

## LCQ10: Arts Development Fund

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Following is a question by the Hon Ronny Tong Ka-wah and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (January 18):

I have received complaints from some arts organisations, and they consider that the criteria of the Arts Development Fund (the Fund) for assessing the standards and achievements of individual arts organisations are unclear, not transparent and unfair, making it impossible for them to successfully apply for subsidies, as well as making it difficult for them to participate in international exchanges and performances as representatives of Hong Kong, and hindering the development of valuable non-governmental arts organisations. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) in the past five years, of the total number of outbound project applications approved under the Fund; among the organisations which had been granted subsidies, the number of those engaged in Chinese music; the number of approved outbound projects for participating in international performances, as well as their performance programmes;

(b) of the specific standards (e.g. of the interpretation of "attaining a high level of artistic excellence or possessing a proven track record in arts", etc.) for vetting and approving cultural exchange projects under the Fund; whether the Sub-committee on Arts Development Fund is responsible for the assessment; whether the members who are responsible for the assessment are appointed by the Government or returned through elections; if they are appointed by the Government, of the criteria for making such appointments; if they are returned through elections, of the eligibility for the elections and the timing of the elections;

(c) given that "attaining a high level of artistic excellence or possessing a proven track record in arts" is currently one of the conditions for granting subsidies under the Fund, among those members who are responsible for the assessment at present, whether there are people with knowledge in assessing different arts achievements; if not, how they can make assessment with regard to arts with which they are not familiar;

(d) of the respective numbers of outbound project applications which were rejected in each of the past five years, and from which kinds of arts organisations such

applications had been submitted; of the reasons for rejecting their applications; whether there is any appeal mechanism at present; if not, the reasons for that, and under what conditions the arts organisations concerned can submit applications again;

(e) whether the Fund has considered listing on a web site information about the arts organisations which had been granted subsidies for their outbound projects in the past, as well as the details of the exchange projects in which they participated, so as to enable members of the public and other arts organisations to make reference to such information, and enhance the transparency of the Fund's operation; if not, of the reasons for that; and

(f) whether it knows the number of arts organisations engaged in Cantonese music (also known as "Guangdong music") in Hong Kong; whether the Fund had granted subsidies for projects of such arts organisations in the past five years; and whether there are any other programme or measure to promote or subsidise the development of arts organisations engaged in Cantonese music; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

(a) The Arts Development Fund (the Fund) approved grants for a total of 177 applications between 2006-07 and 2010-11, nine of which supported outbound projects by Chinese music groups. The approved projects were multifarious, ranging from performing arts, visual arts to multi-disciplinary arts. Apart from performances and exhibitions, there were projects which involved participation in international arts and cultural conferences.

(b) and (c) Applications for funding are assessed by the Sub-committee on the Arts Development Fund (Sub-committee) under the Advisory Committee on Arts Development (ACAD), which subsequently provides its advice to the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB).

The Sub-committee assesses the applications for funding according to the following vetting criteria, which are set out in the "Notes on Application" and uploaded onto HAB's website for reference by the public:

(i) Individual/organisation applicants must attain a high level of artistic excellence or possess a proven track record in arts;

(ii) The organisers must be either non-local government/quasi-government organisations, or any fairly reputable and prominent non-local arts and cultural organisations. If a cultural exchange activity is not hosted by such organisations, the application will normally not be considered unless the activity is of significant importance to the arts and cultural exchange; and

(iii) Proposed exchange projects must help promote local arts and culture outside Hong Kong as well as enhance Hong Kong's international image.

Members of the Sub-committee include veteran arts practitioners, academics engaging in arts and cultural research or teaching, experienced personnel in arts and cultural management, and representatives of HAB, Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) and Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC). The membership list of the Sub-committee has been uploaded onto HAB's website for public information.

(d) Between 2006-07 and 2010-11, a total of 61 applications were declined, as shown by year as follows:

Year	Number of projects declined
2006-07	7
2007-08	8
2008-09	17
2009-10	12
2010-11	17
Total	61

Reasons for the unsuccessful applications included: failure to meet the basic requirements, late submissions, insufficient information and subsequent failure to submit supplementary information within the specified time frame as requested by the Secretariat, failure to meet the vetting criteria, funding support had been already been given to the same applicant for a maximum of two cultural exchange projects in the preceding 12 months, etc. At the request of individual/organisation applicants, the Sub-committee or ACAD may examine the case information to consider whether revision to the recommendations shall be made.

(e) HAB has uploaded the list of grantees onto its website.

(f) Cantonese music is an important music genre in Hong Kong. It is often performed by a large number of local Chinese orchestras and ensembles, such as the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra. Committed to the promotion of arts and culture in Hong Kong, HAB and LCSD have attached great importance to local cultural treasures such as Chinese music, including Cantonese music, and have spared no effort in the continuous promotion of the music genres concerned. In the past five years, the Fund has granted subsidies to Chinese music groups for overseas cultural exchange to promote Cantonese music. Moreover, LCSD has organised a Cantonese Music Series which engaged local Chinese music groups to give concerts featuring Cantonese music. Local Chinese music groups have also received support in the promotion of Cantonese music through outreach activities such as talks, concerts, exhibitions under the Department's Community Cultural Ambassador Scheme. In addition, HKADC has subsidised activities of Chinese music groups, including the promotion of Cantonese music, through various project schemes.

Ends/Wednesday, January 18, 2012

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