

立法會
Legislative Council

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Panel on Home Affairs

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 22 May 2017**

Elite Athletes Development Fund

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the Elite Athletes Development Fund ("EADF") and summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by members of the Panel on Home Affairs ("the Panel") in its previous discussions on EADF and related issues including educational and career development support for Hong Kong's elite athletes.

Background

2. According to the Administration, its strategic policy for developing sport in Hong Kong is threefold, namely to promote sport in the community, to support elite sport, and to make Hong Kong a centre for major international sports events. The Elite Sports Committee under the Sports Commission¹ ("SC") is tasked to advise the Government through SC on matters pertaining to elite sport, providing policy direction to the Hong Kong Sports Institute ("HKSI") and advising on funding priorities for supporting elite sport and athletes.

3. HKSI is responsible for delivering services to support Hong Kong's top athletes and works in close collaboration with the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China ("SF&OC") and the national sports associations. HKSI commenced a major redevelopment project in March 2009 to upgrade its training facilities for elite athletes of Hong Kong. The redevelopment of HKSI was completed in 2014.

¹ Established in January 2005 and chaired by the Secretary for Home Affairs, SC is responsible for advising on matters pertaining to sports development. There are three Committees under SC, namely the Community Sports Committee, the Elite Sports Committee and the Major Sports Events Committee.

Elite Athletes Development Fund

4. In his 2011-2012 Budget, the Financial Secretary proposed to set up a \$7 billion EADF. The investment return of EADF would replace the current mode of subvention to HKSI. Under this arrangement, HKSI would no longer receive an annual subvention from the Government, but instead would receive income generated from the investment return from the \$7 billion EADF. The proposal on funding injection into EADF was approved by the Finance Committee ("FC") on 18 July 2011.

Panel's discussion

5. The Panel discussed the establishment of EADF on 13 May 2011. The Panel also discussed educational and career development support for elite athletes at its meeting on 10 April 2015. The major views and concerns expressed by members are summarized in ensuing paragraphs.

Elite Athletes Development Fund

6. According to the Administration, the future operation of HKSI would be largely financed by the investment returns on the seed capital of EADF. On the assumption that the long-term average investment return would be about 4% to 5%, the \$7 billion EADF would generate between \$280 million and \$350 million per annum. Some members expressed concern whether the 4% to 5% annual investment return was too optimistic and whether the investment return would be sufficient for HKSI to support more full-time elite athletes or enhance the financial assistance to them.

7. The Administration advised that EADF aimed at providing a steady financial support for HKSI. The 4% to 5% annual investment return was based on the performance of the Hong Kong Exchange Fund managed by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority over the past six years. The Administration advised that if the investment return failed to meet the target, the Secretary for Home Affairs ("SHA") might use the seed capital of EADF to meet the funding needs of HKSI. If necessary, the Administration might, subject to FC's approval, consider injecting additional funding into EADF.

8. Some members expressed concern about the exclusion of the three most popular team sports in Hong Kong, viz. football, basketball and volleyball, from EADF, and the neglect of the development of athletes in these team sports. They called on the Administration to allocate a specific portion of EADF to promote them. Other members, however, considered it necessary to have an objective benchmarking system for the selection of elite sports, and the scope of EADF should not be extended to non-elite sports.

9. The Administration explained that EADF aimed at providing funding to HKSI for supporting elite sports that had been selected through an objective assessment mechanism. Although the above three popular team sports were not selected as elite sports based on the existing selection criteria, the Administration had strengthened the financial support for the development of team sports, including football, through the Arts and Sport Development Fund.

10. It was the Administration's proposal that the statements of account of EADF would be audited by the Director of Audit and included in the financial report of SHA Incorporated for tabling at the Legislative Council ("LegCo") annually. Some members considered the proposed arrangement for LegCo's monitoring of EADF inadequate. There was a suggestion that the Administration should report to LegCo on the implementation of EADF and answer Members' questions at regular intervals. Some members also considered that the benchmarks for the identification of elite sports supported by HKSI and HKSI's strategic development plan should be submitted to LegCo for consideration and endorsement.

11. The Administration assured members that the operation of EADF would be highly transparent and subject to the monitoring by LegCo. The Administration was willing to report to the Panel on EADF if the Panel so wished, whereas HKSI's strategic development plan was considered and endorsed by the Board of Directors of HKSI.

Education support for elite athletes

12. Members had stressed time and again that it was incumbent on the Administration to provide effective and coordinated support to elite athletes. They urged the Administration to make reference to overseas experience and put in place a flexible education system, which was considered conducive to the development of elite athletes. In their view, the Administration should formulate a concrete policy and action plans, instead of merely encouraging secondary schools/tertiary institutions to provide flexible programmes for the athletes. In addition to tertiary institutions, some members considered that primary and secondary schools should allow flexibility for elite student athletes to pursue their studies while taking part in sports training or competitions. Members welcomed HKSI's setting up of the Elite Athlete-Friendly School Network ("the Network") in June 2014 to establish partnership with 27 secondary schools to allow flexibility in the school curriculum to specifically cater for the training and competition needs of student athletes.

13. The Administration advised that the existing education system had allowed flexibility for students to extend their years of studies. Schools were encouraged to make arrangements for high-level student athletes to attend

make-up classes, defer studies or apply for leave to take part in training and competitions. There were also tailor-made training programmes offered by schools themselves or in collaboration with other institutions for student athletes to help them strike a balance between studies and sports career. The Administration expected that the exemplary performance of the 27 participating schools in the Network launched by HKSI would be recognized gradually, hence fostering a culture that valued sports in other schools. HKSI was also considering partnering with local institutions to provide an on-site Professional Accreditation Programme at diploma level to elite athletes aged 15 or above, whereby their sports training would be the core of the programme and recognized for credit points.

Career development for elite athletes

14. Members generally took the view that uncertain prospect for elite athletes after retirement had deterred parents from encouraging their children to pursue a career in sports. The Administration was urged to provide more opportunities for retired athletes to pursue further education in local tertiary institutions or consider providing subsidies for them to study abroad. There was also a view that the Administration should nominate eligible student athletes to study at overseas universities if no suitable programmes were available at local universities.

15. The Administration advised that HKSI was studying the feasibility of developing in-house education programmes for student athletes to better cater for their education and training needs. While local tertiary institutions had the autonomy to admit students and the enrolment requirements for individual programmes offered by different institutions might vary, University Grants Committee-funded institutions had accepted admission applications from elite athletes recommended by HKSI or SF&OC. The Hong Kong Athletes Fund also provided grants to individual elite athletes to pursue their studies at approved overseas colleges or universities if no comparable courses were offered in Hong Kong.

16. Some members suggested that the Administration should develop a comprehensive career development plan for retired athletes, including engaging them as "ambassadors" to major sports events held in Hong Kong, assisting elite athletes who wished to become coaches after retirement in pursuing coach training programmes, and helping retired athletes to take up suitable job placements in sports related field. In their view, retired athletes applying for civil service vacancies should be considered favourably by the Government.

17. In response to members' concern about career development support for elite athletes, the Administration advised that SF&OC had established the Hong

Kong Athletes Career & Education Programme in collaboration with the business sector, with a view to improving the education and career prospects for serving and retired athletes. In addition, HKSI had adopted a whole-person approach to athletes' development and provided various programmes to assist elite athletes in pursuing further studies in preparation for the transition to a second career. HKSI had also implemented the Athletes Integrated Educational and Vocational Development Programme to provide assistance to athletes in educational and career development, which included academic guidance, consultation and tutorial services, career planning and vocational training, as well as subsidies for elite athletes enrolled in recognized coach training programmes. The Hong Kong Athletes Fund also provided grants to individual athletes for educational and other academic training to enable them to continue their studies and to develop alternative careers upon retirement from full-time sports training and competition.

Relevant Legislative Council question

18. At the Council meeting of 30 April 2014, Hon Frankie YICK raised a written question on assistance for retiring and retired athletes. The question and the Administration's reply are in **Appendix I**.

Recent developments

19. The Administration will consult the Panel on a proposal to inject \$1 billion to EADF at the next meeting on 22 May 2017.

Relevant papers

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

Appendix I

Press Releases

LCQ13: Offering educational and career support to athletes

Following is a question by the Hon Frankie Yick and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (April 30):

Question:

Since 2008, the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China has received government funding to implement the "Hong Kong Athletes Career and Education Programme" (HKACEP) to support athletes in areas such as career development and pursuit of academic studies, etc., including helping retired athletes and those who are about to retire to plan for a second career. In addition, the Hong Kong Sports Institute launched in 2008 the "Athletes Integrated Educational and Vocational Development Programme" (AIEVDP) to provide athletes with support in education and career development. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of retired athletes who applied for joining HKACEP and the number of those who received assistance under HKACEP, together with a breakdown by the support programme (including the language enrichment course, life skills and mentorship programme, scholarship programme for tertiary education, career programme, etc.), in the past five years; the amount of grants receivable by an athlete under HKACEP, and whether they are granted any subsistence allowance;

(2) of the number of retiring athletes assisted by AIEVDP, the areas in which these athletes were provided with support and the amount of grants received by them, and the number of athletes who benefitted from AIEVDP and its percentage in the total number of serving full-time athletes, in the past five years; and

(3) given that the aforesaid two programmes have operated for more than five years, whether the authorities will conduct a review to perfect them; if they will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In a bid to help athletes achieve diversified development in sports, academic studies and career, the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB), in co-operation with various stakeholders, including the Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI) and the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC), offers educational and career support to athletes so that they may plan for further academic pursuits or a "second career" after retirement, while dedicating themselves to training and taking part in competitions. My reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) Since the implementation of the "Hong Kong Athletes Career & Education Programme" (HKACEP) offered by the SF&OC from September 2008 to the end of March this year, there were around 3 000 counts of athletes using the HKACEP services. A breakdown of

programmes (including the number of beneficiaries and the amount of grants receivable) is at Annex 1. Scholarships under the HKACEP are mainly for subsidy of athletes' tuition fees, while living expenses are excluded.

(2) In the past five years, a total of 1 257 elite athletes participated in the "Athletes Integrated Educational and Vocational Development Programme" (AIEVDP) organised by the HKSI, among whom 144 had plans to retire. The AIEVDP renders diversified support to athletes in educational and career development, including tutorial support, education subsidy, coach training, personal development and exchange/learning. A breakdown of such programmes is at Annex 2.

(3) The HAB has been working closely with the HKSI and the SF&OC to provide support to serving and retired athletes in educational and career development. In addition to the programmes offered by the HKSI and the SF&OC, serving athletes and athletes who have retired for less than two years may apply for tuition grants and subsistence allowance from the Hong Kong Athletes Fund (HKAF) for approved certificate, diploma or degree courses run by educational institutions in Hong Kong. In the past three financial years, a total of 34 athletes received grants amounting to around \$3.5 million from the HKAF for further studies. To monitor the effectiveness of various programmes and enhance the relevant measures, we shall continue to participate in the work of various committees under the HKSI and the HKACEP, as well as garner athletes' views through the HKSI and the SF&OC.

Ends/Wednesday, April 30, 2014
Issued at HKT 11:40

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Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China

Hong Kong Athletes Career & Education Programme

Programme Coverage	Beneficiaries	Amount of Grants
Seminars & Workshops on Education, Career Development and Athletes Affairs	1 784	Not applicable
Integrated General English Course	475	100% tuition grants on annual basis.
Consultation Services on Athletes' Education and Career Development	345	Not applicable
Life Skills and Mentorship Programme	227	Not applicable
Career Programme (Job Opportunities)	77	Not applicable
Ambassador Programme	38	Not applicable
Scholarship Programme for Post-secondary Education & Vocational Skills Training	35	For 2-year full-time programmes, the maximum grant is \$60,000 per year; for programmes less than one year, the maximum grant is \$10,000. A maximum grant of \$3,000 for study material expenses for the approved study programmes.
Scholarship Programme for Undergraduate	15	Maximum grant of \$60,000 per year for full-time programmes (no more than four years) and \$48,000 per year for part-time programmes (no more than five years).
Language Enrichment Course	8	Maximum grant of \$12,000.
Academic Enhancement Scheme for Post-secondary and Undergraduate	5	Maximum grant of \$24,000 per year.
Total :	3 009	

Hong Kong Sports Institute

Athletes Integrated Educational & Vocational Development Programmes

Programmes	Beneficiaries	% against no. of full time athletes	Amount of Grants
Elite Athletes Development Programme	725	74.13%	Not applicable.
Elite Athletes Tutorial Support	330	33.74%	Not applicable.
Elite Athletes Education Subsidy	130	13.29%	<p><u>Level One (Junior Level Achievement)</u> Reimbursement of 40% of annual tuition fees up to a maximum of \$10,000.</p> <p><u>Level Two (Senior Level Achievement)</u> Reimbursement of 80% of annual tuition fees up to a maximum of \$20,000.</p> <p>Eligible athlete can apply for subsidy for one programme each year, up to a maximum of four years.</p>
Elite Athletes Exchange Programme	57	5.83%	Not applicable.
Elite Coaching Apprenticeship Programme	15	1.53%	Under this programme, the athlete will be a part-time employee of the HKSI for a period of no more than 12 months, up to a maximum of 80 hours per month with an allowance of \$130 per hour and fringe benefits including insurance coverage, MPF, employer's contribution, statutory holidays and annual leave entitlement.

**Relevant papers on
Elite Athletes Development Fund**

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Home Affairs ("HA Panel")	14.7.2003 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
	13.4.2007 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
	8.1.2010 (Items V)	Agenda Minutes
	14.1.2011 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
HA Panel and Panel on Education	13.5.2011 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
HA Panel	13.5.2011 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
	15.11.2011 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
	14.12.2012 (Item VII)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	19.3.2014	Official Records of Proceedings Pages 125 to 129
	30.4.2014	Official Records of Proceedings Pages 53 to 57
HA Panel	10.4.2015 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
	12.6.2015 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
	24.3.2016 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
	20.1.2017 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes

Council Business Division 2
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