the earliest target for DCs to submit their proposals to the Home Affairs Department ("HAD"), but it appreciated that some DCs might need more time to deliberate on the matter before submitting their proposal(s) to HAD. DCs would be given a high degree of flexibility to plan and formulate their proposals and could submit their project proposals when considered mature for detailed investigation and planning for implementation. While the Administration did not prescribe that the projects should be completed within the current DC term, it was hoped that the projects could commence or even be accomplished as early as practicable.

5. As regards the funding approval procedure, DCs were required to follow the established procedures to seek funding approval from LegCo for implementation of individual SPS projects. For all construction works of SPS projects, and SPS projects that were non-works in nature or the non-works components of any SPS projects costing more than \$10 million, they would be submitted to the Finance Committee ("FC") for funding approval. If the non-works component of an SPS project cost \$10 million or less, the Administration would follow the established mechanism to seek funding approval under delegated authority from within the Government.

#### **Major views and concerns expressed by LegCo Members**

6. The views and concerns expressed by LegCo Members on SPS at various committee meetings, including the Panel on Home Affairs ("HA Panel"), the Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC") and FC, are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

#### Objective and nature of the SPS projects

7. When the HA Panel discussed the Administration's proposal to enhance the District Administration Scheme at its meeting on 18 February 2013, some Members considered that individual DCs should be allowed with flexibility in the planning of signature projects having regard to their special circumstances. Some other Members, however, hoped that the Administration would give directions to DCs on what and how SPS projects should be taken forward and provide yardsticks for DCs for evaluating proposals, so as to facilitate DCs to resolve differences on project(s) to be implemented and assist them in identifying the SPS project(s) that could best cater for the overall needs of local communities.

8. According to the Administration, the objective of SPS was mainly to provide a larger amount of resources to DCs for implementing large-scale and sustainable projects to address the specific needs of individual districts. It was the aim of the Government to make the best use of community wisdom in going for SPS. As DCs would have the full discretion to utilize the fund allocated under SPS, it was for individual DCs to decide on the process of evaluation.

#### Funding for the SPS projects

9. At the PWSC meeting on 13 March 2013, a concern was raised about how the Administration would provide resources to enable DCs to carry out non-works SPS projects. According to the Administration, resources for non-works projects had been earmarked in its annual Estimates of Expenditure. Five time-based civil servant posts would be created in HAD, and additional time-based non-civil servant contract posts would be created in HAD and relevant works departments to support the work of individual DCs.

10. Concern was raised about the arrangements for the management and maintenance of the SPS projects initiated by DCs at the FC meeting on 10 May 2013. The Administration advised that if DCs partnered with government departments in implementing SPS projects, the partner departments would take up the subsequent management and maintenance. Where DCs partnered with NPOs, they would have to work out the share of responsibilities and the subsequent operation of the project. Guidelines for the selection of NPO partners would be issued to DCs for reference. The Administration hoped to encourage tripartite co-operation involving the Government, the community and the business sector in implementing SPS projects.

#### Monitoring of the SPS projects

11. Some Members considered it of paramount importance for DCs to uphold the principles of transparency and fairness in the initiation, planning, selection of partner organizations, delivery as well as monitoring of all SPS projects. In their view, a mechanism should be put in place to prevent individual DC members from making use of the SPS projects to gain political capital for themselves, such as building up personal reputation or networks with district organizations. The Administration should request all DCs to conduct district consultation before deciding on whether or not a proposal should be pursued under SPS.

12. Some other Members, however, pointed out that given the experience gained in the implementation of the District Minor Works Programme, DCs would have the ability to discharge their duties effectively and impartially. To

improve district administration, they agreed that a monitoring mechanism should be in place for compliance by 18 DCs in implementing signature projects.

13. In response to an enquiry raised at the PWSC meeting on 13 March 2013, the Administration advised that the SPS projects would be subject to multi-level monitoring, and members of the community were able to give views on prospective projects by participating in open meetings of DCs and various local consultation forums. Project proposals put forth by DCs would be processed by HAD and subject to LegCo's scrutiny, as DCs were required to follow the established procedures to seek funding approval from LegCo for individual SPS projects. HAD had formulated detailed operational procedures on SPS which set out the rules and principles in respect of the engagement of consultants and contractors as well as the monitoring of project implementation and delivery for compliance by 18 DCs in taking forward signature projects. The SPS projects would be taken forward by DCs with HAD's support and overall coordination in ensuring no duplication of work among different government departments during project implementation. DCs would put in place appropriate arrangements to ensure that public requests for use of the facilities would be handled in a fair and open manner.

#### Progress of the SPS projects

14. When discussing the SPS project of Wong Tai Sin DC at the HA Panel meeting on 23 July 2014, Members expressed concern about the progress and implementation of SPS projects in various districts. Concern was also raised about when and how funding applications on these projects would be submitted to LegCo.

15. The Administration advised that all the 18 DCs had agreed on the preliminary proposals of their SPS proposals. HAD and respective District Offices were working closely with DCs, relevant government bureaux and departments and where applicable, partner organization(s) in taking forward these projects, including examining their technical feasibility, before seeking Members' views and FC's funding approval. The Administration would submit the remaining SPS proposals to the HA Panel in batch for consideration.

#### **Latest development**

16. The HA Panel discussed the SPS project of Kwai Tsing District (i.e. the "Enhancement of Community Healthcare Service") and the SPS project of Wong Tai Sin District (i.e. the "Expansion and Improvement of Wong Tai Sin Square") at its meetings on 10 January and 23 July 2014 respectively. While the former

project was approved by FC on 12 July 2014, the latter project would be submitted to PWSC for consideration in the 2014-2015 session.

17. According to the list of outstanding items for discussion submitted at the Panel meeting on 17 November 2014 (LC Paper No. CB(2)238/14-15(01)), the Administration planned to brief the Panel on 17 SPS project proposals in six batches in the 2014-2015 session.

18. The Administration will brief the Panel on the SPS project of Sham Shui Po DC on the construction of a Shek Kip Mei Community Services Centre at the meeting on 12 December 2014.

### **Relevant papers**

19. A list of the relevant papers on LegCo's website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
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Relevant papers on Signature Project Scheme

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Home Affairs	18.1.2013 (Item IV)	<a href="#">Agenda</a>  <a href="#">Administration's paper on "2013 Policy Address - Policy Initiatives of Home Affairs Bureau"</a>  <a href="#">2013 Policy Address</a>
	18.2.2013 (Item V)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Public Works Subcommittee	13.3.2013 (Item No. 1 - PWSC(2012-13)59)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Finance Committee	10.5.2013 (Item No. 1 - FCR(2013-14)2)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	11.7.2014 (Item No. 18 - FCR(2014-15)21)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Panel on Home Affairs	10.1.2014 (Item IV )	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	23.7.2014 (Item III)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>