

**立法會**  
***Legislative Council***

LC Paper No. CB(4)506/19-20(08)

Ref: CB4/PL/PS

**Panel on Public Service**

**Special meeting on 4 May 2020**

**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. 33 entries from 22 departments were awarded under CSOSAS in December 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's Commendation Award Scheme; and
- (d) Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme ("the LMSTA Scheme").<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> From 2019-2020 onwards, awardees can flexibly nominate a travelling companion to receive the same travel allowance.

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

### **Past discussions by the Panel**

3. Panel members in general support various commendation schemes for civil servants to give due recognition to their services and good performance. 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 Bureaux/Departments ("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 Service Award and the Internal Support 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. 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 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. Taking account of the comments made by the Panel and civil servants in the post-event reviews and the developments in the community, different categories of awards had been introduced over the years. The Inter-departmental Partnership Award and the Departmental Service Enhancement Award were rolled out to encourage B/Ds to improve their services and strengthen their co-operation.

7. 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.

8. 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

9. In response to a member's suggestion, the Administration relaxed the travelling with spouse requirement in the LMSTA Scheme from 2019-2020 onwards so that the awardee (whether married or not) could flexibly nominate a travelling companion and receive the same travel allowance.

10. Some members asked whether the eligibility requirement on the service length could be lowered and whether the quota ratio of awards for eligible officers could be improved, so that officers with a continuous service of less than 20 years and consistently excellent performance could also benefit from the Scheme. The Administration advised that the travel allowance under the LMSTA Scheme was not a condition of service and would only be granted to some civil servants. 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 each year. 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. As the new measure to allow awardees to flexibly nominate a travelling companion from 2019-2020 onwards would further increase this expenditure, the Administration had to take into account the resource implication when considering further improving the quota ratio.

#### Honours and Awards System of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

11. 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

12. 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. 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.

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

13. Some members were of the view that to ensure fairness, contributions of non-civil service contract ("NCSC") staff, subvented sector staff and Government's agency/outsourced workers, in particular for those who had been providing services to the Government for a long time, should also be recognized under the commendation schemes.

14. The Administration advised that the Secretary for the Civil Service's Commendation Award Scheme was only applicable to civil servants and the award recipients had on average more than 20 years of service. In fact, Heads of B/Ds could decide the most appropriate means to give recognition to deserving NCSC staff. NCSC staff with outstanding performance might qualify for awards under CSOSAS and the Honours and Awards System of HKSAR. Commendation letters could also be given to NCSC staff under the Commendation Letter Scheme and kept in the personnel files of the NCSC staff, which in turn might facilitate their application for civil service posts. B/Ds might also explore the possibility of organizing joint programmes with subvented organizations to give recognition to subvented sector staff. As regards outsourced workers providing services to B/Ds, CSB would relay members' views to the major procuring B/Ds for ways to encourage outsourced service contractors to give recognition to their deserving workers.

15. Regarding member's suggestion of rolling out a travel award scheme with a smaller amount of travel allowance for NCSC staff to boost their morale, the Administration replied in the negative and advised that the terms of employment of NCSC staff were separate and different from those of civil servants. That said, 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

16. 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. Quoting a suspected suicide case which involved a civil servant who was suspected to have committed a criminal offence, a member called on the Administration to enhance the support and counselling service given to civil servants who were involved in legal proceedings.

17. 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. Noting that there was a rising demand for counselling on personal or family issues, the Administration would step up the level of support. In response to a member's concern that some civil servants might not use the hotline counselling 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.

18. Question was raised about whether the hotline counseling service would be extended to cover family members of civil servants. The Administration advised that the hotline counselling service was aimed at helping civil servants cope with stress at work and other personal problems. Civil servants and their family members were entitled to receive clinical psychological services provided by the Families Clinics.

### **Latest development**

19. The Administration will update the Panel on CSOSAS and other commendation schemes for civil servants at the special meeting on 4 May 2020.

### **Relevant papers**

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

Council Business Division 4  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
28 April 2020

**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**

	<b>Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme</b>	<b>Honours and Awards System of HKSAR</b>	<b>SCS's Commendation Award Scheme</b>	<b>Commendation Letter Scheme</b>	<b>Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme</b>
<b>Target</b>	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
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To recognize the efforts of B/Ds and teams which provide excellent service;</li> <li>• to promote a customer-focused culture in the civil service; and</li> <li>• to inspire departments and teams for continuous improvement in the delivery of public services.</li> </ul>	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.	<p>To recognize civil servants who have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provided consistently outstanding service for at least three consecutive years; or</li> <li>• made significant contribution towards enhancing the efficiency or image of B/Ds; or</li> <li>• performed a meritorious/brave act warranting special recognition.</li> </ul>	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.

	<b>Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme</b>	<b>Honours and Awards System of HKSAR</b>	<b>SCS's Commendation Award Scheme</b>	<b>Commendation Letter Scheme</b>	<b>Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme</b>
<b>Decided by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1<sup>st</sup> stage: Boards of examiners<sup>1</sup></li> <li>2<sup>nd</sup> stage: final adjudication panels<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	Chief Executive, on the recommendation of an Honours Committee <sup>3</sup>	SCS, on the recommendation of an Award Committee <sup>4</sup>	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
<b>Awards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inter-departmental Partnership Award</li> <li>Departmental Service Enhancement Award</li> <li>Team awards (comprises the Specialised Service Award, the Internal Support Award, General Service Award, Regulatory Service Award and</li> </ul>	Bauhinia Awards, Bravery Awards, Disciplined Services and Independent Commission Against Corruption Awards, Medal of Honour, Chief Executive's Commendation	<p>Each award recipient receives a certificate of recognition and a gold pin.</p> <p>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.</p>	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.

<sup>1</sup> Comprises seasoned managers from various service industries

<sup>2</sup> Comprises Legislative Council Members, District Councils members, representatives from professional organizations, staff side members of the Central Consultative Councils of the Civil Service and senior directorate officers of the Civil Service Bureau.

<sup>3</sup> Comprises government officials and eminent community leaders

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



	<b>Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme</b>	<b>Honours and Awards System of HKSAR</b>	<b>SCS's Commendation Award Scheme</b>	<b>Commendation Letter Scheme</b>	<b>Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme</b>
	the Crisis Support Award ) <sup>5</sup>				

---

<sup>5</sup> There are Gold, Silver and Bronze prizes, and Meritorious Awards for each award category under the Scheme. Special Citation Award - Workplace Safety and Wellness, Application of Innovation and Technology, Interactive Communication with the Public are also given out.

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

**List of relevant papers**

Meeting/Event	Date	References
Panel on Public Service	19 December 2016	<u>Administration's paper</u>  <u>Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</u>  <u>Minutes</u>
	22 December 2017	<u>Administration's paper</u>  <u>Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</u>  <u>Minutes</u>
	19 November 2018	<u>Administration's paper</u>  <u>Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</u>  <u>Minutes</u>