

香港特別行政區政府
中央政策組



CENTRAL POLICY UNIT
The Government of the Hong Kong
Special Administrative Region

11 December 2017

Mr Anthony CHU
Clerk to Panel on Public Service
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Mr Chu,

Panel on Public Service
Motions passed at the meeting on 20 November 2017

At the meeting of the Panel on Public Service held on 20 November 2017, Members passed five motions under item IV “Central Policy Unit Re-organisation”. The Government is invited to provide written responses to the motions, which are set out below.

Engaging a talent outside the Government to head the Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office (“PICO”)

2. As explained at the Panel meeting on 20 November 2017, the Head/PICO will be required to provide leadership in overseeing the provision of secretariat and research support to the Chief Executive’s Council of Advisers on Innovation and Strategic Development; in facilitating co-operation across bureaux in policy research and co-ordination of major policies, and in providing “first-stop and one-stop” project consultation and co-ordination services; managing the public policy research funding schemes; and collaborating with the public policy research community. To perform this important role effectively, an ideal candidate for this position should possess, apart from policy research capability, an innovative mind, strong leadership and in-depth knowledge of and practical experience in the operation of the Government. We believe that candidates with these essential qualities may be found both within or outside the Government.

3. Under the proposed arrangement, the Chief Executive may appoint either a Non-civil Service (“NCS”) appointee (equivalent to D8 rank) or a civil servant at Administrative Officer Staff Grade A1 (“AOSGA1”) (at D8 rank) to head PICO. This would allow the maximum flexibility in selecting the most suitable talent available, whether within or outside the Government, to take up this important leadership role in the future.

Introduction of “policy research vouchers”

4. A policy objective of recruiting 20 to 30 Policy and Project Co-ordination Officers to work in PICO is to provide more opportunities for people who are interested in pursuing a career in public policy research and policy and project co-ordination to participate in public policy and public administration work direct. They will be responsible for not only policy research, but also co-ordination of major cross-bureau policies and provision of “first-stop and one-stop” consultation and co-ordination services to innovative projects. They will work in mixed teams with other policy officers, professional officers and people with various specialties and practical experience in public policy formulation and implementation. These jobs in PICO will offer a unique opportunity and experience for the Policy and Project Co-ordination Officers to take part in public policy formulation and co-ordination direct.

5. Meanwhile, these Policy and Project Co-ordination Officers will be responsible for planning and organising public engagement exercises to ensure that the views of the public, especially those of young people, will be evaluated and taken into account early in the public policy formulation process. They will also assist in liaising with the academia, research institutes and think tanks and facilitating collaboration with them. Furthermore, PICO will continue to administer the Public Policy Research (“PPR”) Funding Scheme and Strategic Public Policy Research (“SPPR”) Funding Scheme, which will provide funding support for the academia and non-profit research organisations and think tanks to carry out public policy research. Nevertheless, we do not have plans to provide financial subsidies in the form of “policy research vouchers” for think tanks, political parties and other policy research organisations to provide training on and conduct policy research.

Returning the administration of the “Public Policy Research Funding Scheme” to the Research Grants Council

6. The Central Policy Unit (“CPU”) launched the PPR Funding Scheme in 2005 to promote public policy research in Hong Kong; the SPPR Funding Scheme was introduced in 2008 to encourage longer-term public policy research on specific areas. The Research Grants Council (“RGC”) was engaged to administer both schemes between 1 April 2005 and 31 March 2013. After reviewing the operations of the schemes and collecting feedback from the policy research community in 2011, the CPU decided to revise the mode of operation of these two funding schemes to make the funding scheme available to a wider local public policy research community¹, adopt a more flexible time table for submission of applications and enhance the transparency and public dissemination of the results of the studies.

7. The CPU took up the day-to-day operation of the schemes² starting from 2013-14. To ensure the quality of the research projects and objective and independent assessment of the research applications, the assessments will be conducted by an Assessment Panel comprising experienced academics, which will determine the assessment criteria and detailed mechanism. Applications will be assessed by the Panel Members as well as external (local and international) reviewers, who are academics and experts. To ensure the policy relevance and impact of the research proposals, the Assessment Panel will also invite relevant bureaux or departments to provide their views on the research proposals for the Panel’s reference.

¹ In addition to the University Grants Committee-funded institutions, other local degree-awarding higher education institutions and non-profit-making public policy research think tanks may also apply for research funding support under the schemes.

² The SPPR Funding Scheme was once merged into the PPR Funding Scheme between 2013-14 and 2015-16. The CPU introduced the re-modelled SPPR Funding Scheme in April 2016, and both funding schemes are running simultaneously now.

8. We have carefully reviewed the operation of the PPR Funding Scheme and SPPR Funding Scheme during the review of the CPU. Noting that the funding schemes have been running smoothly with growing number of applications received over the years, we have decided that PICO should continue to administer the two public policy research funding schemes. Meanwhile, we will continue to work with the Assessment Panel to identify ways to further enhance the policy relevance and impact of the studies funded under these schemes.

Studying the feasibility of establishing a “baby fund” and the new direction for education in the future

9. On Members’ proposal to study the feasibility of establishing a “baby fund” and the new direction for education in the future, it is a key responsibility of PICO to promote evidence-based policy research and co-ordinate major cross-bureaux policies selected by the senior leadership in the Government. Upon its formal establishment, PICO will liaise with the relevant policy bureaux and departments and seek steer, where necessary, to decide on the research agenda and priorities of various research topics.

Yours sincerely,



(Wilson Kwong)

for Head, Task Force on
Central Policy Unit Re-organisation

c.c. Secretary for the Civil Service
(Attn: Ms Bertille LI)