

S for IT visits anti-epidemic food support programme service operators

The Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit, today (July 7) visited the Hong Kong Chinese Church of Christ Grace Elderly Activity Centre to better understand the operation of an anti-epidemic food support programme launched under the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund (SIE Fund) food support flagship project, FOOD-CO. Mr Sit encouraged service operators to continue to drive innovative programmes to create social impacts and strengthen social cohesion.

The Chief Executive Officer of St James' Settlement, Ms Josephine Lee, gave a briefing on the operation of the anti-epidemic food support programme via the FOOD-CO platform, followed by a demonstration on how the platform could boost the efficiency of food distribution with the aid of information technology and data analysis and help those affected by the pandemic in a timely manner.

"The impact of COVID-19 on our economy has been swift and severe, with the grass roots being hard hit. I am grateful to our service operators for joining hands with the Government and lending a helping hand to people in need through the anti-epidemic food support programme via the FOOD-CO platform. The SIE Fund will continue to foster cross-sectoral collaboration to benefit more people in need and promote social inclusion," Mr Sit said.

Mr Sit then joined volunteers to distribute food packs to families in need and chatted with them. Each food pack includes fast-food shop cash coupons, fresh food, oatmeal, noodles and canned food. To observe proper social distancing during the pandemic, service operators will register the families in need in advance to shorten the time for collection and queuing.

With a \$5 million donation in February, FOOD-CO has started providing food support to the grass-roots citizens affected by the pandemic in four districts through its social service partners. With an allocation of a \$5 million matching fund from the SIE Fund in March, the service was extended to cover the remaining 14 districts to benefit a total of 5 000 people.