

ITEM FOR FINANCE COMMITTEE

HEAD 53 – GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT : HOME AFFAIRS BUREAU

Subhead 700 General non-recurrent

New Item “Injection into the Arts and Sport Development Fund (Sports Portion) for the Sports Science and Research Funding Scheme”

Members are invited to approve a new commitment of \$150 million for injection into the Arts and Sport Development Fund (Sports Portion) for the Sports Science and Research Funding Scheme.

PROBLEM

We need to strengthen our efforts in the areas of sports science and sports medicine by adopting scientific methods and advanced technologies in their training and gear, so as to help our athletes better prepare for and participate in major international sports events and enhance their competitiveness.

PROPOSAL

2. The Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA) proposes to create in 2021-22 a new commitment of \$150 million for injection into the Arts and Sport Development Fund (ASDF) (Sports Portion) for the Sports Science and Research Funding Scheme (the Scheme), in order to enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong athletes at and their preparation for major international sports events in the coming few years.

JUSTIFICATION

Development of Elite Sports

3. The Government fully supports and attaches great importance to the development of elite sports. The Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI) is Hong Kong’s elite sports training centre. It provides athletes with elite training,

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direct financial grants and comprehensive support services, including strength and conditioning, sports science, sports medicine, dual career development in sports and education, insurance, meals and accommodation etc. Currently, HKSI has in total 20 Tier A sports, 13 Tier B sports, six Tier A disabled sports and three Tier B disabled sports, and provides support to around 1 300 athletes.

4. With the long-term and comprehensive training and support services provided by HKSI, the overall performance of Hong Kong athletes has been improving in recent years, and made remarkable achievements in various sports. The Hong Kong, China Delegation achieved the best ever results of one gold, two silver and three bronze medals in Hong Kong history at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games (OG), as well as the outstanding results of two silver and three bronze medals at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games (PG). A number of athletes also broke Hong Kong records or attained personal best results at these two Games. The entire community was lifted by the excellent performance of our athletes.

5. The outstanding achievements of Hong Kong athletes are only made possible with the professional training and support services they received. As more Hong Kong athletes have gained a place amongst the world's best, the relevant sports science and sports medicine support services become even more crucial not only in enhancing the effectiveness of athletes' training, but also in avoiding injuries and facilitating speedy recovery. Currently, HKSI provides the following special facilities and support services in sports science and sports medicine –

(a) *Scientific Conditioning Centre*

The Scientific Condition Centre provides assessments to athletes, as well as developing and implementing science-based strength and conditioning programme, to unleash athletes' full potential by improving their cardiovascular system, muscular strength, speed, power, agility and mobility;

(b) *Sport Biomechanics & Technology Centre*

The Sport Biomechanics & Technology Centre is responsible for providing measurement and analysis of sporting skills. It provides coaches and athletes with evidence-based technique improvement advice, as well as consultation and advice for setting up training-assisted feedback systems to enhance athletes' skill acquisition and development;

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(c) *Sports Medicine Centre*

The Sports Medicine Centre provides athletes with medical support, including physical examinations, general and orthopaedic clinic services, physiotherapy, manual therapy, rehabilitative training, therapeutic exercise and sports massage. The centre also provides athletes with regular musculoskeletal evaluations, postural and movement impairment assessment;

(d) *Sport Psychology Centre*

The Sport Psychology Centre works closely with coaches to improve athletes' performance and psychological qualities during training and competitions from a psychological perspective, as well as facilitating overall development of their physical and psychological well-being. The centre also provides psychology services for individuals and in group settings for athletes of various age groups. These services include mental skills training, psychological assessment, personal counselling, psycho-education, on-field support and applied research. In addition, the centre sends professionals to competition venues to provide timely and direct on-field psychological support to athletes; and

(e) *Sport Nutrition Monitoring Centre*

The Sport Nutrition Monitoring Centre provides sport-based and individualised support on nutrition strategies, biochemical performance analysis, food selection and provision, as well as education and research, which assists athletes to cope with training and competitions, and to help them achieve their best performance.

6. During the preparation for the Tokyo OG, PG and other major international sports events, the HKSI's Elite Training Science and Technology Division (the Division) and various Tier A sport teams have commissioned a number of research projects to help improve the performance of athletes. They have also collaborated with local tertiary institutions on specific scientific research projects. For example, HKSI has been collaborating with the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology on equipment development and exploration of the best riding postures for Hong Kong cycling athletes through the use of the wind tunnel and application of aerodynamics technology. HKSI has also collaborated with an enterprise to develop special fabric for the suits of the Hong Kong Cycling Team, applying specialised seaming technology and tested in the wind tunnel, to reduce drag.

7. The outstanding performance of the Hong Kong, China Delegation at the Tokyo OG and PG is a clear indicator of the capacity of Hong Kong athletes in reaching the highest level in the international sports arena. Nevertheless, as the standard in international sports events are on the rise, we need to set up the Scheme to intensify support in sports science and sports medicine, so as to enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong athletes and enable them to scale new heights.

The Scheme

8. We need to strengthen our efforts in the areas of sports science and sports medicine by adopting scientific methods and advanced technologies in their training and gear, so as to help our athletes better prepare for and participate in major international sports events and enhance their competitiveness. We propose the Government and the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust (HKJCCT) to each inject \$150 million, i.e. \$300 million in total, into the ASDF (Sports Portion), with the entire sum earmarked for the Scheme to enhance the competitiveness of athletes and help them better prepare for major international sports events in the coming few years, including the 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games (AG) and Asian Para Games (APG), the 2024 Paris OG and PG, as well as the 15th National Games in 2025.

9. The Scheme will cover the following areas pertaining to elite sports development –

- (a) commissioning of science and research projects on areas including sports science and sports medicine;
- (b) purchase of equipment and software applications on scientific research related to strength and conditioning, sports science and sports medicine; and
- (c) further improvements to athletes' gear, etc.

10. Within the scope of the \$300 million-Scheme jointly funded by the Government and HKJCCT, we will not set any funding ceilings for individual projects to allow maximum flexibility.

11. The Division is required to seek advice from the relevant expert committee^{Note} of HKSI on the applications under the Scheme. With the support of the expert committee, HKSI may then submit the application(s) to the

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^{Note} HKSI will set up an expert committee for the Scheme.

Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) for consideration and seeking SHA's approval. We welcome tertiary institutions, "national sports associations" (NSAs) and other organisations to collaborate with HKSI on sports science and research projects to help improve Hong Kong athletes' performance and competitiveness.

12. Upon the approval of funding proposal by the Finance Committee (FC), HAB will formulate funding guidelines for the Scheme and consult the Sports Commission accordingly. The Division shall set out measurable performance indicators for the projects funded under the Scheme for evaluating the effectiveness of the projects in enhancing the competitiveness of Hong Kong athletes and their preparation for major international sports events, and reporting to HKSI's relevant expert committee and HAB.

Operation of the ASDF (Sports Portion)

13. SHA is the controlling officer of ASDF, responsible for approving funding applications. The main categories of projects supported by the ASDF (Sports Portion) are as follows –

- (a) supporting athletes to prepare for and participate in major international games, including OG, PG, AG, APG, the Summer Universiade and the National Games, as well as competitions of different sports at World and Asian levels;
- (b) supporting NSAs and other sports organisations to host international sports events locally, including "M" Mark events and major international sports events;
- (c) supporting schemes for the development of local football in accordance with the recommendations of the Football Task Force;
- (d) launching in January 2018 the Five-Year Development Programme for Team Sports covering eight team sports featured in AG, namely baseball, basketball, handball, hockey, ice hockey, softball, volleyball and water polo, with the aim of enhancing the performance of team sports progressively and increasing their chances of attaining elite sports status in the future; and
- (e) supporting other one-off initiatives of great significance to the development and promotion of sports in Hong Kong.

14. To further promote the sports development, FC approved an injection of \$1.5 billion into the ASDF (Sports Portion) in July 2010 as a seed fund. The annual investment returns provide sustainable additional resources to support the long-term development of sports. Although FC approved in January 2019 that the usage of the monies under ASDF is no longer limited to its investment returns, we will only deploy the portion of the seed fund to support worthy sports projects with SHA's approval, so as to maintain investment yields of ASDF for providing continuous support to sports development. As at 31 July 2021, the balance of the ASDF (Sports Portion) is around \$2.508 billion.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

15. We propose a one-off injection of \$150 million into the ASDF (Sports Portion) for the Scheme, so as to enhance the competitiveness of athletes at major international sports events in the coming few years. The additional workload arising from the implementation of the Scheme will be absorbed by HAB.

16. If the proposed injection is approved by FC, HKJCCT will inject \$150 million into the ASDF (Sports Portion) in parallel. The injection will total at \$300 million. We estimate that this injection will be sufficient to meet the needs under the Scheme to prepare for major international sports events in the coming few years. We will review the operation and effectiveness of the Scheme after the 2024 Paris OG and PG.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

17. The Chief Executive announced on 10 August 2021 a number of measures to support the sustainable development of sports in Hong Kong, including allocating a total of \$300 million jointly with HKJCCT, with each party contributing \$150 million, to enhance the competitiveness of athletes and their preparation for major international sports events in the coming few years. The related measures are generally supported by the sports sector and the public.

18. We consulted the Panel on Home Affairs of the Legislative Council on the above proposal on 27 September 2021. Members did not object to the submission of the proposal to FC.

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BACKGROUND

19. The ASDF (Sports Portion) was established by the Government in January 1997 with an initial injection of \$140 million, followed by four subsequent injections totalling \$2.63 billion with the last one made in January 2019, to support the long-term development of sports in Hong Kong.

Home Affairs Bureau
September 2021