

WOMEN'S COMMISSION

Funding Scheme for Women's Development

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to report the latest status of the Funding Scheme for Women's Development (Funding Scheme), and to consult Women's Commission (WoC) on how the funding allocated to the "Funding Scheme (District Council Stream)" should be handled in the future.

Background

2. With a view to providing more programmes and activities conducive to women's development, WoC has launched the Funding Scheme in 2012 and invited women's groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) providing services for women to submit applications. At present, the annual funding allocation of the Funding Scheme is \$4 million, of which \$3 million is placed under the responsibility of WoC to invite, scrutinise and endorse applications and to allocate funding for supporting regional or territory-wide projects to promote women's development: the projects can be of one-year, two-year or three-year duration and the corresponding funding caps are \$200,000, \$400,000 and \$600,000 (viz. "Funding Scheme WoC Stream"). The other \$1 million is placed under the responsibility of 18 District Councils (DCs) to invite applications, approve applications and allocate funding for supporting activities to promote women's interests in their districts, capped at around \$53,000 for each DC¹, (viz. "Funding Scheme DC Stream"). An "Overview of Application Details" for the "Funding Scheme WoC Stream" and "Funding Scheme DC Stream" is at **Annex 1**.

Latest Development

3. At the fifth meeting of the Working Group on Collaboration and Promotion (WGCP) held on 13 July 2020, some WGCP Members observed that some district women's groups had encountered difficulties in applying for funds under the "Funding Scheme DC Stream".

¹ The annual funding of \$1 million is distributed through the 18 DCs, which are responsible for inviting and approving applications, and the funding cap for each DC is around \$53,000 (i.e. \$1 million ÷ 18 DCs).

4. Having followed up the concerns raised by WGCP Members, the Secretariat noted that some DC secretariats had long been unable to convene committee meetings to vet applications for the “Funding Scheme DC Stream”, while some others that could arrange such meetings were unable to complete the assessment of funding applications on schedule owing to different reasons. In view of the circumstances in 2020-21, it is envisaged that similar difficulties may persist in 2021-22. The Secretariat's analysis of funds spent under the “Funding Scheme DC Stream” from 2016-17 to 2020-21 is set out below:

- the number of DCs participating in the Funding Scheme decreased from 18 (i.e. all DCs) to 12²;
- the number of funding proposals approved by DCs decreased from 28 to 17; and
- the amount approved decreased from \$934,687 (utilisation rate³ about 98%) to \$661,199 (utilisation rate³ about 69%).

As regards the funds spent under the “Funding Scheme WoC Stream”, the number of funding applications has increased to 55 to 81 per year since 2018-19 as compared to about 30 to 40 in previous years (see **Annex 2**).

The Proposal

5. At the WoC meeting held on 12 November 2020, some Members advised that the funds under the Funding Scheme should be effectively used, whilst some other Members suggested that WoC invite applications from local women's groups and NGOs directly and allocate the \$1 million under the “Funding Scheme DC Stream” in order to better utilise the funds.

6. If the above proposal is accepted by WoC, and taking into account the fact that the groups/organisations currently applying for the “Funding Scheme DC Stream” are generally smaller in scale and locally based, we suggest WoC to use the funding to establish a "Funding Scheme District Stream". Priority under this category of application should be given to district based organisations (not limited to women's groups) for organising one-off short-term event (can be completed in a few days or weeks) so as to avoid duplicating the scope of “Funding Scheme WoC Stream”. In other words, applicant organisations can apply to organise projects in a single district with less than one year's duration. When one district has been given funding support, priority should be given to applications from other districts, so that the \$1 million funding of WoC can be evenly distributed among the 18 districts where possible to meet the overall objective of supporting women's development at district level. The arrangement for the “Funding Scheme WoC Stream” as mentioned in paragraph 2 above will remain unchanged, that is, it will continue to operate on a regional and/or cross-year basis to support larger scale activities, organised by women's

² The six DCs which did not participate in the Funding Scheme are Southern, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon City, Sha Tin, Kwai Tsing and North DCs.

³ The base of the utilisation rate is \$954,000 (i.e. The annual funding cap of \$53,000 for each DC x 18 districts).

groups with stronger organisational capacity to promote longer terms women's development.

Advice sought

7. Members are invited to provide comment on the proposal in paragraphs 5 and 6 above.

Follow-up action

8. Subject to Members agreement to the proposal in paragraph 6 above, the Secretariat will consult WGCP on the amendments to the "Overview of Application Details" and consult WGCP before notifying relevant groups/organisations of the revised "Overview of Application Details". Members of WGCP will also be invited to introduce the revised "Overview of Application Details" in a briefing session. The Secretariat expected that the first round of application for the "Funding Scheme District Stream" can be conducted in October this year at the earliest, and that the subsequent application cycles will follow the usual practice and to commence accepting applications in April each year.

Women's Commission Secretariat
May 2021

Women's Commission
Funding Scheme for Women's Development

	WoC Stream	DC Stream
Objective	To invite women's groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) providing services for women to submit applications for organising regional or territory-wide activities, so that their potentials could be unleashed and enhanced, and they would also be better equipped to contribute to the community	To provide financial support to district women's groups and NGOs through the District Councils (DCs) for organising district level activities suiting the needs of women in the local community and conducive to their development
Project duration	One-year, two-year or three-year	One-year
Funding caps	The corresponding funding caps for one-year, two-year and three-year projects are \$200,000, \$400,000 and \$600,000	\$53,000 for each DC
Applicant organisations	Women's groups and NGOs providing services for women	Respective DC to decide whether to organise activities solely by DCs or its relevant committees; co-organise by DCs in partnership with women's groups/NGOs; organise by women's groups or NGOs; or co-organise with other DCs
Regional or territory-wide requirement	Proposed activities are required to be organised in more than one districts among the 18 districts. Promotion or recruitment of participants in different districts are not considered as regional or territory wide activities	Proposed activities can be organised in single district
Vetting of applications	WoC Secretariat will first examine the applications and make recommendations for the Working Group on Collaboration and Promotion (WGCP)'s consideration. Subject to WGCP's endorsement of the applications, approval will be sought from a Principal Assistant Secretary of Labour and Welfare Bureau.	Respective DC Secretariats will first examine the applications and make recommendations for the DC's consideration. Subject to DCs, endorsement of the applications, approval will be sought from the respective District Officer.
Assessment criteria for cross-yearly projects	For two-year projects, in addition to basic assessment criteria, will also consider the continuity of the project and the time required to finish the whole project. For three-year projects, will also consider whether the project can achieve long-term development of women and its scalability, i.e. whether it can be scaled-up or expanded by replicating the successful strategies to cover more participants.	Cross-yearly projects will not be approved.

**Funding Scheme for Women's Development
(District Council Stream)**

Year	Participating District Councils (DCs)	No. of proposals approved	Amount approved (\$)	Utilisation Rate⁴
2016-17	18	28	934,686.5	98.0%
2017-18	17	26	856,337.0	89.8%
2018-19	17	24	833,281.0	87.3%
2019-20	16	24	810,520.0	85.0%
2020-21	12	17	661,199.0	69.3%

**Funding Scheme for Women's Development
(Women's Commission Stream)**

Year	No. of proposals received	No. of proposals approved	Amount approved (\$)	Utilisation Rate⁵
2016-17	35	23	1,379,327.0	137.9%
2017-18	38	23	1,688,764.0	168.8%
2018-19	62	39	3,638,690.9	121.3%
2019-20	55	42	4,071,054.0	135.7%
2020-21 ⁶	81	48	3,544,985.0	118.2%

⁴ The base of the utilisation rate is \$954,000 (i.e. The annual funding cap of \$53,000 for each DC x 18 districts.

⁵ The base of the utilisation rate in 2016-17 and 2017-18 is \$1 million. From 2018-19 onwards the base of the utilisation rate is \$3 million.

⁶ Introduction of "Notes for Applicants" since 2020-21.