

Mechanism for handling Members' visits conducted under the name of the Council or its committees outside Hong Kong in response to invitations

Detailed procedures of the mechanism are –

1. If the President is invited to lead a delegation of Members in a visit conducted under the name of the Council, he should be consulted as to the acceptance of the invitation. If a quota is prescribed on the number of participating Members by the relevant organisation, the President should consult Members through the House Committee on the composition of the delegation as well as the programme content and logistics of the visit.
2. If the invitation is extended to all Members of the Council, the House Committee should convene a meeting to discuss whether to accept the invitation. If the House Committee considers that the proposed visit is related to Council business and agrees to accept the invitation, it should also consider whether the expenditure of the visit should be charged to individual Members' Overseas Duty Visit (ODV) accounts and the detailed arrangements of the proposed visit. If the invitation is extended to Members of the Council (except the President) but a quota is prescribed on the number of participating Members by the relevant organisation, the House Committee should also consider the composition of the delegation which should normally be broadly representative of the membership of the Council.
3. If the invitation is extended to members of more than one Panel¹, the Chairmen of the Panels should discuss and agree as to whether a joint meeting should be convened or whether the Panel having a prominent interest in the subject matter should convene a meeting and invite members of the other Panel(s) to attend. The notice of the meeting should be copied to all other non-Panel Members who are welcome to attend the meeting and participate in the discussion, but they do not have any voting right in respect of the issues under discussion. At the meeting, members should discuss whether to accept the invitation and the details of the proposed visit.
4. If the invitation is extended to one Panel only, the meeting should be convened by the Chairman of the Panel. The same meeting arrangement as in step (3) above should be adopted.
5. Any views or requests made by Members at the meeting should be relayed by the Secretariat to the relevant organisation for consideration, and Members should be informed of any feedback received.

¹ The same arrangement will apply to invitations extended to Bills Committees and subcommittees on subsidiary legislation/policy issues.

6. If the invitation is not accepted, the relevant organisation should be so informed.

7. If the invited Panel(s) considers that the proposed visit is related to Council business and agrees to accept the invitation, it should issue a circular to invite members to indicate whether they will join the visit. The Panel(s) should submit a paper on the detailed arrangements of the visit to the House Committee. Where the Panel(s) considers that the expenses incurred ought to be charged to the ODV accounts of Members, such a proposal should be included in its paper and the House Committee's endorsement is required.

8. If the endorsement of the House Committee on the financial arrangement is obtained, the expenditure of the visit should be charged to individual Members' ODV accounts.

9. If the endorsement of the House Committee on the financial arrangement is not obtained, Members may join the visit on a self-financing basis or claim reimbursement of the expenses incurred for the visit under the Operating Expenses Reimbursement system².

10. A report on a visit outside Hong Kong that has been approved by the House Committee shall be submitted to the House Committee after the conduct of the visit.

² Under the "Guide for Reimbursement of Operating Expenses for Members", entertainment, liaison or travelling expenses incurred by a Member or his staff in or outside Hong Kong for Legislative Council business may be reimbursed against claims certified by the Member without supporting documents.