

LCQ2: Promoting co-operation between Hong Kong and Mainland higher education institutions

Following is a question by the Hon Stanley Ng and a reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (June 7):

Question:

There are views that with limited university places and an insufficient scale of academic staff members and researchers in Hong Kong, it is difficult to generate economies of scale. In order to develop Hong Kong into and consolidate its position as a regional hub for international higher education, a very important measure is to make use of and combine with the Mainland's educational resources to achieve the complementarity of advantages and combination of strengths. Hence, universities in Hong Kong should establish long-term co-operation and strategic relationships as well as deepen co-operation in academic research and teaching with outstanding universities on the Mainland, so as to achieve the complementarity of resources and mutual recognition of qualifications. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the work carried out by the Government in respect of promoting co-operation and establishing strategic relationships between Hong Kong and Mainland universities;

(2) how the Government will facilitate and encourage co-operation between Hong Kong and Mainland institutions to achieve the complementarity of advantages; and

(3) as there are views that while the Mainland attaches great importance to vocational education and has a well-developed and multi-level vocational education system, the development of vocational education in Hong Kong is relatively slow, how the Government strengthens the mutual recognition of both academic qualifications and qualifications conferred by Hong Kong and Mainland institutions, deepens academic exchanges and connectivity between Hong Kong and Mainland institutions and their co-operation in vocational education, as well as takes advantage of the country's opportunities and vast market to provide young people with better vocational development opportunities?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong is home to 22 degree-awarding post-secondary education institutions which dedicates themselves to the nurturing of a new generation

of young people with an affection of our country and Hong Kong and equipped with global perspectives with the provision of diversified programmes. Five of these institutions are even among the top 100 universities in the world, actively engaging in world-class research with their highly diversified and internationalised advantages. Hong Kong strives to become a regional hub of international higher education with a view to providing quality talents in support of the rapid development of the country, thereby playing the role of leveraging Hong Kong's advantages for meeting the country's needs.

Our reply to the Hon Stanley Ng's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) The Government has done substantial work in the drive, facilitation and encouragement of higher education co-operation between Hong Kong and the Mainland with a view to complementing each other's advantages, especially in maintaining a close collaboration in the areas of scientific research co-operation, student exchange, talent nurturing and collaboration in providing education services. As of November 2022, there were 2 320 active academic research collaboration projects between higher education institutions of Hong Kong and the Mainland. Six Hong Kong higher education institutions have thus far set up industry-education-research bases or institutes in Shenzhen to further strengthen co-operation with Mainland institutions in scientific research, giving full play to Hong Kong's position as an international innovation and technology centre.

Firstly, on the joint provision of education services, with the country's policy support in recent years, a number of Hong Kong's higher education institutions have begun education collaboration projects in different forms in the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). Among them, Hong Kong Baptist University partnered with Beijing Normal University to establish the Beijing Normal University-Hong Kong Baptist University United International College in Zhuhai in 2005; the Chinese University of Hong Kong partnered with Shenzhen University to establish the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen) in 2014; and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Guangzhou) commenced operation in September 2022. Meanwhile, the first phase of City University of Hong Kong's Dongguan campus is expected to complete within 2023, while the Shenzhen campus of the University of Hong Kong is under preparation. The Education Bureau (EDB) will actively assist Hong Kong higher education institutions in exploring more flexible and innovative operation models to promote closer collaboration with their GBA campuses, so as to facilitate the flow of faculty members and students with a view to nurturing outstanding talents needed by the country's development and synergising the complementary academic structures and facilities of the Hong Kong and Mainland campuses.

Secondly, the EDB supports the establishment of alliances between higher education institutions of Hong Kong and the Mainland. With the support of the Ministry of Education and relevant education departments, Hong Kong's higher education institutions have established four alliances with institutions of the Mainland and Macao, namely the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao University Alliance, the Beijing-Hong Kong University Alliance, the Shanghai-Hong Kong University Alliance and the Jiangsu-Hong Kong-Macao University Alliance,

bringing together over 80 elite institutions. Through a comprehensive co-operation mechanism, the alliances gather high-quality teaching and research resources and deepen the mutual benefits of member institutions in areas such as scientific innovation and talent exchange, thereby enhancing the level and standard of regional co-operation.

In addition, the EDB has entered into education co-operation agreements with a number of Mainland provinces and municipalities, providing the framework for co-operation in education exchanges between the two places. This will encourage higher education institutions of the two places to strengthen exchanges and co-operation in the areas of talent nurturing, teacher exchange and academic research, as well as support institutions to explore the joint provision of education services by leveraging on their respective areas of academic strengths and characteristics.

Looking forward, we will continue to actively participate in and promote higher education collaboration between Hong Kong and the Mainland. This is to be achieved through the establishment of multilateral and cross-disciplinary partnerships, thereby capitalising on the characteristics of our higher education sector and its advantages of being internationalised, as well as through creating favourable conditions for research development, knowledge transfer and industrialisation as a demonstration of the complementary advantages of the two places.

(3) The Government has been proactively promoting mutual recognition of academic qualifications between Hong Kong and Mainland institutions, as well as deepening exchanges and collaboration on Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET). The Government has all along been committed to promoting the development of VPET. As a major VPET provider in Hong Kong, the Vocational Training Council (VTC) has been cultivating a diversified workforce for Hong Kong and proactively exploring collaboration with Mainland and non-local VPET institutes in different areas.

Firstly, to further promote VPET collaboration with the Mainland, the VTC officially opened its first operation centre in Shenzhen in March 2023. Through the operation centre, the VTC will build a VPET exchange platform to foster its collaboration with partners on the Mainland, including in the areas of field studies, workplace attachment and training, and programme exchange, with a view to helping more young people in Hong Kong understand the developments of the country and enabling students on the Mainland to learn about the VPET scene and different progression pathways in Hong Kong, thereby cultivating more talents with applied skills for Hong Kong, the GBA and the country.

In addition, with the support of the HKSAR Government and the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government, the VTC works closely with the Shenzhen Polytechnic (SZPT). The two parties signed a collaborative framework agreement in December 2020 to pursue further collaboration in areas including offering joint programmes, providing workplace attachment and training and exchange opportunities, and research and development. In 2021, they signed a further collaborative agreement to strengthen their collaboration in organising joint programmes and workplace attachment and training. There are

eight programmes jointly organised by the two parties that have successfully passed the accreditation of the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) and are recognised by the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (QF). The VTC is also actively expanding its networks with Mainland institutes by different means, which include establishing the GBA Student Exchange Alliance with the SZPT, Zhongshan Polytechnic and Guangzhou Huashang Vocational College, fostering the development of vocational skills in the GBA.

Thirdly, since the signing of the Letter of Intent on QF Co-operation between Hong Kong and Guangdong between the EDB and the Department of Education of Guangdong Province in 2019, the EDB, the QF Secretariat, and the HKCAAVQ have been working closely with the relevant authorities in the Guangdong Province to foster qualifications framework-related collaboration between the two places. In early 2022, the HKCAAVQ accepted the invitation from the relevant authorities in the Guangdong Province to provide a two-year consultancy service to support the development of the Guangdong Lifelong Education Qualifications Framework, including providing assistance in establishing a quality assurance mechanism, accreditation standards and procedures, piloting accreditation exercises, and developing guidelines for setting up a qualifications register. We support the HKCAAVQ in providing further assistance in the development of the Guangdong Lifelong Education Qualifications Framework, thereby laying the foundation for liaison and co-operation between the qualifications frameworks of the two places in the long term.

In the future, through the platforms of the qualifications frameworks of the two places, we will also continue to actively facilitate and support the relevant bureaux and departments with regard to the situation of individual sectors in pursuing constructive interactions and diversified co-operation in the areas of manpower resources and qualifications with the Mainland, providing momentum for the developments of Hong Kong, the GBA and the country.

LCQ4: Establishing data governance system

Following is a question by Prof the Hon William Wong and a reply by the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, in the Legislative Council today (June 7):

Question:

It has been reported that a number of regions have established data governance systems covering legislation and effectiveness evaluation, but the

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has not enacted clear data laws and regulations or formulated effectiveness indicators. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will study the enactment of a data law to promote the development of digital economy, foster the development of digital industries, unify information, establish a sharing mechanism and safeguard data security (in particular preventing activities that endanger national security, such as disseminating provocative information on social media platforms);

(2) of the Government's proposals in place, prior to the enactment of a data law and the establishment of a data bureau, to promote the collection and interoperability of big data among government departments, between the Government and different sectors, and between the Government and members of the public, so as to enable the Government to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the actual situation in Hong Kong, deliver more effective public services, and facilitate the business sector to expand their businesses; and

(3) given that according to the report Global Data Barometer published in 2022, the scores of Hong Kong in "data governance", "data availability" and "data capability" were 37.5, 52.9 and 58.2 respectively, whether the Government will formulate key performance indicators for these three pillars, so as to establish the direction of the Government's work on data governance and allow members of the public to monitor the effectiveness of the Government's work on data promotion?

Reply:

President,

The Government attaches great importance to the function of data in driving the development of smart city and digital economy in Hong Kong, since data is a key impetus to innovation and high-quality development. The Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Development Blueprint promulgated last year clearly set out that the Government is to continuously enhance Hong Kong's digital capability by planning from atop, in order to enable citizens to enjoy the convenience brought by technology development to their daily lives and create new momentum for economic development.

Having consulted the Security Bureau, my reply to the question raised by Prof the Hon Wong is as follows:

(1) Data governance includes multiple elements. Apart from consolidation, application, opening up and sharing of data, data governance also involves protection of data security, data infrastructure and industry planning, as well as the interface with various standards and regulatory frameworks, etc. These elements are closely linked and complement each other so as to leverage the greatest power of data.

In respect of data governance system as raised by the Member, apart from

law, it also includes the multi-pronged data governance strategy currently adopted by the Government covering policies, administrative guidance and technical infrastructure setting, etc.

On policies and guidance, we have formulated the open data policy, the Security Regulations, the Government IT Security Policy and Guidelines, the Guidance on the Ethical Development and Use of Artificial Intelligence and the Ethical Artificial Intelligence Framework, among others. These policies and guidance serve to provide comprehensive protection for the safety of government systems and data, while promoting the free flow of technology and data.

On technical infrastructure, we have launched the Big Data Analytics Platform, the Next Generation Government Cloud Infrastructure and the Shared Blockchain Platform. The Consented Data Exchange Gateway (CDEG) under development will serve to facilitate the interflow of data within the Government and between the Government and the general public.

On legislation, the existing Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486) (PDPO) covers six data protection principles. The CDEG under development would enable the provision of personal information to different government departments with prior consent of the data subjects, in compliance with the requirements of the PDPO. The National Security Law and the relevant provisions of the Crimes Ordinance are also applicable to the Internet setting and handling of data.

We understand that the suggestions on data law being put forward by the Member entails an expectation that we may further strengthen data governance, empower the free flow of data and accelerate the integration of data development and safety. We will listen to the valuable views and enhance data governance in terms of its breadth, depth and effectiveness in an ongoing manner. For instance, we will look into the restrictions of legislation on the use and sharing of data and explore ways to strengthen the data governance system of the Government, so as to further optimise and facilitate the overall development and planning of data exchange, digital economy and smart city.

(2) The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (HKSAR) Government has all along endeavoured to promote the collection and interflow of data among government departments and different sectors.

On open data, since the Government announced the Open Data Policy in 2018, bureaux/departments (B/Ds) and public and private organisations have opened up over 5 160 datasets in the Open Data Portal (data.gov.hk) for free use by the public and various sectors. Some 50 billion downloads were recorded in 2022. The Government expects to further open up about 180 new datasets in 2023 in support of smart city development.

The Development Bureau also launched the Common Spatial Data Infrastructure portal (portal.csdi.gov.hk) in December 2022 for free use by the public. Over 626 spatial datasets from more than 50 government

departments have now been made available through the portal. The datasets cover a wide range of aspects such as planning, lands, buildings, works, population and transport.

As regards the Government itself, the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer launched the Big Data Analytics Platform in September 2020 to support B/Ds in sharing the non-personal data collected, and strengthen B/Ds' implementation of big data analytics and artificial intelligence projects, with the aim to providing more data-driven e-government services.

The Next Generation Government Cloud Infrastructure has also provided relevant function which enables regular and real-time data interchange among B/Ds' systems and databases by means of Application Programming Interface.

The CDEG under development will enable B/Ds to exchange the personal data stored in the systems by means of data interchange upon obtaining the authorisation from citizens. Citizens will no longer be required to repeatedly provide information to B/Ds. Our target is to link up the CDEG with the Commercial Data Interchange of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority by end-2023, and roll out the CDEG before end-2024 for adoption by B/Ds so as to further facilitate data interchange within the Government and between the Government and the industry.

(3) Funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre, the Global Data Barometer report released in 2022 mainly covered two aspects, namely data openness and data governance. As mentioned above, the HKSAR Government has done a lot on data openness and achieved fairly good results. We reckon the room for enhancing data governance and will strengthen our work in this regard in order to strike a better balance between data openness and data governance.

In fact, Hong Kong ranked third in Asia in terms of the overall score of the Global Data Barometer. We will continue to be result-oriented and formulate appropriate policy measures and work objectives on development of digital economy and smart city to enable citizens to experience the benefits and a sense of achievement and satisfaction to be brought by technology and smart living solutions.

LCQ6: Scheme of Control Agreements signed between Government and two power companies

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Hoey Simon Lee and a reply by the

Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (June 7):

Question:

Regarding the current Scheme of Control Agreements (SCAs) signed between the Government and the two power companies, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that under SCAs, CLP Power Hong Kong Limited and the Hongkong Electric Company Limited set up the New Eco-Building Fund and the New Smart Power Fund respectively, and the two power companies may on the one hand earn incentives for achieving the targets in relation to energy audits, energy saving from audits and the funds concerned, while on the other hand they may also receive incentives for achieving the targets in relation to energy efficiency, energy conservation and renewable energy as set out in SCAs and have their permitted returns adjusted accordingly, whether the Government has assessed if the aforesaid arrangements will result in the two power companies making double profits;

(2) given that the Government will review the incentive and penalty mechanism under SCAs with a view to increasing the penalties for major power outage incidents, whether the Government will review the incentive and penalty mechanism for the three performance indicators of "supply reliability", "operational efficiency" and "customer services" at the same time; and

(3) as it is pointed out in SCAs that the two power companies will co-operate with the Government in a study on the detailed arrangements for strengthening the interconnection between the power grids of the Mainland and Hong Kong as well as that between the existing power grids in Hong Kong, and on the potential access to the power grid by third parties, whether the Government has conducted studies on grid interconnection and started planning for opening the access to the power grid?

Reply:

President,

The current Scheme of Control Agreements (SCAs) signed between the Government and CLP Power Hong Kong Limited and Castle Peak Power Company Limited (collectively referred to as CLP), and between the Government and the Hongkong Electric Company, Limited and HK Electric Investments Limited (collectively referred to as HEC), came into effect on October 1, 2018, and January 1, 2019, respectively. The SCAs set out the obligations of the power companies, the returns for shareholders, and the arrangements by which the Government monitors the companies' electricity-related corporate affairs.

The current SCAs have a term of 15 years and will expire in 2033. The Government and the power companies shall have the right during the year ending December 31, 2023, to request modification of any part of the current SCAs. All proposed modifications will not take effect unless a written

agreement is made by all parties on the modifications. The Government is preparing to conduct an interim review of the SCAs in 2023 together with the power companies.

Regarding the question raised by Dr the Hon Hoey Simon Lee, our reply is as follows:

(1) To encourage the two power companies to promote energy efficiency and conservation and develop renewable energy (RE), the SCAs set out relevant performance targets. If the two power companies achieve the targets in relation to energy efficiency and conservation and RE as set out in the SCAs, they can receive incentives and have their permitted returns adjusted accordingly. The relevant performance targets vary in nature and mainly include the following categories:

(i) Energy Audit Performance refers to the number of energy audits completed for industrial and commercial customers by power companies in that year under the "Energy Audit Programme" of the SCAs;

(ii) Energy Saving Performance audited under the "Energy Audit Programme" or by other authorised persons refers to the aggregate energy saving attributed by the energy-saving technologies which are installed at the industrial and commercial customers of the power companies in that year;

(iii) "New Eco-Building Fund" Performance of CLP and "New Smart Power Fund" Performance of HEC refer to the number of buildings with confirmed projects which have commenced and energy saving performance of the buildings subsidised by the power companies, with respect to the retrofitting or retro-commissioning, implementation of building-based smart/IT technologies or any other improvement measures as agreed with the Government carried out in the common areas in commercial and non-commercial buildings. The energy saving performance claimed for incentives under this category cannot be claimed under item (ii) above at the same time; and

(iv) Renewable Energy Performance refers to the total amount of electricity generated by RE systems in that year, etc.

In submission of energy saving performance, the two power companies are also required to declare if there are any incentives earned from other items. The Government will conduct spot-check on the information of energy saving performance during the Auditing Review to ensure no double profits are made.

(2) The Government keeps an open mind with regard to the interim review of the SCAs and has not set any limit on the scope of review. In respect of the views collected, the Government intends to negotiate with the power companies to modify the current SCAs, including but not limited to reducing the permitted returns, requesting power companies to share fuel costs in the event of energy crisis, and reviewing the incentive/penalty mechanism by increasing penalties for major power outage incidents. The SCAs set out the Customer Performance Incentive/Penalty Mechanism covering four performance categories, namely "Supply Reliability", "Operational Efficiency", "Customer

Services" and "Supply Restoration". The relevant mechanism will also be included in the review. Upon completion of the interim review, the Government will report the outcome in due course.

(3) The Government has been working on strengthening regional co-operation with a view to stabilising electricity tariffs, ensuring energy security and obtaining more clean energy. As promulgated in the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050, the Government, together with the power companies, will explore ways to enhance regional co-operation and identify sources of zero-carbon energy in neighbouring regions, including seeking investment and development opportunities for participating in and operating zero-carbon energy projects near Hong Kong. Under the strengthened regional co-operation, we can also consider enhancing the interconnection of the power grid and introducing new electricity suppliers.

With regard to strengthening regional co-operation, CLP currently imports electricity through its Clean Energy Transmission System (CETS) connected to the Daya Bay Nuclear Power Station and the electricity network of the China Southern Power Grid. The Government approved CLP's Development Plan in 2018, which includes the CETS enhancement project, under which overhead lines will be replaced to increase the transmission capacity. The project, expected to be completed in 2025, will provide Hong Kong with greater flexibility to import more clean energy.

In addition, the Government has reserved land in Tseung Kwan O Area 132 to build electricity facilities, which is strategic in enhancing regional energy co-operation. The electricity facilities will connect to the electricity supply systems of the two power companies in future, and can strengthen the interconnection between the two power companies and the ability of electricity transmission, thereby helping to stabilise electricity tariffs and reduce emissions from local power plants in the long run for the benefit of members of the public in Hong Kong. The project is currently still in the preliminary planning stage. Having regard to the time required for planning, construction and completion of the new cross-boundary electricity transmission and receiving facilities, the electricity facilities are expected to be commissioned before 2035.

According to overseas experience, opening up the power grid will not necessarily reduce electricity tariffs and ensure stable electricity supply. A stable and reliable electricity market is essential for Hong Kong's energy security, economic development and people's livelihood. The electricity market involves huge investment and requires professional and reliable operation, as well as co-operation with neighbouring regions. Whether the power grid should be opened up in the long run will involve complex considerations, including ways to eliminate vicious competition while ensuring that power companies will invest adequate resources, and construct, maintain stable and reliable electricity supply, maintain a reasonable level of electricity tariffs, and provide clean energy to achieve the goal of carbon neutrality.

According to the current SCAs, any changes introduced to the regulatory

framework of electricity supply will only be implemented at the earliest after the expiry of the SCAs, i.e. in end-2033. In recent years, in view of the international trend to strive towards carbon neutrality, the electricity technology is changing rapidly and will very likely affect the operation approach of the future electricity market. Therefore, our focus at this stage is to promote the strengthening of regional co-operation to stabilise electricity tariffs and ensure the stability and security of energy supply. Under the framework of the SCAs, we will explore and study the operation and regulation of the future electricity market, including whether to open up the power grid, with the two power companies at an appropriate juncture.

Thank you.

LCQ12: Chinese Medicine Development Fund

Following is a question by Professor the Hon Chan Wing-kwong and a written reply by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, in the Legislative Council today (June 7):

Question:

The Chinese Medicine Development Fund (CMDF), which was officially launched in June 2019, is the first dedicated fund set up to support the development of Chinese medicine (CM). In addition, the Financial Secretary proposed in the 2023-2024 Budget the injection of \$500 million into CMDF. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the total numbers of applications received, approved and rejected by the authorities, as well as the number of applications withdrawn, since the launch of CMDF; the amount of funding involved in the approved applications; the main reasons for the applications being rejected;

(2) of the respective numbers of applications received and approved by the authorities, since the launch of CMDF, for the four projects under the Enterprise Support Programme of CMDF (i.e. the "Chinese Medicine Personal Training and Chinese Medicine Clinic Improvement Funding Scheme", the "Proprietary Chinese Medicine Quality and Manufacturing System Enhancement Funding Scheme", the "Proprietary Chinese Medicine Registration Supporting Scheme" and the "Chinese Medicine Warehouse Management, Logistics and Services Improvement Funding Scheme"), and the two projects under the Industry Support Programme (i.e. the "Chinese Medicine Industry Training Funding Scheme & Chinese Medicine Promotion Funding Scheme" and the "Chinese Medicine Applied Studies and Research Funding Scheme"), as well as the respective amounts of funding involved in the approved applications, and set

out the breakdown in a table;

(3) of the average time taken by CMDF for vetting and approving each application; whether the Government will further streamline the application procedure of CMDF, so that CM institutions with genuine needs can obtain funding support in a timely manner;

(4) of the publicity and promotional measures taken by the Government to ensure that CM institutions are aware that they may apply for funding support from CMDF to cater for their development; and

(5) of the latest situation regarding the usage of CMDF and its balance; given that in reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council in respect of the Estimates of Expenditure 2023-2024, the Government indicated that the authorities planned to enrich the coverage and depth of CMDF's funding support in the current financial year, of the specific details of the relevant plan?

Reply:

President,

Officially launched in June 2019, the Chinese Medicine Development Fund (CMDF) is the first dedicated fund set up to support the development of Chinese medicine (CM) with the main objective of enhancing the overall standard of the CM sector to dovetail with CM development.

The reply to the various parts of the question raised by Professor the Hon Chan Wing-kwong is as follows:

(1) and (2) The CMDF is committed to benefitting personnel and organisations of different segments in the entire CM sector and has launched over 10 funding schemes covering such areas as talent training, improvement of clinic facilities, enhancement of proprietary Chinese medicine (pCm) manufacturing quality and management systems, support for pCm registration, promotion of CM, applied studies and research, etc. As at the end of April 2023, the major achievements of the CMDF are as follows:

(a) on talent nurturing, over 2 700 Chinese medicine practitioners (CMPs) and CM drug personnel have received subsidies to attend various CM professional training programmes to continuously enhance their professional knowledge and abilities; the CMDF has also subsidised programme providers to design and organise innovative training projects in order to fill the gap of the existing programmes available in the market, benefitting more than 8 000 personnel. So far, a total of over 5 000 funding applications have been approved by the CMDF under the relevant funding schemes;

(b) on quality enhancement, the CMDF has supported more than 400 CM clinics and 150 Chinese herbal medicine retailers / wholesalers in upgrading their facilities and equipment to enhance service quality as well as the safety and quality control of CM drugs; the CMDF has also supported over 150 pCm

manufacturers / wholesalers in completing the registration process for more than 680 pCm products by engaging consultancy services and technical support, thereby enhancing the quality of Hong Kong registered pCm products and promoting the brand image and development of the CM drug industry. So far, a total of over 1 250 funding applications have been approved by the CMDF under the relevant funding schemes;

(c) on research and applied studies, the CMDF has supported the commencement of over 40 CM research and applied studies projects, which are instrumental in promoting the academic and clinical research as well as professional and industry development of CM in Hong Kong, and broadening the CM knowledge base; and

(d) on publicity and promotion, the CMDF has supported the implementation of over 400 CM publicity and public education activities of various forms, covering kindergarten students, primary and secondary school students, the elderly and the public, benefitting a total of over 1.3 million people/organisations and involving the approval of the funding applications of over 20 large-scale projects.

In addition, to mobilise the CM sector's resources which are concentrated in the private market for combating COVID-19 in a timely manner, the "Fight the Virus Together – Chinese Medicine Telemedicine Scheme" and the "Together We Unite – Chinese Medicine COVID-19 Rehabilitation Scheme" were launched under the CMDF's special approval and full subsidy, with a view to meeting the keen demand from infected persons under isolation for CM teleconsultation services as well as COVID-19 recovered patients for rehabilitation treatment.

As at the end of April 2023, the amount of funding granted to the approved projects under the CMDF was about \$220 million (provisional figure). The CMDF has cumulatively received over 7 400 funding applications (including applications under vetting, pending vetting and pending submission of supplementary documents required or responses from applicants to enquiries from the implementation agent), of which over 6 300 funding applications were approved. Figures of approval for various funded projects are set out at Annex.

(3) As the implementation agent of the CMDF, the Hong Kong Productivity Council is responsible for the daily operation of the CMDF and the vetting of applications in accordance with the established requirements and mechanism devised by the Advisory Committee on CMDF (Advisory Committee) to ensure that all applications are impartially handled. The vetting process may vary depending on the nature, scale and complexity of the technical details of individual applying projects. The average vetting time is around three to four months, while approval may speed up for applications with complete information.

The implementation agent of the CMDF will also offer assistance and advice to applicants as appropriate during the application process, such as organising regular "one-to-one advisory sessions", rendering guidance to

applicants on how to fill in the application form, and providing application templates for applicants' reference, etc.

As for applications on CM promotion, applied studies and research projects submitted by CM-related organisations, the Advisory Committee will inform the applicant of its comments if it has doubts about the implementation feasibility of a project, or considers that the applicant concerned has failed to provide ample details after discussion. The applicant may revise its proposal based on the Advisory Committee's comments for re-submission. The relevant arrangement helps applicants better understand how to revise their proposals, so as to expedite the vetting progress.

(4) On publicising and promoting the CMDF, the implementation agent makes on-going efforts to step up the publicity and promotion of various CMDF funding schemes through different channels, which include setting up a thematic webpage and an enquiry hotline for the CMDF; producing online or printed publicity materials for distribution via such means as physical and social platforms as well as communications software; publishing CMDF's featured articles in CM magazines and mass media; and organising regular talks, sharing sessions and "one-to-one advisory sessions", with a view to better publicising and promoting the CMDF to the public and the CM sector in a multi-faceted manner.

Apart from disseminating its latest news through the Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong and other related organisations, the CMDF also proactively liaises with the CM sector and participates in its activities to enhance connection and communication, with a view to updating the stakeholders of the CM sector on the latest information of various support programmes. Furthermore, the "CM Resources Platform" has been established under the CMDF to provide the CM sector and parties concerned with diversified resources and useful reference materials on CM.

(5) The Health Bureau (HHB), in conjunction with the CMDF's implementation agent, has been reviewing the operation of the CMDF, including conducting consultation and collecting views of different stakeholders. In consultation with the Advisory Committee, the HHB implements various enhancement proposals in phases, such as refining the design of the existing funding schemes, streamlining the application process and administrative arrangements, expanding the application eligibility and funding scope, raising the funding ceiling and extending the time limit for project completion.

To further promote the long-term development of CM as an integral part of Hong Kong's healthcare system, the Government announced in the 2023-24 Budget an additional injection of \$500 million into the CMDF to support the following initiatives:

(a) commissioning organisations to conduct large-scale training, publicity and research projects on strategically priority themes conducive to CM development as a whole. Subject to further discussion with the CM sector, the projects may include the following themes and issues: developing novel and targeted training programmes which will tie in with the service commencement

of the Chinese Medicine Hospital; conducting research projects to further enhance the role of CM in primary healthcare and the healthcare system in general; promoting brand image of Hong Kong's CM practice and drugs, telling good stories of Hong Kong as well as facilitating industry development in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Mainland and overseas markets; stepping up the use of information technology by the CM sector; and rolling out large-scale city-wide initiatives to enhance public education for widening the use of CM in the community; and

(b) taking forward new capacity-building initiatives to enrich the coverage and depth of the CMDF's funding support for projects, such as raising the ceiling of the existing funding schemes for supporting the sector-initiated projects to enhance their effectiveness; launching the Training Programme of Advanced Clinical Talents in Chinese Medicine supported by the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine to provide systematic training for young CMPs with higher qualifications, thereby enabling them to become high-level backbone talents in CM theories and clinical practice; and providing technical support to pCm manufacturers for better quality control with a view to enabling Hong Kong pCm to "go global" through expansion to other markets.

The new initiatives mentioned above are expected to be rolled out in phases starting from 2023-24. The HHB, in conjunction with the Advisory Committee on CMDF, will closely monitor the implementation of the CMDF and, together with the implementation agent, maintain close contact with the CM sector and relevant stakeholders to introduce enhancement measures as and when necessary.

Tender results of re-opening of 10-year Government Bonds under Institutional Bond Issuance Programme

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority, as representative of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (HKSAR Government), announced that a tender of 5-year Government Bonds through the re-opening of existing 10-year Government Bond (issue number 10GB2706) under the Institutional Bond Issuance Programme was held today (June 7).

A total of HK\$2.5 billion 5-year Government Bonds were offered today. A total of HK\$10.437 billion tender applications were received. The bid-to-cover ratio, i.e. the ratio of the amount of bonds applied for over the amount of bonds issued, is 4.17. The average price accepted is 91.85,

implying an annualised yield of 3.447 per cent.

HKSAR Government Institutional Bond Issuance Programme Government Bond tender results

Tender results of the re-opening of 10-year Government Bonds under the Institutional Bond Issuance Programme:

Tender Date	: June 7, 2023
Issue Number	: 10GB2706 (Re-open)
Stock Code	: 4235 (HKGB 1.25 2706)
Issue and Settlement Date	: June 8, 2023
Tenor	: 5-year
Maturity Date	: June 29, 2027
Coupon Rate	: 1.25 per cent
Amount Applied	: HK\$10.437 billion
Amount Allotted	: HK\$2.5 billion
Bid-to-Cover Ratio*	: 4.17
Average Price Accepted (Yield)	: 91.85 (3.447 per cent)
Lowest Price Accepted (Yield)	: 91.77 (3.469 per cent)
Pro-rata Ratio	: About 85 per cent
Average Tender Price (Yield)	: 91.38 (3.582 per cent)

* Ratio of the amount of bonds applied for over the amount of bonds issued.