

For information  
on 17 July 2014

## **Legislative Council Panel on Manpower**

### **Review on the Effectiveness of the Employment in One-stop in Tin Shui Wai**

#### **Purpose**

This paper briefs Members on the findings of the review on the effectiveness of the Employment in One-stop (EOS) in Tin Shui Wai.

#### **Background**

2. To enhance employment support for job seekers, it was announced in the 2009-10 Policy Address that a pioneer one-stop employment and training centre would be set up in Tin Shui Wai. This measure aimed at taking forward some major recommendations of the former Commission on Poverty in relation to employment support, including streamlining, integrating and enhancing the existing employment and training/retraining services provided by the Labour Department (LD), Social Welfare Department (SWD) and Employees Retraining Board (ERB); and adopting an integrated approach in the delivery of training and employment assistance in order to make the best use of existing resources and provide more targeted assistance to those with employment difficulties. LD was responsible for setting up the new centre and managing its operation.

3. Located on the fourth floor of the new Tin Ching Amenity and Community Building (ACB) at Tin Ching Estate in Tin Shui Wai, the pioneer one-stop employment and training centre, EOS, commenced operation on 28 December 2011. To facilitate job seekers in obtaining employment and training/retraining services, an ERB service centre was set up on the third floor of the same building.

4. Because of the availability of sufficient space for provision of various new services and facilities at the ACB at Tin Ching Estate in Tin Shui Wai which was scheduled for completion in 2011, EOS was established in Tin Shui Wai. It was also noted that a substantial number of job seekers with employment difficulties, including unemployed able-bodied recipients of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance

(CSSA), were residing in the district. The establishment of EOS could provide more in-depth employment support to them.

5. We briefed Members on the progress of the setting up of EOS on 15 December 2011. We now report on the review of the overall effectiveness of EOS in the light of its actual operational experience gained during its first two years of operation.

### **Services Offered**

6. With a total floor area of 1 082 square metres, EOS is about two to three times the size of a job centre of LD. Apart from the basic job search facilities and employment services available at LD's job centres, EOS offers a new service model such as the assessment of the employment needs of job seekers through a needs assessment tool, and the provision of case management and employment support services by a non-governmental organisation commissioned under a service contract (commissioned organisation).

7. Job seekers may obtain the following employment support services at EOS:

#### **(I) Basic services of a job centre**

- make use of job search information and reference materials at the resource corners, browse employment-related training information or undergo career aptitude assessment for more effective career planning;
- obtain the latest labour market information through various job vacancy display facilities (such as the touch-screen vacancy search terminals, job cards on display, computers with internet connection, etc);
- make use of various job search facilities (such as computers for compiling job application letters and résumé, submitting job applications and résumé to employers by e-mail or fax; or contacting employers by phone for enquiries and job interviews);
- make use of the Employment Advisory Service to discuss with employment advisors job seekers' individual employment needs and obtain job search advice and information on labour market and training courses, and/or undergo career aptitude assessment;
- make use of job referral services for arranging interviews with employers, participate in online job interviews with employers' representatives pre-arranged by EOS, or attend on-the-spot interviews at district-based job fairs;

- participate in the various employment programmes administered by LD, for example, the “Employment Programme for the Middle-aged” and “Work Trial Scheme”; and
- obtain and submit the application forms for the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme.

(II) Enhanced employment support services available exclusively at EOS

- make use of self-learning facilities to acquire training on computer software applications, interviewing skills and use of language ;
- job seekers to participate in case management and employment support services (participants) and to undergo needs assessments (this computer-aided needs assessment tool analyses the employment needs of individual job seekers with reference to their qualifications, skills, experiences, motivation, interests, job preferences, personalities, attitudes and aptitudes for work);
- Participants to obtain customised case management and employment support services with reference to the needs assessment results. Case managers possessing the qualifications and experience of registered social workers will regularly conduct interviews with the participants, providing them with tailor-made employment support services to meet their specific needs. Post-employment support services for at least three months are also provided to participants that have found jobs; and
- Participants to attend customised training activities that suit their individual needs organised by the commissioned organisation, including the activities of various support groups such as the emotions management group, employment support group for women, and career and life planning group for youths, to share experiences of peers, or/ and to be referred to ERB for enrolment into suitable ERB courses for enhancing their work motivation and employability.

8. In addition, in line with the practice of other job centres of LD, EOS endeavours to strengthen and maintain close liaison with employers both within and outside the district. Job fairs are frequently held to facilitate employers to recruit and promote local employment opportunities.

## **Performance**

(I) Performance of basic services at EOS

9. In 2012 and 2013, EOS recorded a total of 129 057 visitors and 20 651 registered job seekers. SWD requires participants that it referred to EOS to meet the case managers twice a month if they are unemployed

able-bodied CSSA recipients and are under the age of 50. Participants who are over the age of 50 will meet their case managers once a month. Because of this special arrangement, it may not be appropriate to directly compare the numbers of job seekers visiting EOS and those of other job centres. As for recruitment activities, EOS organised a total of 132 job fairs involving 395 employers in these two years. The job fairs attracted 9 101 job seekers. Statistics on the performance of the major basic services provided by EOS are as follows:

Table 1: Performance of basic services

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>Total</b>
(i) Number of visitors	57 405	71 652	129 057
(ii) Number of registered job seekers	11 076	9 575	20 651
(iii) Number of job referrals	10 325	7 206	17 531
(iv) Number of placements <sup>1</sup>	1 412	2 150	3 562
<b>(v) Job fairs:</b>			
(a) Number of job fairs	56	76	132
(b) Number of participating employers	171	224	395
(c) Number of attending job-seekers	4 124	4 977	9 101
(d) Number of vacancies offered	11 331	17 544	28 875

(II) Performance of case management and employment support services at EOS

10. Case management and employment support services were provided to 1 682 participants during the first two years of operation which was 24.6% above the target number of participants (1 350<sup>2</sup>). Of these, 1 592 (94.6%) were unemployed able-bodied CSSA recipients referred by SWD and the remaining 90 (5.4%) were job seekers who received the

<sup>1</sup> Currently, over 90% of the vacancies advertised through LD are open for direct application by job seekers. Job seekers who have found work through direct application are not required to report their placement positions to EOS. Therefore, only information on placements through job referrals by EOS is available.

<sup>2</sup> The initial targets of EOS intakes were 550 and 800 job seekers in the first and second years of operation respectively to receive case management and employment support services.

services on a voluntary basis<sup>3</sup>. In terms of gender, a more or less even distribution of participants was recorded, with 51.4% being male and 48.6% being female. In terms of age, participants in the age group of 40 to below 50 was the largest group, accounting for 32.4%, followed by those in the age group of 50 to below 60, which accounted for 28.3% of the total number. In terms of educational attainments, most received education level of Primary 6 or below, accounting for 34.4% of the total number of participants. The second largest group was those with education up to Secondary 1 to 3, making up 33.1% of the total number. Details on the profiles of the participants were set out in Tables 2 and 3 below:

Table 2 : Breakdowns of participants by age and gender

<b>Age</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
15 to below 20	98	88	186
20 to below 30	133	106	239
30 to below 40	124	111	235
40 to below 50	191	354	545
50 to below 60	317	159	476
60 or above	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>1 682</b>

Table 3: Educational attainments of participants

<b>Educational attainment</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>%</b>
Primary 6 or below	578	34.4%
Secondary 1 to 3	557	33.1%
Secondary 4 to 5	335	19.9%
Secondary 6 to 7	134	8.0%
Post-secondary	78	4.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 682</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<sup>3</sup> Operational experience from the past two years revealed that not too many job seekers who were not referred from SWD would like to receive the case management and employment support services voluntarily. This was mainly owing to the buoyant employment market in recent years (unemployment rates for the whole territory were 3.3% and 3.4% in 2012 and 2013 respectively). As a result, job seekers would generally find it easier to find work themselves. Moreover, those voluntary participants generally had higher work motivation and job search skills. Hence, their needs for attending regular counselling sessions with case managers, training activities or other employment support were relatively low, and they had reduced needs for case management services than those participants referred by SWD.

11. Case managers of EOS made a total of 1 288 job referrals during the first two years of operation. A total of 1 709 placements<sup>4</sup> were recorded, involving 974 participants which accounted for 57.9% of the total number. 28 participants had returned to mainstream full-time schooling<sup>5</sup>. Training activities organised by the commissioned organisation recorded a total attendance of 3 103. A total of 229 and 133 referrals were made to enroll in ERB placement-tied training courses and other ERB training courses respectively. Details are provided below:

Table 4: Performance of case management and employment support services

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>Total</b>
(i) Number of participants	582	1 100	1 682
● <i>referred by SWD</i>	533	1 059	1 592
● <i>other voluntary participants</i>	49	41	90
(ii) Number of job referrals by the commissioned organisation	674	614	1 288
(iii) Number of placements ( <i>Number of participants involved</i> )	636 (383)	1 073 (644)	1 709 (974)
(iv) Number of participants returning to mainstream full-time schooling	4	24	28
(v) Training activities organised by the commissioned organisation:			
● <i>Number of training activities</i>	109	168	277
● <i>Total hours of training</i>	265	377	641
● <i>Number of attendees</i>	1 261	1 842	3 103
(vi) Number of referrals to ERB training/retraining courses:			
● <i>Placement-tied training courses</i>	53	176	229
● <i>Other ERB training courses</i>	37	96	133
● <i>Training workshops at ERB Service Centre</i>	1 085	624	1 709

<sup>4</sup> Includes placements secured by participants on their own and some participants have secured more than one placement.

<sup>5</sup> According to the service contract, mainstream full-time schooling means education with attendance of no less than 13.75 hours per week at the secondary level in a grammar school, vocational school, technical training school, or as part of the Yi Jin Diploma (full-time) offered by any educational institute.

(vii) Number of referrals to other organisations for training/retraining	43	54	97
(viii) Number of referrals to other related support services in the community <sup>6</sup>	340	232	572

12. According to the information provided by SWD, in 2012 and 2013, among the 1 592 unemployed able-bodied CSSA recipients referred to EOS, 419 (26.3%) had secured full-time employment<sup>7</sup>. Of these 419 recipients, 220 (52.5%) had changed to low-earning cases and 199 (47.5%) had left CSSA net. Details were as follows:

Table 5: Employment situation of unemployed able-bodied CSSA recipients after receiving the case management and employment support services

<b>Unemployed able-bodied CSSA recipients</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>Total</b>
(i) Number of participants	533	1 059	1 592
(ii) Number of participants having secured full-time employment	83	336	419
● <i>Number of participants having changed to low-earning CSSA cases</i>	42	178	220
● <i>Number of participants off CSSA net</i>	41	158	199

### **Evaluation of the Effectiveness of EOS**

13. The mode of operation of EOS enhanced the collaboration among LD, SWD and ERB, and provided targeted assistance to job seekers, especially those with special employment difficulties, in the form of “one-stop services”. The evaluation of the effectiveness of EOS in the

<sup>6</sup> For example, family, medical and resources assistance services, etc.

<sup>7</sup> As prescribed by SWD, full-time employment means an employment with at least 120 hours of work per month and meeting the income requirements, which are monthly earnings of not less than \$1,775 from 1 February 2012 to 31 January 2013; \$1,845 from 1 February 2013 to 31 January 2014; or \$1,920 with effect from 1 February 2014. Depending on the monthly earnings and the situation of individual family, participants having secured full-time employment may leave CSSA net or change to low-earning CSSA cases.

ensuing paragraphs was based on these two perspectives as well as the feedback from service users on the facilities and services of EOS.

(I) Strengthened collaboration among departments and organisations

14. In managing the operation of EOS, LD, SWD, ERB and the commissioned organisation maintained close collaboration regularly and made special arrangements such that smooth operation was ensured for the provision of enhanced employment and training services to job seekers with special employment difficulties.

15. LD and SWD had worked out the mechanism and detailed procedures for the referral of unemployed able-bodied CSSA recipients to receive case management and employment support services at EOS. Participants referred by SWD would go through a needs assessment test conducted by LD staff to ascertain their individual employment needs. For example, participants with higher education levels, more work experiences and a shorter duration of stay on CSSA might only need some factual information and basic employment services such as the latest labour market information, different channels for seeking employment and job referral service, etc. For those participants with lower education levels and job skills, as well as a longer duration of stay on CSSA, in-depth counselling and training services could be required for enhancing their work motivation and employability. LD staff would then pass the cases together with the assessment results to the commissioned organisation responsible for the provision of case management and employment support services for follow-up actions. To facilitate SWD in monitoring the CSSA applications by participants, case managers of the commissioned organisation would provide SWD with relevant up-to-date information concerning the unemployed able-bodied CSSA recipients. In case the participants failed to comply with the requirements of SWD (e.g. not attending regular interviews or relevant activities), case managers would inform SWD accordingly for appropriate follow-up actions.

16. Each participant was provided with case management and employment support services for a basic service period of 12 months. Based on the needs assessment results, case managers would offer the participants with customised services to cater for their individual needs, which might include counseling on employment and emotional issues, provision of latest labour market information, job matching services, referral to training and other welfare services. Apart from the support services received from the case managers, participants could make use of a full range of facilities and services available at EOS and participate in the



employment programmes administered by LD in order to increase their employment opportunities.

17. Besides, participants were provided with various training opportunities at EOS, including training activities tailor-made by the commissioned organisation. Participants might also be referred to ERB for enrolment into ERB courses to enhance their work motivation and to improve their employability.

18. The commissioned organisation arranged training activities of at least 20 hours for each participant on job search skills, soft skills and psychological well-being. It also closely collaborated with the ERB Service Centre in Tin Shui Wai in co-organising workshops on skills training (e.g. use of computers and languages) for participants. LD and ERB also jointly formulated a collaboration mechanism, so that case managers could directly refer participants with training/retraining needs to ERB Service Centre for enrolment into suitable ERB courses so as to increase their chance of finding work. Under this referral mechanism, participants referred by case managers would be exempted from attending the selection interview when they enrolled in ERB's placement-tied training courses except for those that specifically required all candidates to pass an admission test.

19. During the first two years of operation, EOS made 362 referrals to ERB for participants to enroll into training courses offered by its appointed training bodies in Tin Shui Wai and neighbouring districts. Among these referrals, 219 applications for training were accepted, including 137 cases for the ERB placement-tied training courses and 82 cases for other ERB training courses. Of these, 69 cases had successfully completed the ERB placement-tied training courses, involving 66 participants. A total of 72 placements were recorded in respect of these 66 participants after their completion of ERB placement-tied training courses. From the above, it could be seen that the strengthened collaboration between EOS and ERB had effectively enhanced the employment opportunities of those participants with training needs.

20. At the time when the establishment of EOS was contemplated, it so happened that the ACB at Tin Ching Estate in Tin Shui Wai was under construction. Sufficient space was therefore available not only for the establishment of EOS with its whole range of new services and facilities, but also for the establishment of another ERB Service Centre. Although co-location of these two centres could facilitate job seekers in obtaining the services, the operational experience from the past two years indicated that

it was not necessary to house EOS and the ERB Service Centre at the same building. EOS and ERB Service Centre could continue to set up a collaboration mode, through the information technology (IT) system and other channels of communication, for co-organising training workshops and EOS could continue to refer participants to directly enroll in ERB placement-tied training courses, organised by training bodies appointed by ERB.

21. In addition, an IT system had been specially developed for EOS to enable effective data sharing among departments and organisations involved to ensure smooth operation and enhance efficiency. Since up-to-date data and relevant information of participants were readily available in the IT system, participants were not required to provide relevant information in each referral or application, thus saving much time and effort.

## (II) Effectiveness of case management and employment support services

22. Case management and employment support services of EOS aimed at providing targeted assistance to job seekers with special employment difficulties. The operational experience from the past two years confirmed that case managers of the commissioned organisation with registered social worker qualifications and experience could practicably help those job seekers with employment difficulties. 57.9% of the participants had secured employment after receiving the services, demonstrating that the services could help participants overcome their employment barriers and find work. Among the unemployed able-bodied CSSA recipients referred by SWD, 26.3% of them had secured full-time employment, out of which 52.5% had changed to low earning CSSA cases and 47.5% had left CSSA net. This also indicated that the services were to a certain extent effective in helping participants find work and become self-reliant.

23. Most of the participants were unemployed able-bodied CSSA recipients characterised by relatively low education levels, with 69.6% of them attaining the education level of Form 3 or below. As a result, their need for in-depth counselling and other support services was relatively higher than that of the ordinary job seekers. On top of this, 67.2% of them had stayed on CSSA for five years or more; and they might lack the confidence and motivation in re-entering the labour market. Apart from the psychological factors, they were commonly affected by family and interpersonal problems which became their employment barriers. Under the case management and employment support services of EOS, case

managers would first try to help these participants resolve their personal, family and job skills problems, thereby assisting them in rebuilding confidence for re-entering the labour market.

(III) Feedback from service users

24. EOS conducted customer opinion surveys in the form of questionnaires in the past two years to collect feedback from service users to ensure service quality. In January 2012, EOS conducted a survey with 6 796 visitors to tap their views on the basic services and facilities of EOS. 95.6% of the respondents were very satisfied or satisfied<sup>8</sup> with the overall service quality of EOS.

25. In addition, EOS conducted two surveys with participants in February and October 2013 respectively to gain a better understanding of the changes they experienced in terms of their knowledge on labour market, job search skills, motivation and confidence in job seeking after receiving case management and employment support services, as well as their level of satisfaction with the services offered. Consolidated results of the two surveys from a total of 983 respondents were summarised below:

- 77.4% considered that their knowledge on labour market had increased;
- 76.8% found that their job search skills had been improved;
- 77.6% became more confident in finding employment;
- 87.8% were very satisfied or satisfied<sup>9</sup> with the services, environment and facilities of EOS;
- 89.6% were very satisfied or satisfied<sup>10</sup> with the follow-up services of case managers; and
- 80.1% of the respondents having participated in the group activities/job search skills training/vocational skills training were very satisfied or satisfied<sup>11</sup> with the arrangements.

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<sup>8</sup> Among these respondents, 27.2% were “very satisfied” while 68.4% were “satisfied”.

<sup>9</sup> Among these respondents, 24.1% were “very satisfied” while 63.7% were “satisfied”.

<sup>10</sup> Among these respondents, 32.3% were very satisfied” while 57.3% were “satisfied”.

<sup>11</sup> Among these respondents, 14.7% were “very satisfied while 65.4% were “satisfied”.

## **Concluding Remarks**

26. Based on the above observations and the operational experience in the past two years, it is found that EOS with its one-stop model of operation and service provision has effectively helped job seekers in securing employment on the one hand, while enhancing labour market efficiency by expediting the recruitment process for employers on the other hand. Most of the service users were satisfied with the services and facilities available at EOS. Participants of the case management and employment support services also gave positive feedback on the effectiveness of the services in enhancing their work motivation and employability.

27. Nonetheless, owing to the stable economy in the past two years, job seekers in general found it relatively easy to find suitable work. This explained why the number of participants joining case management services on a voluntary basis was on the low side<sup>12</sup>. As these voluntary participants did not have practical needs for counselling, training and other employment support services, the effectiveness of the services in helping these voluntary participants cannot be fully assessed. On the other hand, as a result of the buoyant job market in recent years, the overall number of unemployed able-bodied CSSA cases had been declining continuously<sup>13</sup>, making it difficult to conclusively ascertain the effectiveness of the case management and employment support services of EOS in assisting these participants. Moreover, the requirements for running an EOS in terms of office space and resource inputs are very high. Its location also has to be easily accessible to service users. Good coordination on provision of a suitable site, manpower and other resources would thus be essential before considering the establishment of additional EOS.

28. In view of the above, we recommend that EOS be continued in Tin Shui Wai under the same mode of operation with a view to providing quality employment and recruitment services in the district. We will continue to monitor the operation of EOS and collect more data to review its effectiveness after another two years of operations, before deciding on the way forward.

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<sup>12</sup> In 2012 and 2013, a total of 90 participants joined the case management and employment support services of EOS on voluntary basis, making up 5.4% of all participants.

<sup>13</sup> In December 2011, the overall number of unemployed able-bodied CSSA cases was 26 859. In December 2013, the overall number of unemployed able-bodied CSSA cases decreased by 21.3% to 21 149.

**Advice Sought**

29. Members are invited to note and give their views.

Labour and Welfare Bureau  
Labour Department  
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