

Legislative amendments on low-altitude economy development to be gazetted on Friday

Legislative amendments which seek to facilitate the development of the low-altitude economy (LAE) will be gazetted on Friday (May 23) to amend the Small Unmanned Aircraft Order (Cap. 448G) and the Air Navigation (Hong Kong) Order 1995 (Cap. 448C).

The Small Unmanned Aircraft (Amendment) Order 2025 serves to extend the existing regulatory regime to cover small unmanned aircraft (SUA) weighing over 25 kilograms but not exceeding 150kg. The major proposed amendments include:

- (1) to add a new category C aircraft (i.e. those weighing over 25kg but not more than 150kg);
- (2) to require anyone operating category C aircraft to obtain prior permission from the Civil Aviation Department (CAD);
- (3) to impose insurance requirements for category C aircraft;
- (4) to permit a statutory fee to be charged on a full cost-recovery basis (e.g. fees for registration of a category C aircraft);
- (5) to require anyone operating cross-boundary SUA operations, regardless of the weight of the SUA deployed, to obtain prior permission from the CAD; and
- (6) to require information in respect of SUA operated under the CAD's prior permission to be kept for six months and be accessible within Hong Kong to facilitate enforcement.

As well, the Air Navigation (Hong Kong) Order 1995 (Amendment) Order 2025 serves to facilitate the trials of various unconventional aircraft in Hong Kong. New articles are proposed to be added under Cap. 448C to empower the Chief Executive to permit the trials of unconventional aircraft under specified conditions.

A spokesman for the Transport and Logistics Bureau said, "In order to tie in with the overall national development, the Government has been proactively taking forward various initiatives to promote LAE development in Hong Kong, and it is imperative to establish a robust legal and regulatory framework for the emerging technologies for LAE. The proposed legislative amendments can tap into the potential of heavier SUA and facilitate trial flights for unconventional aircraft, thereby expanding and enriching the application scenarios for different low-altitude flying activities.

"In the longer term, the Government is also studying a new and customised piece of legislation regulating different types of unconventional

aircraft," the spokesman added.

The Amendment Orders will be tabled at the Legislative Council (LegCo) on May 28. Subject to scrutiny by the LegCo, the Amendment Orders will be targeted for commencement on July 18.