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Panel on Welfare Services

**Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 11 March 2019**

Community Investment and Inclusion Fund

Purpose

This paper provides background information and gives an account of the discussions at meetings of the Panel on Welfare Services ("the Panel") on the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund ("CIIF").

Background

2. CIIF was set up by the Government in 2002 to provide seed money in the form of initial funding for applicant organizations to implement diversified social capital development projects in the community, promote reciprocity between the public and different sectors, and build cross-sectoral collaborative platforms and social support networks.

3. CIIF projects operate in diversified models in various areas, including but not limiting to family and child welfare, youth development, elderly support and empowerment, community capacity building, cross-generational integration, social integration and health care.

4. The CIIF Committee has been established to examine and approve applications, and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the funded projects. It is also tasked to advise the Secretary for Labour and Welfare on the most appropriate and effective means to facilitate the development of social capital in Hong Kong and all matters relating to the administration of CIIF. The Assessment and Evaluation Sub-Committee under the CIIF Committee makes preliminary assessment on the applications received, provides guidance and support for the applicant organizations, and makes recommendations on the

applications for consideration by the CIIF Committee.

5. The Government has injected \$800 million into the Fund since its establishment. As at December 2018, CIIF has committed funding of about \$562 million to agencies/service units for launching 375 projects. The number of people with direct participation in these projects exceeds 730 000. The participation of around 93 000 volunteers and 9 200 collaborative partners has built up some 2 100 mutual help networks.

Deliberations of the Panel

6. The major concerns and views expressed by Panel members and the Administration's responses are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Assessment of applications and disbursement of funds

7. Members generally raised concern about the excessive complicated application procedures, slow pace of disbursement of CIIF as well as the implementation of the funded projects being subject to close scrutiny. They urged the CIIF Committee to speed up the vetting of applications and fund disbursement. Some members considered that the sustainability of the projects and the applicants' financial capacity to continue the operation of the relevant projects upon the expiry of the funding period should not be taken into account when assessing the applications for CIIF.

8. The Administration advised that in approving projects, the CIIF Committee took into account a number of factors, including the prudent use of public funds, encouragement of creativity, participation of organizations, etc. Since the establishment of CIIF, the Committee had made it clear that the seed money would be used to support projects that could foster the development of social capital while one-off activities and projects lacking long-lasting impact would not be supported. When assessing applications, the CIIF Committee would accord priority to the effectiveness of the projects in the building of social networks, mutual trust and spirit of cooperation to facilitate the enhancement of self-reliance of the disadvantaged.

9. The Administration further advised that CIIF would continue to actively encourage more applications from eligible organizations so as to promote social capital. CIIF had further strengthened its publicity and promotion efforts, with a view to enhancing public understanding and recognition of CIIF and social capital, and encouraging joint participation and implementation of the social capital concept. To enable applicants to have a better understanding of CIIF's requirements, the CIIF Secretariat regularly organized briefing sessions,

arranged grantees and prospective applicants to share their experience in the good modes of operation and implementation of successful projects, provided individual consultation service for applicants in need as well as reviewed from time to time the possibility of streamlining administrative procedures. The CIIF Secretariat had also enhanced support services to grantees, including providing clear guidelines on reporting of project achievements, organizing sharing sessions and training workshops, as well as inviting academics to explain the prerequisites for effective implementation of social capital projects and developing effective assessment tools and methods.

Scope of projects

10. In response to members' enquiry about the scope of the projects subsidized by CIIF, the Administration advised that the main objective of CIIF was to promote social capital, through enhancing individuals' capacity, social networking and cross-sectoral collaboration. CIIF would consider applications from various sectors applying different approaches to promote social capital development insofar as they were in line with CIIF's objectives. In addition, CIIF had been stepping up efforts in promoting social capital and engaging cross-sectoral partners, including developing various collaboration models such as "medical-welfare-community" model and "family-community-school" model. CIIF would continue to actively encourage more applications from eligible organizations with a view to deriving more diverse collaboration models and intensifying the impact of social capital in Hong Kong.

Sustainability of projects

11. Members were concerned about the sustainability of CIIF projects, particularly those flagship projects which could serve as a model for adoption by other project teams for wider implementation.

12. According to the Administration, it saw great potentials in those flagship projects for wider implementation in the territory and for mainstreaming as regular services. A wide variety of projects of different themes targeted at specific sectors of the community could also be implemented across the territory. In regard to the sustainability of CIIF projects, some project teams continued to develop their projects by various means, for example, by incorporating the project model into the agency's mainstream service, continuously developing mutual support networks by the participants themselves, operating on a self-financing basis, or injecting new elements/innovative ideas for next-stage development.

Evaluation of overall effectiveness

13. Some members expressed concern about the effectiveness of CIIF in promoting and building social capital, and urged the Administration to critically review the overall achievement of the CIIF objectives. The Administration advised that in order to have a fuller understanding of the effectiveness of CIIF in promoting social capital development, it had commissioned two evaluation studies in 2006 and 2012 respectively. The findings of these studies affirmed that the various collaboration models developed under CIIF could effectively enhance capacity building of individuals, and promote cross-generational care, mutual help across various social strata and ethnic harmony, resulting in an overall enhancement of community capacity. Besides, CIIF had conducted a three-year evaluation from 2013 to 2016 on the impact of social capital, and the results showed that CIIF had been highly effective in building social capital and enhancing the culture of care and love.

Relevant papers

14. A list of relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
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Relevant papers on Community Investment and Inclusion Fund

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Welfare Services	16 April 2009 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes CB(2)1620/08-09(01)
Panel on Welfare Services	10 December 2012 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes

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