

**For discussion
on 18 March 2024**

Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs

2024 Voter Registration Campaign

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the publicity plan and main features of the 2024 Voter Registration (“VR”) Campaign.

Background

2. Regular VR campaigns are organised on an annual basis. The scale and main features of the annual campaign depend on whether that year is an election year¹. This year, the Registration and Electoral Office (“REO”) will organise a VR Campaign making reference to the scale and main features for a non-election year.

Timetable for the annual VR Cycle

3. Under the existing legislation, permanent residents of Hong Kong who (i) have reached 18 years of age on or before the statutory deadline for the publication of the next final register (“FR”) (i.e. 25 September); (ii) hold a valid identity document; (iii) ordinarily reside in Hong Kong; and (iv) are not disqualified from being registered as electors, are eligible to be registered as electors. The statutory deadline for new registration (“NR”) for the annual VR cycle is 2 June. Eligible persons who wish to register as electors must submit their applications on or before the aforementioned deadline for inclusion in the

¹ For the VR Campaign in an election year, extended publicity activities (e.g. setting up of roving registration counters at selected residential estates / public places, display of banners, bunting and giant wall banners, production of radio programmes, community outreach programmes, etc.) will be included in addition to the activities of a standard-scale.

FR of the year.

4. Existing electors in the current FR do not need to register again. Nonetheless, if the electors have relocated to another residential address after the publication of last year's FR, they should submit an application to REO for change of particulars ("COP") on or before 2 June, so that their updated particulars can be reflected in the FR. Also, if there is evidence showing the registered address of a particular elector is no longer his/her principal residential address, REO will conduct a statutory inquiry to the person. Electors who receive an inquiry letter should reply. Electors who fail to reply the inquiry on or before 2 June will be included in the omissions lists ("OLs") in the next phase of the VR campaign.

5. Persons who submit an NR as an elector in a geographical constituency ("GC") or a COP (for changes of residential addresses) are required by REO under the law to submit address proof² in their applications, which includes utility bills for water / electricity / town gas service / landline telephone or mobile phone, etc.. Additional information / proof may be required by REO in respect of addresses in buildings that are manifestly non-residential. Nonetheless, under no circumstance would REO require the electors to provide address proof with personal bank information. Electors shall be aware of the above in avoidance of fraud.

6. Provisional registers ("PRs") and OLs for GCs, functional constituencies ("FCs") and Election Committee subsectors ("ECSSs") will be published on or before 1 August for inspection after the processing of NR and COP applications. Persons who are included in OLs would receive prior notice by post in late July and reminders via email/Short Message Service ("SMS") (if provided) after the publication of OLs. During the inspection period from 1 to 25 August, members of the public may lodge claims or objections against entries on the PRs and the OLs, which will be determined by a Revising Officer ("RevO"). REO will finalize and publish the FRs incorporating the rulings of

² Types of documents accepted by REO as valid proofs of address include bills or documents issued by public bodies, tertiary institutions, government departments or the judiciary (such as utility bills for water/ electricity/ town gas services/ landline telephone/ mobile phone, bills from the Hospital Authority and post-secondary institutions, etc.), statements or correspondences issued by banks and financial institutions, and valid and "stamped" (for stamp duty) tenancy agreement.

the RevO.

7. The statutory deadlines and procedures for VR are set out at **Annex**.

Main Features of the 2024 VR Campaign

Objectives

8. The overall objectives for the 2024 VR Campaign are to -
 - (a) promote the statutory VR deadline for COP and NR (i.e. 2 June), and call upon eligible persons of all age groups to register as electors by then;
 - (b) remind registered electors to notify REO of any change in their registration particulars when necessary;
 - (c) remind members of the public that applicants for NR or COP are required to submit address proof;
 - (d) remind members of the public who are uncertain with their registration status and / or particulars to verify their registration status and check the residential address they used for registration via the Online Voter Information Enquiry System (“OVIES”) or REO’s hotline. Registered electors may also verify their registration particulars through the same means;
 - (e) hold targeted campaigns for (i) persons who are eligible to register but have yet to do so; and (ii) persons would become eligible to register in the near future; and
 - (f) encourage electors to provide / update their phone number and email address for receiving messages from REO and candidates in elections. REO will send validation SMS / email to improve the accuracy of the collected data.

9. Also, in support of the digital government initiative, REO will fully roll out a new option for electors to submit applications for NR and COP for GCs and access OVIES through “iAM Smart+”. REO would actively promote the use of this service in the VR Campaign this year.

Timing

10. The 2024 VR Campaign will be conducted in two stages –
- (a) The first stage will run from **late April to 2 June** to appeal to eligible persons for NR, remind registered electors to update their particulars with the REO, and remind electors to respond to REO’s inquiry letters. Members of the public will also be reminded that address proofs are required for applications for NR or COP;
 - (b) The second stage will run from **1 to 25 August 2024** (i.e. from the publication of PRs and OLs to the end of the claims and objections period). Electors will be reminded to check their registration particulars via OVIES or REO’s hotline. REO will appeal to electors on the OLs to respond to the reminding letters, so as to reinstate their registration status, failing which the electors will not be included in the FR.

Activities

11. Multiple approaches in publicity would continue be adopted to disseminate the VR messages and appeal for NR and COP –
- (a) set up registration counters at Registration of Persons Offices (“ROPs”) of the Immigration Department (“ImmD”) to encourage and help members of the public register when they visit these offices to apply for or collect their identity cards (especially persons who have recently reached the age of 18 or attained permanent residency);
 - (b) send VR application forms and posters to tertiary institutions and

secondary schools to seek their assistance in providing and collecting application forms submitted by students. REO will also set up mobile registration counters in tertiary institutions starting in April to facilitate the registration of their students. REO will also cooperate with tertiary institutions for setting up mobile registration counters during registration or orientation activities for new students, so as to facilitate as many new eligible voters as possible;

- (c) conduct the school visiting programme for senior secondary students to appeal to students who will be turning 18 to register as electors; and
- (d) conduct targeted publicity for tenants in public housing estates who have yet to register as electors.

12. Apart from the above, REO has observed an increased number of persons residing in Hong Kong arising from different talent schemes by the Government. They will be eligible to register as electors after attaining permanent residency. To share relevant information to them early, REO will contact support groups for new immigrants and talent schemes through the Labour and Welfare Bureau, Immigration Department and District Offices under the Home Affairs Department to encourage their registration after attaining permanent residency.

13. In addition, a number of actions will be taken to encourage existing electors to update their particulars with REO after moving, including—

- (a) writing to households in newly-completed private estates to remind them to report change in address with provision of address proof and to appeal to persons who have yet to register as electors to register early;
- (b) identifying electors who have newly moved into public housing units through cross-matching of records with Housing Department and the Hong Kong Housing Society, and updating their registered address; and

- (c) collaborating with ImmD to appeal to electors, who have granted consent for cross-matching of particulars between ImmD and REO, to apply for change of registered addresses with provision of address proof; and
- (d) encouraging voters to update their non-statutory information such as phone number and email address by using more convenient means (e.g. directly through OVIES).

14. REO has noted that some members of the public who were electors are no longer in last year's FR due to failure to respond during the statutory inquiry processes in previous years. REO would try to contact them by phone or email in its existing database to appeal to them for re-registration.

Publicity measures

15. Similar to previous VR Campaigns, a series of publicity measures will be put in place. We will produce a series of television and radio Announcements in the Public Interest ("APIs") for broadcasting through different media channels (e.g. TV and radio broadcasts) and at different venues (e.g. residential estates and government buildings) to promote VR messages in both stages of the VR Campaign. Besides, we will place advertisements on websites and mobile apps, at major MTR stations, bus shelters and on public transport vehicles; and display posters.

16. We will continue to make use of mobile apps and other online platforms including social media where appropriate to better disseminate the VR messages. Advertisements, including still graphics and video, are planned to be placed on various online platforms. We will also appeal to relevant organisations to place VR-related information on their websites so as to reach out to potential electors in the FCs and voters in the ECSSs. Publicity materials will also be provided to those organisations for deployment.

Advice Sought

17. Members are invited to note the overall publicity plan and the main features of the 2024 VR Campaign as detailed in the paper.

**Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau
Registration and Electoral Office
March 2024**

Statutory Deadlines Concerning Voter Registration (“VR”) in 2024

Statutory Deadline	VR procedure and event
2 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Electors to apply to the Electoral Registration Officer (“ERO”) for reporting change in registration particulars.• Applicants to apply to the ERO for new registration.• Electors under inquiry process to make written response to the ERO.
11 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicants or Electors to provide further information/particulars relating to the application submitted to the ERO (if so requested).• After finishing all the registration procedures, the ERO to compile the registration particulars, and to arrange printing, checking and binding of the provisional registers (“PRs”) and omissions lists (“OLs”), for inspection.
1 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ERO to publish and make available the PRs and OLs for inspection.
25 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The public to make a claim or objection to the registration in the PRs.• Electors included in the OLs to provide written response to the reminding letter issued by the ERO in order to have his registration reinstated upon the approval of the Revising Officer (“RevO”).
11 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The RevO to fix a hearing and make ruling for each notice of claim or objection received.
17 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The RevO to give the notice to the ERO of the rulings made.
25 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ERO to publish and make available the FRs for inspection.