

To: hkpcenq@hkpc.org, ceo@ceo.gov.hk

From: Vincent Or

Date: 03/23/2021 04:48PM

Subject: Complaint on D-Biz

Dear CE and Mr. Willy Lin

I hope this email finds you all well.

I am writing to you to express my deep disappointment of the D-Biz program you introduced last year as part of the Anti-Pandemic Fund. Whilst I find most of the measures under the Anti-Pandemic Fund did give some help to the public in steering through the very difficult time we have during this unseen pandemic, this D-Biz program is unfortunately hugely ineffective and bureaucratic, even like a joke after all.

Promised amount

In the announcement, it was suggested that each project shall be able to receive an amount of not more than HKD300,000 in order to help the businesses in developing the distancing business solutions amid the pandemic. However, in fact, the actual amount most the organisations received was much less than HKD300,000, some may even be a few thousand dollars. I fully appreciate the fact that you would have to vet the projects, but such a great variance in numbers did come with huge disappointment to the public.

Vetting methodology

As suggested above, I fully appreciate that you would have to vet the projects in order to ensure the fund is rightly used. However, in most cases I came across, there is no transparency whatsoever in the amount you approved, and even worse, the amount approved is less than the market standard.

Even if you believe that you shall have a greater control on the amount being used or allocated to each application, then you should simply state such amount to the applicant directly in the first place without the applicant obtaining two quotations which proves useless and a waste of time after all.

Communications

The whole D-Biz has a terrible communication protocol. Whilst there is a hotline set up to answer the general queries, the hotline has no access whatsoever to the

details of each application and in fact, whenever there is a question specific to the application, the hotline can only take down the details and ask the staff in the office to reply directly to the applicant. After then, it will take ages for the staff in the office to get back to the applicant on the query, either because the office is hugely under-staff or the staff is so inefficient. I believe the amount in setting up a hotline which cannot really answer any specific questions on applications is just a waste of monies. And the staff in the office have not been very helpful in addressing the questions after all, as they simply repeat what have already been included in your guidelines.

Furthermore, during the vetting process, whatever queries you may have on the applications do not come in one log but in piecemeal. Actually those follow up questions do in most cases require the applications go back to the vendors to gather more information. However, you should appreciate the fact that the applicant and the vendor are independent customer and supplier, they are not related to each other after all. Unless you expect them to collude in the application process, one cannot be expected to keep going back to the vendors to ask for more information. On the other hands the vendors simply would have no such interest in entertaining all such requests in particular the amount you approved is not even a market standard and do not include any premium in compensating the extra work the vendor would have to spend in relation to D-Biz applications.

Timing

The timing it takes to approve the applications is again another joke really. Initially D-Biz aims to help the business in developing the distancing business solutions in order to steer through the pandemic, now, even at a time with the pandemic largely come under control (depends on what business one is in), most applications made in last August have not even been approved. With cases which have been approved back in January 2021, I have not even been asked to sign the contract and of course no funding has so far been received.

If business is really looking to the fund in helping to develop its business model, the business idea may have well been gone ages before the fund actually reaches their bank accounts. Especially when we are talking about IT programs and business developments, all such comes with speed and sharpness. The whole D-Biz procedures just do not help in achieving so.

After all, I find you are so out of touch of the market and simply believe the market shall work in a way you projected. Unfortunately, that's so not true, and quite the opposite.

I am not sure if this email would be able to earn your attention but still I better write this down rather than doing nothing, hoping this may help in improving the measures introduced by the government going forward.

Yours

Vincent Or

CC. Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting of LegCo