

[H2OPE Centre hydrates young minds](#)

The newly opened H2OPE Centre provides information on water resources and conservation to foster a culture of cherishing water.

News.gov.hk interviewed engineers from the Water Supplies Department to learn how children can discover more about the water cycle and the environment through interactive games at the centre.

The story appears on news.gov.hk today (January 19) in text and video format.

[Government launches new scheme to subsidise local SMEs to participate in TDC's exhibitions](#)

To further assist local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in exploring markets and business opportunities, the Government will launch a one-off scheme on February 1, 2020 to subsidise local SMEs to participate in exhibitions organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (TDC). The scheme will last for 6 months till July 31, 2020. Local SMEs will be subsidised 50 per cent of its participation fee per participation in TDC's exhibitions during the period, subject to a cap of \$10,000.

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, said today (January 19), "Enterprises are facing pressure from challenges brought by external economic environment and current economic downturn, and SMEs' operations are in particularly hard hit. The exhibition sector can drive economic activities of other sectors such as export trade, product and service industries as well as tourism. However, many stakeholders of the exhibition sector have told us that the economic downturn has reduced the willingness of local SMEs to participate in exhibitions. The Government has all along been providing subsidies to SMEs for exploring markets. We have decided to expand the scope of assistance to local SMEs which participate in TDC's exhibitions, such that they can grasp immediate business opportunities by showcasing Hong Kong's quality services and products to buyers and potential business partners from around the world."

Mr Yau said that the scheme is expected to benefit over 5 000 local SMEs. SMEs which have obtained subsidy from the scheme, if eligible, can still apply for the Dedicated Fund on Branding, Upgrading and Domestic Sales (BUD Fund) or the SME Export Marketing Fund (EMF) for funding on a matching

basis for the remaining exhibition-related expenses. The Government will work closely with the TDC to ensure that the scheme will be launched smoothly and swiftly in order to provide timely and targeted assistance for local SMEs.

Meanwhile, to assist enterprises in enhancing their competitiveness and developing the Mainland and overseas markets, a total of \$3 billion has been injected into the BUD Fund and the EMF to substantially increase the cumulative funding ceilings per enterprise and the ratio of initial payments, as well as to expand the geographical coverage of the BUD Fund to cover all economies with which Hong Kong has signed Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) starting from tomorrow (January 20).

"The Government has announced several rounds of support measures since last August, including increasing funding support and consolidating the existing SME centres managed by different government departments and agencies to provide one-stop information for SMEs. The abovementioned measures will more effectively and flexibly support enterprises in expanding markets and enhancing their competitiveness," Mr Yau said.

Enhancements to the BUD Fund and the EMF include:

BUD Fund

(1) the scope of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Programme under the BUD Fund will be expanded to become the FTA Programme, under which the geographical coverage will be extended from the 10 ASEAN countries to cover other economies with which Hong Kong has signed FTAs, including Australia, Chile, the four member states of the European Free Trade Association, Georgia, Macao, and New Zealand;

(2) the cumulative funding ceiling for each enterprise will be doubled from the current \$2 million to \$4 million, including increasing the cumulative funding ceiling under the Mainland Programme from \$1 million to \$2 million, and that under the FTA Programme from \$1 million to \$2 million; and

(3) the ratio of initial payment will be raised from the existing level of 25 per cent to up to 75 per cent of the approved government funding.

EMF

(1) the cumulative funding ceiling per SME will be doubled from \$400,000 to \$800,000; and

(2) a new option will be provided for application for an initial payment of up to 75 per cent of the approved government funding.

A dedicated service team named "SME ReachOut" has also commenced operation starting from January 1 to support SMEs through face-to-face meetings to help identify funding schemes that suit them, while answering

questions relating to applications. The goal is to enhance SMEs' understanding of the Government's funding schemes with a view to encouraging better utilisation of the support provided by the Government.

More details of the above enhancement measures are available on the Trade and Industry Department's website (www.smefund.tid.gov.hk).

Red flag hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (January 19) that due to big waves, red flag has been hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.

Red flag hoisted at Silverstrand Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (January 19) that due to big waves, red flag has been hoisted at Silverstrand Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.

Fatal traffic accident in Yau Ma Tei

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident in Yau Ma Tei

yesterday (January 18) in which a 20-year-old man died.

At about 11.49pm, a medium goods vehicle (MGV) driven by a 47-year-old man and a motorcycle driven by the 20-year-old man were travelling along West Kowloon Highway towards Hung Hom in sequence. When approaching Yaumati Catholic Primary School outside, the MGV reportedly slowed down due to traffic in front and the motorcycle failed to stop and collided with the MGV.

Sustaining serious head injuries, the 20-year-old motorcyclist was rushed to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in unconscious state and was certified dead at 0.45am today (January 19). In addition, a 20-year-old male motorcycle passenger sustained injuries and was sent to Queen Elizabeth Hospital for medical treatment in unconscious state.

Investigation by the Special Investigation Team of Traffic, Kowloon West is underway.

Anyone who witnessed the accident or has any information to offer is urged to contact the investigating officers on 3661 9062 or 3661 9000.