

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)193/18-19(07)

Ref: CB4/PL/PS

Panel on Public Service

Meeting on 19 November 2018

Updated background brief on the commendation schemes for civil servants

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme ("CSOSAS") and other commendation schemes for civil servants, and summarizes the major views and concerns on the subject expressed by members of the Panel on Public Service ("the Panel") during previous discussions.

Background

2. According to the Administration, there are several commendation schemes applicable to civil servants. The Civil Service Bureau ("CSB") has been organizing CSOSAS on a biennial basis since 1999. The Hong Kong Management Association was invited to co-organize CSOSAS since 2007 to enhance the interaction between the public and private sectors. CSB plans to organize the next CSOSAS in 2019. In addition, the following commendation schemes which are also applicable to civil servants are held annually:

- (a) Honours and Awards System of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ("HKSAR");
- (b) Commendation Letter Scheme;
- (c) Secretary for the Civil Service ("SCS")'s Commendation Award Scheme; and
- (d) Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme ("the LMSTA Scheme").

Key features of the above five schemes are set out in **Appendix I**.

Past discussions by the Panel

3. The major views and concerns expressed by Panel members on CSOSAS and other commendation schemes for civil servants and the Administration's responses are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

CSOSAS

4. Regarding members' concern that the design of CSOSAS might favour some departments with frequent interaction with the public, the Administration advised that some B/Ds might, due to the nature of their service or their number of staff, had more opportunities to interact with the public and hence received more compliments and were in a more advantageous position in competing for the awards under this Scheme. That said, departments and teams which provided general counter services could compete in other awards, such as the General Public Service Award and the Internal Services Award.

5. Some members were concerned that participation in CSOSAS would become a matter of formality for participating B/Ds. They suggested introducing new elements/measures or expanding the award categories to the Scheme to stimulate interest and encourage participation. Noting that most of the services and projects were initiated by the awardees, some members opined that consideration should be given to giving out awards to recognize service initiatives that responded to public demands.

6. The Administration pointed out that taking account of the comments made by the Panel and civil servants in the post-event reviews, different categories of awards had been introduced over the years. Due consideration would also be given to introducing new elements to the Scheme having regard to the developments in the community. Before the commencement of each term of the Scheme, experience sharing seminars on providing quality public service would be arranged so as to inspire B/Ds and civil servants to emulate good practices of award winners. The Administration would continue to improve CSOSAS, encourage more B/Ds to participate in the Scheme and publicize the outstanding performance of awardees.

7. The Administration further said that the Special Citation for Responsiveness to Customer Needs was added in 2015 to give due recognition to those B/Ds which had positively responded to public demands in improving their services. As some members of the public were dissatisfied with the lack of collaboration and innovation among B/Ds, the Administration particularly rolled out the Inter-departmental Partnership Award, the Service Enhancement Award and Special Citation for Innovation to encourage B/Ds to improve their services and strengthen their co-operation.

8. Some members suggested that the Administration should step up publicity, in particular through different social media, to showcase the exemplary performance of the winning departments and teams. The Administration advised that it would continue to commission Radio Television Hong Kong to produce a one-hour TV documentary for broadcast on television during prime time. CSB had also created a dedicated website for CSOSAS to introduce the award winning services with video footages and in-depth description. Videos about the prize presentation ceremony and award recipients, as well as videos and pictures with details of outstanding but lesser-known services provided by different B/Ds were uploaded onto CSB's Website. In addition, talks and visits to schools and different community groups would be organized to introduce government services. Promotion efforts in new media would also be stepped up. The Administration also said that B/Ds were appreciative of the award presentation ceremony and welcomed the use of multiple channels for promoting their services.

9. In response to members' recommendations on strengthening the participation of Members and members of the public in CSOSAS, the Administration said that it would consider measures to enhance public participation of the Scheme.

Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme

10. Some members asked whether the eligibility requirement on the service length could be lowered, so that the officers with a continuous service of less than 20 years and consistently excellent performance could also benefit from the Scheme.

11. The Administration advised that it had been improving the quota ratio under the LMSTA Scheme. The quota ratio was increased from one award for every 33 officers meeting the service requirement (1:33) to 1:30 in 1997-1998 and further improved to 1:27 from 2014-2015. The number of awards issued each year was calculated based on the quota ratio and there was no limit on the number of awards issued. Due to the expansion and aging profile of the civil service, the Administration would accord priority to retiring staff when considering the grant of the awards. The Administration further clarified that the travel allowance under the LMSTA Scheme was not a condition of service and would only be granted to some civil servants.

Honours and Awards System of HKSAR

12. At the Panel meeting on 19 December 2016, a member sought clarification of the public's perception that Bureau Secretaries would be conferred with awards under the Honours and Awards System of HKSAR upon completion of service, and asked whether CSB was responsible for the nomination. The Administration stressed that the nomination criteria and

vetting procedures for the Honours and Awards System of HKSAR were rigorous and independent, CSB would only be involved in the nomination of civil servants for awards. The Administration further stated that from 2012 to 2016, civil servants made up 33% to 42% of total awardees.

Commendation Letter Scheme

13. Members noted that only some 1% of civil servants received commendation letters every year. With a view to sustaining civil servants' morale, a member asked whether consideration could be given to introducing more levels of commendation to enable more civil servants to be commended.

14. In response, the Administration said that there was no ceiling set on the number of commendation letters that could be issued. The Administration undertook to remind Heads of Departments/Grades to issue commendation letters as appropriate without regard to the number.

Secretary for the Civil Service's Commendation Award Scheme

15. In response to members' enquiries raised at the Panel meetings in 2015 and 2016 about the increase in the target number of awards under the SCS's Commendation Award Scheme commencing from 2016-2017, the Administration explained that as expenditure was involved in granting travel awards to eligible recipients of SCS's Commendation Award, a target on the number of awards to be given out must be set for the expenditure estimates.

Awards and commendation letters for non-civil service contract staff, subvented sector staff and Government's service agency workers

16. Some members were of the view that to ensure fairness, contributions of non-civil service contract ("NCSC") staff, subvented sector staff and Government's service agency workers to the work of the Government should also be recognized under the commendation schemes for civil servants.

17. The Administration advised that as NCSC staff were employed on a time-limited basis, they were not covered by the SCS's Commendation Award Scheme which was only applicable to civil servants and the award recipients had on average more than 20 years of service. NCSC staff with outstanding performance might qualify for awards under CSOSAS and the Honours and Awards System of HKSAR and receive commendation letters under the Commendation Letter Scheme. Heads of B/Ds could decide the most appropriate means to give recognition to deserving NCSC staff. B/Ds might also explore the possibility of organizing joint programmes with subvented organizations to give recognition to subvented sector staff. As regards Government's service agency workers, the Administration could neither

commend nor discipline its agency workers because they were not staff of the Government.

18. Regarding member's concern on whether NCSC staff who could meet the criterion on length of continuous service were excluded from the SCS's Commendation Award Scheme and the LMSTA Scheme, the Administration agreed to look into how individual B/Ds could give recognition to NCSC staff with long continuous service.

Other support measures to boost morale/alleviate work pressure of civil servants

19. Apart from granting service awards to civil servants, some members were concerned about the great pressure arising from heavy workload and high public expectations on the work quality of the civil service in recent years, and enquired whether the Administration had implemented any measures to strengthen the support for and boost the morale of civil servants.

20. The Administration pointed out that it would provide support and training to civil servants to help them deliver their work. Additional manpower would also be provided to B/Ds which experienced manpower shortage as appropriate. For emotional counselling and support for civil servants, the Administration had commissioned the Christian Family Service Centre to provide hotline counselling service on stress management and clinical psychology services to help staff cope with stress arising from work and other personal problems. At the meeting on 19 December 2016, the Administration advised that there was a rising demand for counselling on personal or family issues and would step up the level of support. In response to a member's concern that some civil servants might not use the hotline counseling service fearing that it might affect their promotion prospects, the Administration said that for privacy reasons, it would not obtain any personal information of the service users from the Christian Family Service Centre.

Latest development

21. The Administration indicates in its paper on policy initiatives of CSB in the 2018 Policy Address that from 2019-2020 onwards, the travelling with spouse requirement of the LMSTA Scheme will be relaxed to allow awardees (whether married or not) to nominate a travelling companion and receive the same travel allowance.

22. The Administration will update the Panel on CSOSAS and other commendation schemes for civil servants at the meeting on 19 November 2018.

Relevant papers

23. A list of relevant papers is set out in **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
12 November 2018

**Key features of the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme,
Honours and Awards System of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ("HKSAR"),
the Secretary for the Civil Service ("SCS")'s Commendation Award Scheme,
the Commendation Letter Scheme and the Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme**

	Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme	Honours and Awards System of HKSAR	SCS's Commendation Award Scheme	Commendation Letter Scheme	Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme
Target	Bureaux/Departments ("B/Ds") and teams in the Government	Members of the public and public officers (including civil servants)	Civil servants	Civil servants	Civil servants
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recognize the efforts of B/Ds and teams which provide excellent service; • to promote a customer-focused culture in the civil service; and • to share experience with B/Ds and teams for continuous improvement and innovation in the delivery of public service 	To recognize their contribution to Hong Kong and their public and community service	To recognize civil servants who have outstanding performance for at least five consecutive years	To recognize civil servants who have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided consistently outstanding service for at least three consecutive years; or • made significant contribution towards enhancing the efficiency or image of B/Ds; or • performed a meritorious/brave act warranting special recognition. 	To recognize local non-directorate officers who have excellent performance with a continuous service of 20 years or more, and have not received any Government travel award before

	Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme	Honours and Awards System of HKSAR	SCS's Commendation Award Scheme	Commendation Letter Scheme	Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme
Decided by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-departmental Partnership Award, Departmental Service Enhancement Award and Team awards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1st stage: Boards of examiners¹ - 2nd stage: final adjudication panels² • Best Public Image Award: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legislative Council Members, District Councils members and a random sample of more than 2 400 members of the public 	Chief Executive, on the recommendation of an Honours Committee ³	SCS, on the recommendation of an Award Committee ⁴	A commendation committee set up by individual B/Ds under the chairmanship of a directorate officer	Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Departments/Grades or their Deputies

¹ Comprises seasoned managers from various service industries

² Comprises Legislative Council Members, District Councils members, representatives from professional organizations, staff side members of the Central Consultative Councils and senior officials from the Civil Service Bureau.

³ Comprises government officials and eminent community leaders

⁴ Comprises representatives of the Civil Service Bureau and other bureaux/grades

	Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme	Honours and Awards System of HKSAR	SCS's Commendation Award Scheme	Commendation Letter Scheme	Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme
Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-departmental Partnership Award • Departmental Awards (comprises the Departmental Service Enhancement Award and the Best Public Award) • Team awards (comprises the Specialized Service Award, the Internal Service Award, the General Public Service Award, the Regulatory/Enforcement Service Award and the Crisis/Incident Support Service Award)⁵ 	Bauhinia Awards, Bravery Awards, Disciplined Services and Independent Commission Against Corruption Awards, Medal of Honour, Chief Executive's Commendation	Each award recipient receives a certificate of recognition and a gold pin. For those award recipients who have 20 or more years of service and have not enjoyed government sponsored travel outside Hong Kong before, they will also receive a travel award.	Each recipient receives a commendation letter issued by the respective bureau/department.	Award is granted on a one-off basis and in the form of an accountable travel allowance subject to a standard rate. The amount of the travel allowance for 2018-2019 is \$24,320.

⁵ There are Gold, Silver and Bronze prizes, and Meritorious Awards for each award category under the Scheme (except the Best Public Image Award which only has Gold, Silver and Bronze prizes). Each team award has a Special Citation for Innovation and Special Citation for Responsiveness to Customer Needs. A Special Citation for Integrity Management is also given out under the General Public Service Award and the Regulatory/Enforcement Service Award.

	Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme	Honours and Awards System of HKSAR	SCS's Commendation Award Scheme	Commendation Letter Scheme	Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme
Number of awardees in 2017	Not applicable	104 civil servants (19 of them received the Chief Executive's Commendation for Government/Public Service and 52 received various Disciplined Services Awards)	100 civil servants from 37 B/Ds	About 2 600 officers	About 2 510 awards (2017- 2018)

**Civil Service Outstanding Service Award
and other commendation schemes for civil servants**

List of relevant papers

Date	Meeting/Event	References
18 November 2013	Panel on Public Service	<u>Administration's paper</u> <u>Updated Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</u> <u>Minutes</u>
17 November 2014		<u>Administration's paper</u> <u>Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</u> <u>Minutes</u>
16 November 2015		<u>Administration's paper</u> <u>Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</u> <u>Minutes</u>
19 December 2016		<u>Administration's paper</u> <u>Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</u> <u>Minutes</u>

Date	Meeting/Event	References
22 December 2017		<u>Administration's paper</u> <u>Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</u> <u>Minutes</u>