

Funding Scheme for Women’s Development (Women’s Commission Stream) Funding Guidelines

(I) Introduction

The Women’s Commission (WoC) launches the Funding Scheme for Women’s Development (“the Scheme”) to provide funding support to women’s groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for organising projects and programmes which are conducive to women’s development.

2. Under the Scheme, a provision of \$2 million is set aside every year from the envelope of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB). \$1 million will be allocated by WoC to women’s groups and NGOs in organising regional or territory-wide activities (the WoC stream); and another \$1 million will be distributed through the District Councils (DCs) to women’s groups and NGOs in organising district level activities (the DC stream). All the activities shall tie in with the theme as set by WoC every year.

3. The WoC Secretariat under LWB shall provide overall administrative support to the Scheme and administer the WoC stream. WoC mentioned in the following paragraphs refers to WoC and/or its Secretariat.

4. Funded organisations are required to comply with all the requirements as set out in this document.

(II) Application for Funding

Eligibility for Application

5. Women’s groups and NGOs fulfilling the following criteria are considered eligible for submitting applications –

- (a) a statutory organisation or an organisation registered under the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) (e.g. the Companies Ordinance (Cap.32), the Societies Ordinance (Cap.151), and the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap.112)) and established to serve the public as a whole; or
- (b) an autonomous body of persons (whether incorporated or not) or an organisation established to serve the general public as a whole.

Funding Cap and General Funding Restriction

6. There will be two rounds of application each year, one approximately in the second quarter whereas the other one approximately in the fourth quarter. Under normal circumstances, the application should be submitted to WoC on or before the deadline as designated by WoC. Late application will not be entertained and **will not be transferred to the next round of application.**

7. Applicants can choose to apply for a one-year or two-year project. For each one-year project, the funding cap will be \$100,000; for each two-year project, the funding cap will be \$200,000.

8. There is no limit on the number of applications each eligible applicant may submit, provided that they can demonstrate the ability to complete each project.

9. The following types of projects will **not** be funded:

- (a) Projects that involve one-off activities purely for entertainment or publishing (e.g. banquets, picnics, trips and publications);
- (b) Projects that may give undue credit or publicity to an individual, a commercial firm, a political party or association;

- (c) Projects that are intended for the exclusive or personal benefit of an individual;
- (d) Projects that disburse a fixed amount of cash allowance and/or cash relief;
- (e) Projects that are launched primarily for profit-making or fund-raising purposes;
- (f) Projects that are organised, co-organised or co-hosted by Offices of Legislative Council Members or DC members or political parties; and
- (g) Projects that receive sponsorship or donations in cash or in kind from companies selling tobacco or hard liquor, or from organisations which are the service or equipment contractors of the projects.

10. All activities under the funded project must be carried out in Hong Kong.

11. When submitting an application and implementing the approved project, the funded organisation should refer to the permissible items of expenditure and expenditure limits at Annex A. The limits set by WoC for each of the permissible items of expenditure are listed at Annex A. In addition, the applicant should also pay attention to the following:

- (a) Expenditure incurred before the formal approval of the project issued by WoC in writing will not be reimbursed under the Scheme.
- (b) All expenditure incurred should be prudent, realistic and cost-effective.
- (c) The funding allocated to the project shall not be used for recurrent expenditure (i.e. ongoing cost for running an office), purchasing durable assets (e.g. equipment and furniture, etc.), improving facilities or services of the

organisation, hiring staff, producing items for sale, disbursing travelling allowance to participants, presenting gifts (except certificates) to participants, or paying members of the funded organisation for services rendered in connection with the project. There will be no reimbursement for expenditure incurred for these mentioned purposes.

- (d) In general, venues whose hire charges could be fully waived or are more affordable (e.g. community halls or community centres) shall be given priority in choosing the venue of the project. For an event organised in the funded organisation's own venue, the hire cost will not be funded.

Submission of Application

12. Eligible applicants are required to submit an application form (at Annex B) to WoC. The application form can be provided upon request to WoC or downloaded from WoC's website (www.women.gov.hk).

13. If a project is co-organised by two or more women's groups or NGOs, all authorised persons of the relevant organisations should duly sign on the application form, together with the official chop. Entities that purely provide support through provision of venue or assistance in promotion will not be considered as co-organiser(s). However, details of these entities should be provided on the application form.

14. If applicants intend to apply for funding from sources other than the Scheme in order to support all or part of the activities under application, they must state clearly the source of the funding, amount sought and status of approval of the application when submitting applications to the Scheme. To avoid duplication of resources, WoC will not approve funding to activity which has secured funding from sources other than the Scheme. If the application result of other funding sources has yet to be announced at the time of submitting applications to the Scheme, applicants shall inform WoC of the result of the application to funding sources other than the Scheme in a timely manner to avoid duplication of resources. If applicants have obtained funding from

sources other than the Scheme, WoC may revoke or reduce the approved funding amount to ensure no duplication of resources.

15. If applicants need additional funding to cope with expenditure items which exceed the funding cap or are not permitted under the Scheme, they may apply for funding from sources other than the Scheme. However, they must state clearly the source of such funding, amount sought and whether such application has been approved when submitting applications to the Scheme.

16. If applicants would like to apply for funding from sources other than the Scheme after obtaining WoC's funding approval or when implementing the project, they must obtain WoC's approval before making the application to funding sources other than the Scheme. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the cancellation of funding from WoC. In addition, applicants must comply with all the requirements as set out in this document, as well as the relevant regulations and requirements as set out by other funding schemes for which they apply.

17. The applicant will be asked to provide supplementary documents and information from time to time for processing the application upon WoC's request. If the applicant fails to provide such information within a reasonable time frame, the application will not be further processed and no notification will be given.

18. If a black rainstorm warning or typhoon signal number eight or above is in force at or after 12:00 noon on the day of the deadline, the deadline will be extended to 5:00 p.m. on the next working day (excluding Saturdays) after the black rainstorm warning signal or typhoon signal number eight or above is cancelled.

Assessment Process and Criteria

19. Upon receipt of an application, WoC will examine the project proposal to confirm whether it is in line with the theme and fulfils the requirement (see Part (II)) of the Scheme and whether the proposed items of expenditure fall within the list of permissible items of expenditure and

the relevant expenditure limits hereinbefore.

20. Due to the limited financial provision of the Scheme, WoC will consider the priority of applications in each round according to the factors as stipulated in paragraph 21 and 22. In other words, not every eligible project proposal in each round will be approved and not every activity under the approved project will be granted full funding. As a general rule, the approved funding shall be determined in accordance with the relevant expenditure limits hereinbefore or as deemed reasonable by WoC, regardless of the amount bid.

21. If an eligible project proposal is not granted funding, that project proposal will not be transferred to next round of application automatically.

22. In assessing each individual application of one-year projects, WoC will take into account the following factors:

- (a) whether the objectives of the project are in line with the objectives and theme of the Scheme;
- (b) the target audience/participants and the anticipated number of participants of the project;
- (c) contents of the project (including the formats, number of sessions, publicity, etc.), feasibility, and implementation;
- (d) whether the proposed budget is prudent and cost-effective;
- (e) other financial support (including other funding sources, sponsorship and donations in cash or in kind);
- (f) whether the project is more appropriate to be implemented with other government funding or departmental provision;
- (g) expected outcome of the project, for example, whether the project has a sustainable impact on the community or the target audience/participants; and

- (h) whether the applicant has experience in conducting projects of similar scale and nature.

23. In assessing individual application of two-year projects, in addition to the eight factors listed in paragraph 22, WoC will also consider and assess the continuity of the project and the time required to finish the whole project.

24. WoC may review the assessment process from time to time and make improvements based on necessity and in the light of operational experience.

Notification of Results

25. Under normal circumstances, applicants will be notified of the results of the application in writing within three months after the application deadline. Under no circumstances shall an application be deemed to be successful unless and until the applicant had been notified in writing by WoC that the application is successful.

26. The decisions on the approval of application and level of funding rest with WoC. WoC's decision is final and absolute.

27. WoC reserves the right to announce the application results and to disclose the list of successful applicants, the name of the approved projects and the funding amount and other information thereof without the prior consent of any applicant.

Withdrawal of Application

28. A successful applicant may write to WoC to withdraw the application within 14 calendar days from receipt of the notification of result in writing referred to in paragraph 25 above. Such withdrawal is irrevocable.

29. On receipt by WoC of the notice of withdrawal given in accordance with paragraph 28, any approval, conditional approval or

approval-in-principle issued by WoC shall cease to be valid.

(III) Financial Arrangements

Adjustment of Project

30. The funding allocated to the project must be used in accordance with the budget approved by WoC. To facilitate the funded organisation in using the approved funding effectively and flexibly, the funded organisation is allowed to adjust the approved unit cost, quantity or amount without seeking WoC's approval, provided that the expenses after adjustment fulfill all three conditions as follows:

- (a) The amounts do not exceed the total funding approved by WoC;
- (b) The adjustment of each item does not exceed 25% of the relevant approved budget or \$3,000 (whichever is higher); and
- (c) The expenses of each item after adjustment do not exceed the relevant expenditure limits hereinbefore.

31. If adjustment on the approved unit cost, quantity or amount exceeds 25% or \$3,000 (whichever is higher), or there is any major amendment or variation (e.g. changes in project nature and cash flow requirement; the addition of items of expenditure not covered in the original approval), the funded organisation shall seek written approval from WoC by submitting the form at Annex C before the commencement of activities/programmes. Failure to do so may result in withdrawal of funding. WoC may also demand return of any advance payment to the funded organisation.

32. Written notice must be given to WoC when the authorised person of the funded organisation or officer-in-charge of the project during project implementation is changed as soon as practicable.

Payment Arrangements

33. Reimbursement of funding is normally made to the funded organisation on completion of a project. To facilitate the implementation of project, however, payment can be made in the form of advance payment and partial reimbursement. Details of the payment arrangements, the supporting documents required and other relevant requirements are at Annex D. If the funded organisation has applied/is applying for funding from sources other than the Scheme, advance payment will be arranged after the funded organisation notified the result of relevant application and upon written notification made to WoC.

34. All expenditure incurred shall be settled on or before the date(s) of activities, except for expenditure items which by nature can only be incurred after the event (including but not limited to expenditure on processing photographs taken in respect of a funded activity).

35. All expenditure incurred shall be fully settled before the submission of the final report with details stipulated in paragraph 63 below.

36. For payments below \$500 made without official receipts, cash disbursement slips can be used in lieu of receipts. The cash disbursement slip shall include the name in block letters, signature and Hong Kong Identity Card number (English alphabet and the first 3 digits) of the receiver/responsible person, the date of payment and a breakdown of the expenditure.

37. Each item of expenditure must be supported by the **original** receipt as proof of payment, except under the circumstances as set out in paragraph 36. **Invoices, delivery notes or quotations are not regarded as proof of payment.** All receipts must be issued in Hong Kong. Every receipt and supporting document must be certified by either the officer-in-charge of the project or the authorised person¹ of the funded organisation, by affixing his/her signature and the funded

¹ Authorised person refers to the person who applies for the fund on behalf of the organisation and signs the application form. Authorised person and officer-in-charge shall not be the same person.

organisation's chop thereon. The name and signature of the certifying person shall tally with those provided to WoC in the project proposal. Any correction made shall be initialled. Receipts submitted to WoC will not be returned to the funded organisation.

38. Expenditure incurred outside Hong Kong will not be reimbursed.

Project Income and Residual Funds

39. The funded organisation may charge nominal fees from participants to ensure the participation rate of those already enrolled for the activities. Irrespective of whether it has so declared in the project proposals, the funded organisation shall utilise all income in the first instance before the funding under the Scheme is used to meet project expenses. The same arrangement shall apply to sponsorship, cash donations and other funding sources of income. Any surplus funding identified from the project upon its completion shall be returned to WoC. All records pertaining to the receipt of income shall be kept for five years for WoC's inspection as and when necessary.

40. If the actual expenditure is less than the approved funding amount, reimbursement will be made up to the actual expenditure only. Any unspent advance payment must be returned to WoC at the time of submission of the financial report. The funded organisation shall issue a crossed cheque or a bank cashier order payable to "The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region".

41. The funded organisation must complete reimbursement within one month of the completion of activities or before the date designated by WoC. Otherwise, all unspent funding will lapse after the designated date.

42. The funded organisation shall accept liabilities for all deficits arising from the project. If the funded organisation reasonably foresees that the total expenditure will exceed the original budgeted expenditure by whatever amount, the funded organisation shall inform WoC immediately. In addition, the funded organisation shall be responsible for the shortfall in order to complete the project.

(IV) Administrative Arrangements

Procurement of Goods and Services

43. The funded organisation shall exercise the utmost prudence and uphold the principles of openness, fairness, competitiveness and value for money in making procurement with the funding. In particular, they shall strictly observe the following quotation requirements in making procurement with the funding regardless of the value and accept the lowest conforming offer –

Item of procurement	Estimated value	No. of written quotations required
Goods	\$5,000 or below ²	Preferably 2
	\$5,001 – \$10,000	2
	\$10,001 or above	5
Services	\$5,000 or below ²	Preferably 2
	5,001 – \$10,000	2
	\$10,001 or above	5

44. The funded organisation shall nominate its employee(s) or member(s) as designated person(s) for the procurement and provide their particulars (e.g. ID card number and address) to WoC as and when necessary. The designated person(s) for the procurement shall not be the same person as the officer-in-charge of the project or the authorised person of the funded organisation.

45. Prior to the procurement, the designated person shall obtain the required number of quotations and complete a record of quotations at Annex E. All written quotations from suppliers shall be attached. If a written quotation cannot be obtained for purchases of less than \$10,000, the supplier shall be asked to confirm the quoted price in writing (e.g. fax

² Minor purchases of goods and services can also be made in cash to meet immediate needs. No quotations will be required if the total value of the purchase does not exceed \$1,500.

message). The confirmation shall be attached to the record of quotations. Subsequent to the procurement, the designated person shall be responsible for the receipt and use of goods and services for the project and ensure that such goods/services are ordered, received and appropriately used for the project concerned.

46. In case where the procurement procedures as set out in paragraphs 43 to 45 are not followed (e.g. the funded organisation has made specific requests to hire a particular supplier/contractor), full justifications must be given and properly recorded in Annex E for auditing purposes.

47. The funded organisation is not required to submit the record of quotations at Annex E to WoC unless being requested. If requested, the funded organisation shall submit the form together with the quotations according to the deadline set by WoC.

48. The funded organisation, its co-organiser(s), members and staff shall declare any interest when making procurement of goods and services for the approved project, and are prohibited from soliciting, accepting or offering any advantages in the course of planning and executing the project. If there is a conflict of interest, the funded organisation shall decide whether the co-organiser(s), members or staff concerned shall abstain from the procurement exercise and record the reasons for its decision.

49. The principles of openness, fairness, competitiveness and value for money shall be observed when making purchases. The funded organisation is advised to make reference to the Corruption Prevention Best Practice Checklist on Procurement issued by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) where appropriate. The checklist is available from ICAC's website at www.cpas.icac.hk.

50. All quotations and documents in relation to the procurement of a project shall be kept for five years for WoC's inspection as and when necessary.

51. The officer-in-charge of the project, the authorised person of the funded organisation and the person(s) designated for procurement of

goods or services are personally accountable if they submit falsified claims or documents (such as receipts) for the grant of funding.

Publicity and Production of Articles

52. Articles (including audio-visual materials, sound recordings, pictures, written materials and promotional materials) funded by the Scheme shall not be reproduced for sale or any other purposes without prior written approval of WoC. To create a greater synergy, funded organisations are requested to submit to WoC the audio-visual materials and sound recordings for purposes as WoC sees fit (e.g. placing them on WoC's website for wider public access, making them as reference for other women's programmes, etc.)

53. Projects (including activities and publications such as audio-visual materials, sound recordings, pictures, written materials and promotional materials) funded by the Scheme must not contain content that:

- (a) would incite hatred against, and/or denigrate or insult any person, organisation or community of persons; or
- (b) would be in breach of any law, rule or regulation currently in force in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

54. Articles (including audio-visual materials, sound recordings, pictures, written materials and promotional materials) funded by the Scheme must not contain anything that would infringe any intellectual property rights or any rights of portrait, privacy, secrecy or publicity. The funded organisation is fully responsible for ensuring that there is no such infringement. If the funded organisation intends to use materials created by others, prior approval from the copyright owner must be sought. WoC or LWB will not be held responsible for any claims or liabilities incurred by the funded organisation in connection with any claim that the content of the funded organisation's production infringes the copyright or intellectual property right of others.

55. Any activities or articles funded by the Scheme shall not bring either the HKSAR Government, other government(s) or WoC into disrepute, or affect the relations between the HKSAR Government and other government(s), or embarrass the HKSAR Government or other government(s).

56. The funded organisation shall make the following acknowledgement on articles (including audio-visual materials, sound records, pictures, written materials and promotional materials) funded by the Scheme – **“Funding Scheme for Women’s Development - Project funded by the Women’s Commission”**, and display the logo of WoC as far as practicable. The funded organisation shall obtain prior approval from WoC of all articles (including audio-visual materials, sound records, pictures, written materials and promotional materials) funded by the Scheme where the name and logo of WoC will appear.

Sponsorship and Donations

57. Sponsorship and donations in cash or in kind are generally acceptable except for sponsorship/donations from companies selling tobacco and hard liquor, or from those individuals or organisations who are the contractors for the same item of service or equipment for a project.

58. The name and logo of the sponsor/donor shall not be larger or placed in a more prominent position than those of WoC when acknowledging sponsorship/donations in any articles (including audio-visual materials, sound recordings, pictures, written materials and promotional materials) relating to the project.

59. Applicants shall be required to provide details of all sources of sponsorship and donations as far as practicable when they apply for the funding and, where necessary, during the implementation of the project. On completion of the project, they shall indicate in the financial report the amount of sponsorship and donations received.

60. The names of the sponsors/donors, the type, amount and ultimate usage of sponsorship/donations received, as well as copies of the

acknowledgement letters to sponsors/donors in relation to the project shall be kept for five years for WoC's inspection as and when necessary.

Others

61. The funded organisation is encouraged to adopt the Gender Mainstreaming Checklist as developed by WoC in formulating any activities in their project proposals. The checklist is available from WoC website at www.women.gov.hk.

62. The funded organisation is required to comply with any other additional conditions as may be prescribed by WoC in writing.

(V) Monitoring Mechanism

Progress Report and Final Report

63. To ensure that the funding is used in accordance with the approved budget and purposes, the funded organisation shall submit to WoC one month after the completion of the project or by the designated date the following reports and documents:

- (a) a final report completed as per Annex F;
- (b) samples of promotional materials produced for the funded project;
- (c) photographs of each activity conducted under the funded project and its softcopy (in JPEG format of not less than 5 mega pixels);
- (d) a financial report on the income and expenditure completed as per Annex G (with all original receipts duly certified by the officer-in-charge of the project or the authorised person of the organisation); and
- (e) a summary report on participants' responses to questionnaire

together with the original participants' questionnaires.

64. For two-year projects, the funded organisation is required to submit a progress report every six months. All progress reports should be submitted within one month after each six-month period. The format of the progress report is at Annex H.

65. WoC will not reimburse funding if the funded organisation fails to fulfill the requirements set out in paragraphs 63 and 64 above.

Termination of Project

66. The funded organisation shall inform WoC in writing in the event of termination of a project during the preparation or implementation stage.

67. Depending on the circumstances and the reasons provided by the funded organisation, WoC may, where applicable, endorse reimbursement of expenses already incurred in the preparation/implementation of the project. If WoC considers that the termination of the project is due to negligence of the funded organisation, no subsequent reimbursement shall be made and the funded organisation shall be required to return immediately to WoC the full/partial amount of the advance payment and/or reimbursement previously received.

(VI) Disclaimer

68. WoC or LWB will not be held responsible for any claims, demands or liabilities arising from the funded project. It is therefore in the interest of the funded organisation to take out public liability insurance for the project concerned from registered insurance companies in the HKSAR.

(VII) Important Notes

69. Failure to comply with any of the terms and conditions of funding

as set out in the Funding Guidelines (including any other additional conditions as may be prescribed by WoC in writing) may result in the withdrawal of funding and repayment of any advance payment/reimbursement already made to the funded organisation.

70. The funded organisation has the responsibility to ensure that activities undertaken in the funded project (including articles produced) comply with the laws of the HKSAR. The funded organisation may be liable to legal action if it fails to abide by the laws of the HKSAR. For avoidance of doubt, the funded organisation will not be exonerated from any legal liability by virtue of WoC's funding of the project.

The Women's Commission
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