

For discussion on
27 September 2021

Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs

Sports Science and Research Funding Scheme

PURPOSE

The Government and the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust (HKJCCT) propose to jointly inject a total of \$300 million into the Arts and Sport Development Fund (ASDF) (Sports Portion), and earmark \$300 million in the ASDF (Sports Portion) to launch a new Sports Science and Research Funding Scheme (the Scheme). This paper seeks Members' views on the abovementioned proposal.

BACKGROUND

2. The Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI) is Hong Kong's elite sports training centre. It provides athletes with elite training, 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. Currently, the HKSI has 20 Tier A sports, 13 Tier B sports, six Tier A disabled sports and three Tier B disabled sports, and the HKSI provides support to around 1 300 athletes.

3. The Chief Executive announced on 10 August 2021 a number of measures to support the further development of sports in Hong Kong, including allocating a total of \$300 million jointly with the HKJCCT to enhance the competitiveness of athletes at international sports events in the coming few years. The related measures are generally supported by the sports sector and members of the public.

CONSIDERATION

4. The Government fully supports the development of elite sports. With long-term and comprehensive support services, the overall performance of Hong Kong athletes has improved greatly in recent years. There have been remarkable

achievements in various sports. The Hong Kong, China Delegation achieved the best results of one gold, two silver and three bronze medals in Hong Kong history at the Tokyo Olympic Games (OG), as well as outstanding results of two silver and three bronze medals at the 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 by 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 in allowing our top athletes to train more effectively, avoid injuries and recover faster. Currently, the HKSI provides the following sports science and sports medicine facilities and support services –

(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, 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 feedback to coaches and athletes on technique improvement based on evidence, as well as consultation and advice for setting up training-assisted feedback systems to enhance skill acquisition;

(c) Sports Medicine Centre

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

(d) Sport Psychology Centre

The Sport Psychology Centre works closely with coaches to improve athletes' performance and psychological qualities in their training and competitions from a psychological perspective, as well as facilitate development of their overall 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. To prepare for the Tokyo OG, PG and other major international events, the HKSI's Elite Training Science and Technology Division and various Tier A sport teams have commissioned a number of research projects to help improve the performance of athletes. They have collaborated with local tertiary institutions on specific scientific research projects. For example, the HKSI has been collaborating with the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology to develop equipment and explore the best riding postures for Hong Kong cycling athletes through the use of the wind tunnel and application of aerodynamics technology. The HKSI has also collaborated with a company to develop special fabric for the suits of the Hong Kong Cycling Team, coupled with a specialised seaming technology and facilitated by tests in the wind tunnel, to reduce drag.

7. The outstanding performance of the Hong Kong, China Delegation to 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 performance levels in international sports events continue to rise, we need to set up the Scheme to strengthen support in sports science and sports medicine, so as to enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong athletes and enable them to scale new

heights.

Operation of the Scheme

8. We need to strengthen sports science and sports medicine support to our athletes in their preparation for major international events, and improve their training and their gear with the use of advanced technology. The Government and the HKJCCT will each inject \$150 million, i.e. \$300 million in total, into the ASDF (Sports Portion). Upon injection, we will earmark \$300 million in the ASDF (Sports Portion) to launch 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), as well as the 2024 Paris OG and PG.

9. The HKSI's Elite Training Science and Technology Division is required to consult the relevant expert committee of the HKSI on the proposed science projects. Upon support by the expert committee, the HKSI shall submit the proposed projects to the Home Affairs Bureau for approval and funding allocation by the Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA). We welcome tertiary institutions, "national sports associations" (NSAs) and other organisations to collaborate with the HKSI on science and research projects to help improve Hong Kong athletes' performance and competitiveness.

10. 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.

11. Within the proposed framework of the \$300 million Scheme, and to enable the largest degree of flexibility, we will not set any funding ceilings for individual

projects. We estimate that the \$300 million injection in total will be sufficient to meet the needs under the Scheme until the 2024 Paris OG and PG. We will review the operation and effectiveness of the Scheme thereafter.

Operation of the ASDF (Sports Portion)

12. The ASDF (Sports Portion) was established in 1997 with an initial injection of \$140 million, followed by four injections totalling \$2.63 billion with the last one made in January 2019, in support of the long-term development of sports in Hong Kong. The main categories of projects supported are as follows –

- (a) supporting athletes to prepare for and participate in major international games, including the OG, PG, AG, APG, the Summer Universiade and the National Games, as well as competitions of different sports at World and Asian levels;
- (b) hosting international sports events locally by NSAs and other sports organisations, 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 the 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.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. We propose a one-off injection of \$150 million into the ASDF (Sports Portion) to enhance the competitiveness of athletes at international sports events in the

coming few years. The additional workload arising from the implementation of the Scheme will be absorbed by the HAB.

WAY FORWARD

14. If the proposed injection is approved by the Finance Committee (FC), the HKJCCT will inject \$150 million into the ASDF (Sports Portion). The total amount of injection will hence be \$300 million. We will strive to have the funding approved by the FC before the current term of the Legislative Council ends in late October 2021, so that the Scheme can be launched as early as possible.

ADVICE SOUGHT

15. Members are invited to comment on the above proposed injection. We plan to apply funding from the FC subject to Members' views.

Home Affairs Bureau
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