

# Marine Department launches Block Registration Incentive Scheme

The Marine Department (MD) announces today (February 14) the implementation of the amended Merchant Shipping (Registration) (Fees and Charges) Regulations (Cap. 415A) to allow eligible ships to apply for a refund under the Block Registration Incentive Scheme, with a view to attracting more shipowners to register their ships in Hong Kong.

The Scheme is one of the proposed action measures in the Action Plan on Maritime and Port Development Strategy promulgated by the Government in December 2023 to support the sustainable development needs of the maritime and port industry in Hong Kong, with a view to enhancing the long-term competitiveness of the industry. Under the Scheme, if more than one eligible ship is registered with the Hong Kong Shipping Registry (HKSR) within 24 months, the owners of the ships concerned may be provided with a refund of the ship registration fee and the first-year annual tonnage charge. One application may cover ships of different shipowners and may be submitted by a shipowner, ship manager or ship agent.

A spokesperson for the MD said, "The gross tonnage of Hong Kong-registered ships ranks as the fourth largest in the world. Although the current registration fee of the HKSR is highly competitive, we have noticed that some other major flag administrations have already rolled out block registration incentives. We thus deem it necessary to launch a similar scheme in Hong Kong, with a view to further strengthening the HKSR's competitiveness and fostering our leading position among shipping registries in the world."

The gazette of the proposed legislative amendments to Cap. 415A was published on December 13, 2024, and tabled at the Legislative Council on December 18 of the same year for negative vetting, and is scheduled to be implemented on February 14, 2025.

The MD will actively reach out to shipowners and shipping-related companies to promote the Scheme through its network on the Mainland and overseas. Moreover, the MD has produced a leaflet to promote the work of the HKSR and introduce details of the Scheme. For details, please visit the MD's official website at [www.mardep.gov.hk/filemanager/en/share/publications/pdf/materials/hksr.pdf](http://www.mardep.gov.hk/filemanager/en/share/publications/pdf/materials/hksr.pdf) or download the application form for the Scheme at [www.mardep.gov.hk/filemanager/en/share/forms/pdf/md742.pdf](http://www.mardep.gov.hk/filemanager/en/share/forms/pdf/md742.pdf).