

Government launches consultation on proposed regulation of basketball betting activities

Having considered the proposal submitted by the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC), views from the Betting and Lotteries Commission (BLC), and other related issues concerning illegal basketball gambling, the Government today (April 2) launched a consultation on the proposed regulation of basketball betting activities.

In recent years, quite some members of the public have expressed concerns about the problem of illegal basketball betting in Hong Kong. According to the latest assessment of the HKJC, the turnover of illegal basketball betting reached \$70 billion to \$90 billion in 2024. To combat illegal betting activities in an effective manner, the Government announced in the 2025-26 Budget that it will explore regulating basketball betting activities.

The Government proposes establishing a regulatory regime for basketball betting by modelling on the existing regime for football betting. Through amending the Betting Duty Ordinance (Cap. 108), the Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs will be granted the power to issue a licence for basketball betting to the HKJC and to impose licensing conditions to minimise the negative impact of gambling on the public, especially on young people.

Mirroring the regulatory regime on football betting, major licensing conditions of the proposed regulation of basketball betting activities are as follows-

- (1) A fixed duration shall be set on the licensing period;
- (2) The Government shall impose restrictions on the number of bet types and classes of competitions;
- (3) The licensed operator shall not accept bets on basketball matches involving Hong Kong teams and/or matches that take places in Hong Kong, to promote a betting-free and healthy environment for the sport in Hong Kong;
- (4) The licensed operator shall not accept bets from juveniles;
- (5) The licensed operator shall not accept credit betting; and
- (6) The licensed operator shall display notices reminding the public of the seriousness of the problems caused by excessive gambling, and provide information on the services available for those with gambling disorder.

A spokesman for the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB) said, "As a matter of policy, the Government does not encourage gambling. The Government adopts a multipronged strategy to address gambling-related issues, combining regulation of gambling activities through legislation, law enforcement against illegal gambling, public education and publicity on the harms of gambling addiction, and provision of counselling and support services to

people in need.

"There is, however, undeniably an actual and persistent demand for gambling in Hong Kong which, if left unregulated, would likely give rise to illegal gambling activities and associated social problems and other criminal activities. As such, the Government adopts a pragmatic approach by allowing only a limited number of authorised gambling outlets, which includes authorising the HKJC to conduct horse race betting, Mark Six Lottery and football betting in accordance with the Betting Duty Ordinance (Cap. 108)."

Please refer to the website of the HYAB (www.hyab.gov.hk/file_manager/en/documents/policy_responsibilities/consultation_paper.pdf) for the consultation document on the regulatory regime for basketball betting and details of submissions. Members of the public may submit their views by post to 13/F, West Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong (Attention: Home Affairs Division, Home and Youth Affairs Bureau) (date of the stamp chop will be taken as the submission date), by fax to 2591 6002 or by email to ha@hyab.gov.hk on or before May 2.

Furthermore, having consulted the BLC, the Government has decided to renew the licence for football betting of the HKJC Football Betting Limited for five years with effect from July 18, 2025. The conditions under the existing regime will remain largely the same, including the prohibition on accepting bets from juveniles, the prohibition on accepting credit betting, requirements to display warnings about the seriousness of excessive gambling and provide information on the services available for those with gambling disorder, and more. The licensing authority will continue to request the licensed operator not to accept bets on football matches involving Hong Kong teams and/or matches that take places in Hong Kong, to promote a betting-free and healthy environment for the sport in Hong Kong. Moreover, restrictions shall be imposed on the number of bet types and classes of competitions that the licensed operator may offer.