

## **2025-26 Women Empowerment Fund (First Round)**

### **Guide to Application for General Projects**

#### **(I) Introduction**

- 1.1 The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as "HKSAR") attaches great importance to women's contribution to the community and the work of supporting women. In his 2022 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced that a Women Empowerment Fund (hereinafter referred to as "WEF") would be set up under the Women's Commission (hereinafter referred to as "WoC"). In the coming six years starting from 2023 - 24, the annual funding for the WEF is around HK\$20 million.
- 1.2 The WEF aims to empower women, regardless of their age, occupation, background, etc., to realise their full potentials in their respective arenas, ultimately achieving the goal of promoting women's development in Hong Kong.
- 1.3 The projects under the WEF comprise General Projects and Thematic Projects. The Thematic Projects of 2025-26 (first round) refer to "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Exchange Programme" (hereinafter referred to as "Exchange Programme") and "Programme on Women's Participation in Community Services" (hereinafter referred to as "Community Services Programme"). This Guide is applicable to General Project only. For more details of the Exchange Programme and Community Services Programme, please refer to the relevant Guide to Application.

#### **(II) Eligibility for Application**

- 2.1 Women's groups or non-governmental organisations fulfilling the following criteria are eligible for submitting applications:
  - (a)
    - (i) a company incorporated under the Companies Ordinance (Cap. 622) or under the former Companies Ordinance (Cap. 32); or
    - (ii) a society established in Hong Kong under the Societies Ordinance (Cap. 151); or
    - (iii) a statutory body or a body incorporated in Hong Kong by statute; and
  - (b) the respective company / society / body must be of non-profit-

making or charitable in nature.

- 2.2 If the applicant organisation is a non-profit-making women's group or non-governmental organisation registered in accordance with the law, it must provide a certificate of incorporation/registration issued under the law and a Constitution or a Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Constitution or the Memorandum and Articles of Association submitted must include, as proof, a clause specifying that the applicant organisation is non-profit making, and/or its members shall not take any shares of its income or assets. Moreover, upon dissolution of the organisation, its members shall not take any shares of its income or assets. The applicant organisation shall also declare in the application form that it has not shared in the past and will not share during the term of the project its income or assets with its members.
- 2.3 If the applicant organisation is a charitable body registered in accordance with the law, it must provide a certificate of incorporation / registration issued under the law and a copy of documentary proof of tax exemption under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112).
- 2.4 For projects co-organised with other organisations, that co-organiser must comply with the eligibility requirement specified in paragraph 2.1 above as well. The applicant organisation must provide in the application form information about the co-organiser and clearly specify their respective responsibilities, as well as the certificate of incorporation and the Constitution or the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the co-organiser. The applicant organisation shall be responsible for all matters relating to the application. If the application is approved, the relevant funding will be disbursed to the applicant organisation. Entrusted entities that purely provide support through provision of venue, tutor, services or assistance in promotion will not be considered as co-organisers. The applicant organisation shall not add any co-organisers after the project is approved.
- 2.5 The WoC reserves the right to disqualify an applicant organisation and/or co-organiser on the grounds that the applicant organisation and/or co-organiser has engaged, is engaging, or is reasonably believed to have engaged or be engaging in acts or activities that are likely to cause or constitute the occurrence of offences endangering national security or otherwise the exclusion of the eligibility of the related organisation is necessary in the interest of national security, or is necessary to protect the public interest of Hong Kong, public morals, public order or public safety.

### **(III) Requirements of General Projects**

- 3.1 The themes for the general projects include:

- (a) assisting women in accomplishing transformations in the job market (including introduction of job interview skills, job selection and training, placement opportunities, keys to entrepreneurship, digital marketing techniques, etc.);
- (b) enhancing women's awareness on their physical and mental health (including work and family life balance, stress management, mental health awareness, etc.);
- (c) helping women to cope with different roles in family and society (such as by providing them with trainings on child and elderly care; enhancing women's awareness of their rights, etc.);
- (d) motivating women to enhance their personal attributes and achieve full potential (such as workshops on strengthening positive thinking and promoting self-understanding, communication skills, etc.); and
- (e) facilitating the use of new information and communication technology (including trainings on cyber fraud prevention, the use of artificial intelligence, mobile shooting skills, video production, etc.).

3.2 The proposed project must satisfy the following requirements:

- (a) the project must comply with **one of the themes** set out in paragraph 3.1 above;
- (b) the project must be **non-profit-making** in nature;
- (c) all activities under the project must be **carried out in Hong Kong** and the target beneficiaries must be Hong Kong residents; and
- (d) **the project must not incur any additional expenditure to the Government.**

3.3 The applicant organisation should organise suitable project with various modes and nature of activities according to different themes and the needs of different women's groups. The activities should be diversified, interactive, interesting and innovative and can be in the format of workshops, sharing sessions, talks, competitions, visits, publications, etc.

3.4 To boost the effectiveness of the project, the activities would better be sustainable and scalable, empowering different women's groups through ongoing or a series of activities.

3.5 The applicant organisation should accord priority to conduct physical activities in order to enhance the effectiveness of the funded project.

- 3.6 The General Projects are divided into one-year and two-year projects. The successful applicant organisation (hereinafter referred to as “funded organisation”) must complete the one-year and two-year project (hereinafter referred to as “funded project”) within 12 months and 24 months respectively from the effective date set out in an Approval Letter of Funding Allocation (hereinafter referred to as “Approval Letter” issued by the WoC.

#### **(IV) Application for Funding**

##### **4.1 Application Procedures and Deadline for Submission**

- 4.1.1 The WoC will conduct two rounds of applications each year. There is no limit on the number of applications each eligible applicant organisation may submit in each round, provided that it can demonstrate the ability to complete each project.
- 4.1.2 The applicant organisation must submit the application form either in paper or electronically to the Secretariat of the WoC (hereinafter referred to as “the Secretariat”) **on or before 5:00 p.m. on 8 July 2025 (Tuesday).** **Late applications will not be accepted and will not be carried forward to the next round of application.**

##### **(a) Paper application**

The application form can be downloaded from the WEF website ([www.wef.gov.hk](http://www.wef.gov.hk)). Applicant organisations are required to submit the documents (i) to (iv) below by post or in person to the Secretariat:

- (i) the designated application form and the budget form in original copies, which are completed, signed and stamped (electronic signature and electronic stamp are not accepted);
- (ii) one soft copy of the completed application form (in MS Word format) and the budget form (in MS Excel format) saved on USB (Note: the information contained therein must be the same as that in (i) above, and **the printed version shall prevail in matters concerning the application**);
- (iii) documentary proof that the applicant organisation and co-organiser (if any) meet(s) the eligibility of application set out in paragraph 2.1; and
- (iv) Other relevant documents (if any).

##### **(b) Electronic application**

Applicant organisations are required to fill in the application form on the Government e-Form website (<https://eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/hab014/en/>) and upload the electronic files of the required documents according to the specified format and requirements<sup>1</sup>. After submitting the e-Form, **the applicant organisation should print out Part F of the e-Form – “Declaration”, sign and affix the chop of the organisation (electronic signature and electronic stamp are not accepted) and submit it to the Secretariat by post or in person within 7 days after submission of the e-Form. If the applicant organisation does not provide the required and clearly visible documents on time or does not submit the original signed “Declaration”, the application will not be considered without further notice.**

- 4.1.3 For applications submitted by post, the postmark date on the envelope shall be the date of application. Applicant organisation should ensure that sufficient postage is affixed before posting so as to avoid unsuccessful delivery of application. Any underpaid/unpaid mail items will be returned or disposed of by the Hongkong Post. **Late applications and applications submitted by email or by fax will not be considered.** If a Black Rainstorm Warning Signal, Typhoon Signal No.8 or above, or “extreme conditions” is issued by the Hong Kong Observatory between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on the closing date of application, the application deadline will be postponed to 5:00 p.m. on the next working day.
- 4.1.4 The applicant organisations must provide the details of each activity under the proposed project and draw up the budget. The currency must be denominated in **Hong Kong dollars.**
- 4.1.5 It is the responsibility of the applicant organisation to ensure that the application form and relevant documents submitted are complete and accurate. **The application will not be considered if the application form is not duly completed, or the applicant organisation fails to submit all the required documents and information set out in this Guide and the application form.**
- 4.1.6 The Secretariat may request the applicant organisation to provide supplementary documents and information and/or seek clarification from the applicant organisation in relation to the application submitted. The applicant organisation shall reply to the Secretariat in writing within the specified period. Failure to reply within the specified period will result in the application not being considered by the WoC without further notice. Please note that if the Secretariat

---

<sup>1</sup> The applicant organisation shall prepare electronic files of the required supporting documents in accordance with the following requirements:

- (i) the files should be stored in JPG, JPEG, PNG, PDF, XLS or XLSX format;
- (ii) the documents contained in the files should be clearly visible (resolution of 200 dpi or above); and
- (iii) the e-Form supports the uploading of 10 files with a total capacity of 10 MB. If the total number or capacity of files to be uploaded exceeds the maximum, the files should be merged or compressed beforehand.

If necessary, the WoC will request the applicant organisation to provide clearer originals of the files or supporting documents for application vetting.

makes the above request, it does not imply that the related application has met the eligibility criteria of the WEF.

- 4.1.7 All submitted application documents and materials, whether accepted or not, will not be returned to the applicant organisation. The applicant organisation should make its own copies of these documents for record purposes.
- 4.1.8 Duplicate application or application using a non-designated form will not be processed.
- 4.1.9 The applicant organisations are required to consider in detail whether it has adequate ability to implement the project according to the details in the application form and whether the proposed project is feasible, including but not limited to whether it can recruit sufficient participants to join the project, whether it can arrange suitable tutor and venue, whether the format and content of proposed project can achieve the anticipated outcome.

## **4.2 Notification of Application Results**

- 4.2.1 Under normal circumstances, the applicant organisation will be notified of the results of the application in writing in around three months after the application deadline. Under no circumstances shall an application be deemed to be successful unless and until the applicant organisation had been notified in writing by the WoC that the application is successful.
- 4.2.2 The WoC reserves the right to announce the application results and to disclose the list of funded organisations, the names of the funded projects, the funding amounts and other related information without the prior consent of any applicant organisation.

## **4.3 Acceptance of Funding by Organisation**

- 4.3.1 If the proposed project is approved, the WoC will issue an Approval Letter to the funded organisation. If the applicant organisation accepts the funding and agrees to abide by all the terms and conditions set by the Government / WoC in respect of the WEF, it should return the duly signed Acceptance Advice of Funding Allocation cum Application Form for Advance Payment, Undertaking Form and other documents specified by the WoC (if any) within the specified period set out in the Approval Letter, and commence the activities within three months from the effective date stated in the Approval Letter.
- 4.3.2 The funded organisation must organise the funded project and use the funds in accordance with the project details stated in the application form, the Approval Letter, Rules for Implementing Projects and Using Allocated Fund (General

Projects) (hereinafter referred to as “the Rules”), and all instructions, terms and conditions issued by the Government / WoC from time to time in relation to the WEF. Otherwise, the Government / WoC has the right to revoke the funding and the funded organisation must refund the whole amount involved within one month.

- 4.3.3 The Government / WoC may withdraw the funding approval at any time before it receives the duly signed Acceptance Advice of Funding Allocation cum Application Form for Advance Payment and Undertaking Form from the funded organisation. **If the WoC has not received the signed Acceptance Advice of Funding Allocation cum Application Form for Advance Payment, Undertaking Form and other related documents (if any) from the funded organisation by the specified date stated in the Approval Letter, the Government / WoC will consider that the funding is not accepted by the applicant organisation without further notice to the organisation.**

#### **4.4 Withdrawal of Application**

- 4.4.1 The funded organisation may inform the WoC in writing to withdraw the application within 14 days from receipt of the Approval Letter. Such withdrawal is irrevocable. The WoC will keep a record of the organisation’s withdrawal and the organisation’s future funding applications will be affected.
- 4.4.2 On receipt by the WoC of the notice of withdrawal, any approval, conditional approval or approval-in-principle previously issued by the WoC shall cease to be valid.

#### **(V) Funding Criteria**

- 5.1 **The funding cap for each one-year or two-year General Project is HK\$400,000 and HK\$800,000 respectively.** The amount of funding approved for individual projects is determined on case-by-case basis. **The final funding amount shall be as deemed reasonable by the Government / WoC, regardless of the amount sought.**
- 5.2 When drawing up the budget, applicant organisations must list out each income source as well as expenditure item and its breakdown in details. The proposed expenditure items must meet the actual needs, be detailed, reasonable and properly justified. The amount sought must be supported by evidence, prudent and pragmatic.
- 5.3 The staff costs of full-time/part-time staff who serve the participants of the funded project for their direct benefit, costs for renting equipment and venue (except for renting the applicant organisation’s own venue), as well as other one-off non-recurrent direct expenditure (such as costs of the auditor’s report,

expenses on consumables, and publicity expenses for the funded project) may be included in the budget of the proposed project.

- 5.4 To encourage more women to participate in the funded projects, the applicant organisation may organise children activities which are beneficial to their mind and body (such as arranging class activities for children) during the period when the women are participating in the activities under the project. The women participants may place their children under the care services of the organisation. The WoC will consider subsidising the related expenses of providing child care services. The applicant organisation should provide details of children activities and related expenditure items in the application form together with the proposed women activities. Such arrangement is only applicable to children activities which are held in parallel with the women activities
- 5.5 The applicant organisation shall ensure that the staff costs of full-time/part-time staff who serve the participants of the funded project for their direct benefit (including overtime allowance for existing staff and Mandatory Provident Fund contributions for staff arising from the implementation of the projects) shall not exceed 30% of the total approved budget for the activities of the project. The actual funding amount will be adjusted according to the total approved funding amount of the project and shall not exceed the above-mentioned ceiling. Such full-time/part-time staff must be employed and remunerated by the funded organisations. The Secretariat reserves the right to request the organisation to submit a statement about the budget on staff salaries, including but not limited to the specific title and duties of the staff, the necessity of such expenditure to achieve the aim of the project.
- 5.6 The total amount of publicity expenses shall not exceed 10% of the total approved budget for the activities of the project. The actual funding amount will be adjusted according to the total approved funding amount of the project and shall not exceed the above-mentioned ceiling.
- 5.7 The administrative expenses shall not exceed 10% of the total approved budget for the activities of the project (excluding the salary expenses of full-time/part-time employees of the funded organisation (including co-organiser) who are responsible for launching the funded project). In general, administrative expenses include administrative costs incurred in the implementation of the project, such as photocopying costs, postage, transportation costs for delivery of materials (which must be incurred directly from the activities under the project and must be calculated on the basis of using the cheapest means of transportation in each case), etc. The actual funding amount will be adjusted according to the total approved funding amount of the project and shall not exceed the above-mentioned ceiling.
- 5.8 The miscellaneous and contingency expenses shall not exceed 10% of the total approved budget for the activities of the project. In general, miscellaneous



expenses include the design and printing of participant certificates, goodies / souvenirs as an incentive for participants, cleansing and disinfection goods, etc. The actual funding amount will be adjusted according to the total approved funding amount of the project and shall not exceed the above-mentioned ceiling.

5.9 The applicant organisation shall ensure that its proposed budget meets the following requirements (if applicable):

- (a) the honorarium payable to an instructor/guest/speaker of the activity shall not exceed HK\$345 per hour. Only the time spent on the delivery of the activities by the instructor/guest/speaker can be counted (the time spent on the preparation of teaching materials/activity materials cannot be counted);
- (b) the total number of hours of each training course should shall not be less than 8 hours;. Training courses failing to meet this requirement will not be considered.
- (c) the applicant organisation should use their own resources to implement the projects as far as practicable. If it is necessary to purchase the teaching material/activity materials, the applicant organisation should count the required materials based on the principle of sharing and reusing so as to achieve cost-effective use of resources;
- (d) in general, venues of which hire charges could be fully waived or are more affordable (e.g. community halls or community centres) shall be given priority in choosing as the venue of the project. For an activity held in the funded organisation's own venue, the hire charges will not be funded;
- (e) the applicant organisation should first consider the venue with audio equipment if rental of audio equipment is required.
- (f) if the venue provider offers discounted rate or waives the hire charges of venue for non-profit making charitable organisation, the applicant organisation shall hire the venue in its own name. Only the expenditure at a discounted rate for the non-profit making/charitable organisations can be reimbursed.
- (g) if the applicant organisation is required to organise activities at a venue with special equipment or a specific venue with special considerations, the applicant organisation shall state clearly and provide the relevant information in the application form and the budget;

- (h) if the proposed project involves a district or territory-wide competition, each prize shall not exceed HK\$515 and the maximum amount approved for prizes for each competition shall be HK\$2,070, and no prizes in the form of cash or items redeemable for cash (e.g. gift cheque) shall be included;
- (i) each prize for a booth game or similar activity shall not exceed HK\$20 and the maximum amount approved for prizes for each booth activity shall be HK\$1,500, and no prizes in the form of cash or items redeemable for cash (e.g. gift cheque) shall be included;
- (j) the travelling expenses of local public transportation for each volunteer shall not exceed HK\$50 per day per activity. Reimbursement of travelling expenses is made on an accountable basis. Disbursement in the form of fixed amount of subsidy is not allowed. Volunteers shall not receive any remuneration or allowance. The participants of activities and staff of the funded organisation (include co-organiser) are not regarded as volunteers;
- (k) for distribution of goodies / souvenirs to participants, the value of each goodie / souvenir shall not exceed HK\$20, and the maximum amount approved for each activity (not the session under an activity) is HK\$500. Such expenditure shall be included under the miscellaneous and contingency expenses;
- (l) For projects with final funding amount exceeding HK\$50,000, the funded organisation shall submit a financial report with the accounts audited and an auditor's report issued by an independent Certified Public Accountant (CPA) or auditor. The expenditure ceiling of hiring service from a CPA or an auditor is determined according to the total approved funding amount for the activities of the project, as set out below:

<b>Total approved funding amount for activities (HK\$)</b>	<b>Ceiling of hiring service from a CPA or an Auditor (HK\$)</b>
Below \$200,000	\$8,160
\$200,000 – \$499,999.9	\$12,240
\$500,000 – \$800,000	\$16,320

- 5.10 The funding provided by the WEF **shall not be used** for the following expenditure items: costs for maintaining the applicant organisation's (including the co-organiser's) own operation or administration (including but not limited to costs for setting up or refurbishing the organisation's office; costs involved in the decoration, repair and maintenance of its building and office facilities; rent and rates; telephone, fax and broadband charges; utility charges for water,

electricity and town gas; general administrative and office expenses; and entertainment and travelling expenses incurred by the applicant organisation's administrative staff), purchase of durable assets (e.g. equipment, devices, furniture, etc.), purchase of non-expendable items, improvement of the applicant organisation's own equipment or services, procurement of prizes and guest souvenirs in the form of cash or cashable items (e.g. gift cheque), production of goods to be sold, disbursement of any form of remuneration or allowance to participants (including transportation allowance paid to participants for attending the activities), purchase of uniforms for participants and staff (including volunteers), purchase of drinks, refreshments and meals, and other expenditure items which will not bring direct benefit to participants.

5.11 The following types of activities will **not** be funded:

- (a) activities which are not cost-effective, benefiting only a small number of people while expenditure involved is unreasonable or huge;
- (b) providing one-on-one service to participants (e.g. one-on-one tutorial, therapy or counselling sessions);
- (c) activities of a purely recreational/entertainment/sightseeing nature, such as parades or carnivals;
- (d) visits with sole distribution of daily necessities, food or gifts to target beneficiaries and alike;
- (e) physical exchange activities outside Hong Kong;
- (f) dining and travel activities;
- (g) activities that may give undue credit or publicity to an individual, an organisation or a political party or association;
- (h) activities that are intended for the exclusive or personal/organisational/group benefit of a/an individual/organisation/group, such as performances for the organisation's annual events, training staff for use by the organisation and provision of organisation's own services, etc.;
- (i) activities that disburse a fixed amount of cash allowance and/or cash relief;
- (j) activities that are launched for profit-making, fund-raising, commercial, religious or political purposes;
- (k) activities that are organised, co-organised or co-hosted by Offices of Legislative Council Members or District Council Members, political parties or organisations of political nature;
- (l) activities 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 project;
- (m) activities that receive sponsorship by an individual or a company, or activities subsidised by other funding schemes of the Government;
- (n) activities, in the opinion of the Government / WoC, which are likely to constitute or cause the occurrence of offences endangering national security or which would otherwise be contrary to the interest of national security;
- (o) activities that conflict with the policies and interests of any Government

- bureau or department; or
- (p) activities that relate to training courses already covered under the Capacity Building Mileage Programme.

## **(VI) Assessment of Applications**

### **6.1 Assessment Panel**

- 6.1.1 A working group (hereinafter referred to as “WG”) is set up under the WoC to assess eligible applications and make recommendations on funding allocation.

### **6.2 Assessment Criteria and Process**

- 6.2.1 The WoC will only consider applications that satisfy all the eligibility criteria set out in this Guide and the application form. The WoC will consider and determine the applications according to the factors set out below:

- (a) the background of the applicant organisation (including co-organisers) (e.g. whether the applicant has organised activities of a similar scale and nature before and whether its track record and performance are satisfactory);
- (b) the contents of project and implementation arrangements
  - (i) whether the concepts, objectives and contents of all the activities of the proposed project are in line with the objective of the WEF and the themes of the project;
  - (ii) whether the content is substantive, in-depth and innovative (including the objectives, details, frequency, format of each activity, etc.);
  - (iii) the design, organisation and arrangement (including whether the activities are well organised and take into account the different needs of the target beneficiaries; how the organisation matches its resources to achieve synergy, whether the activities are sustainable and extendable, etc.);
  - (iv) the feasibility and overall arrangement (including administrative support, etc.);
- (c) financial arrangements
  - (i) whether the budget is well thought out and prudent, whether the proposed income and expenditure items are reasonable with justifications, whether the project is cost effective, etc.;
  - (ii) other sources of funding (including internal funding from the organisation, other funding sources, sponsorships and donations in cash or in kind);
  - (iii) the level of participation fee to be charged (if any);

- (d) target groups of participants and promotion (including the promotion and implementation strategies, recruitment procedures and mechanisms, assessment criteria and number of estimated participants);
- (e) the expected outcomes, key performance indicators, methods / mechanisms for measuring performance and evaluating effectiveness of the project, etc.;
- (f) the risk assessment and contingency plan (a risk assessment shall be conducted and a comprehensive contingency plan in response to unexpected situations shall be formulated for the implementation of the project); and
- (g) other factors which the WoC may consider relevant.

6.2.2 In general, projects that involve only interest classes, recreation and sports classes or similar activities (e.g. training programme on singing technique, dancing class, calligraphy class, etc.), projects with proposed content similar to the previously funded project of the applicant organisation, will be given lower priority. Besides, regarding the two-year general projects, if the activities are repeated during the two-year period (for example, multiple training courses of identical contents are proposed to be held in the same district during the two-year period), such activities of the second year will not be considered normally.

6.2.3 If the project contains the following elements, a higher priority will be accorded :

- (a) the project is scalable, i.e. it can be scaled up or expanded by replicating the successful strategies to benefit diverse groups of women;
- (b) the group of participants consists of youth, professionals, ethnic minorities, new arrivals or persons with disabilities (please specify in Section C of the application form); and
- (c) it is a territory-wide project.

6.2.4 Not every eligible project in each round will be approved and not every activity under the approved project will be granted funding. If a project is not granted funding, the application will not be carried forward to the next round of application automatically.

6.2.5 In assessing applications, where necessary, the WoC may take into account comments on the proposed project made by relevant Government bureaux/departments and professionals in relevant fields from their perspectives, and also the track record of the applicant organisation in implementing projects under other funding schemes administered by the Government.

6.2.6 The Government / WoC reserves the right to disclose the information provided

by the applicant organisation to a third party for the purpose of assessing the application.

- 6.2.7 The Government / WoC may prescribe additional terms and conditions based on actual needs and may stipulate specific terms and conditions on the use of approved funds on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.2.8 The Government / WoC has no obligation to accept or support any submitted application. The decisions on the approval of application and level of funding shall rest with the Government / WoC. **The decision made by the Government / WoC is final and absolute and cannot be disputed by the applicant organisation.**

## **(VII) Disbursement of Funds**

- 7.1 To assist the funded organisation in meeting the initial costs and liquidity requirements of the project, the WoC may, upon written application by the funded organisation, consider releasing an advance of not more than 50% of the approved amount upon confirmation of acceptance of the funding by the funded organisation.
- 7.2 For better management of the fund, the WoC recommends the funded organisation to open and maintain a separate risk-free interest-bearing bank account (hereinafter referred to as “Project Account”) under its registered name with a licensed bank registered under the Banking Ordinance (Cap. 155) solely and exclusively for processing and transacting all receipts and payments of the project. All project funds, including the approved fund under the WEF, cash contribution from the funded organisation and sponsor(s) and all project related income must be paid into the Project Account. All project payments must be paid out from the Project Account. All project funds must be kept in the Project Account by the funded organisation until such funds are spent (or paid) or returned to the Government by the funded organisation according to the terms and conditions prescribed in the Rules.
- 7.3 The funded organisation must ensure that all interests generated from the Project Account are reflected in the financial statements and audited accounts (if applicable) of the project.
- 7.4 Without prejudice to any other rights or remedies which the Government may have, the funded organisation may be required to compensate the Government for loss of interest income if the project funds are not properly handled in accordance with paragraph 7.2 above.
- 7.5 The WoC will make a lump sum reimbursement or pay the remaining balance after deducting the advance payment upon the completion of the project. The

funded organisation should submit the request for reimbursement within two months from the completion of project or before a specified date (whichever is earlier). Otherwise, the funding will be withdrawn after the specified date without further notice.

- 7.6 The Government / WoC will arrange for the disbursement of the project's remaining funds to the funded organisation, subject to the funded organisation's compliance with the terms and conditions prescribed by the Government / WoC (including but not limited to those in this Guide, the Approval Letter, the Undertaking Form and the Rules) and the implementation of the funded project to the WoC's satisfaction, the WoC's acceptance of documents provided by the organisation on the funded project's deliverables such as summary report on participant opinion survey, final report, financial report, progress report (if applicable), auditor's report (if applicable) and any other additional reports and/or documents as requested by the WoC regarding the funded project, as well as the WoC's confirmation of the organisation's observance of all requirements concerning the project implementation and the use of funding.
- 7.7 Expenditure incurred before the formal approval of the project in writing by the WoC (i.e. before the effective date as stated in the Approval Letter) will not be funded.
- 7.8 Unless the WoC approves otherwise, expenditure incurred after the completion of the funded project, except for expenditure items which by its nature must be incurred after such completion (such as expenses for hiring services from a CPA or an auditor), will not be funded by the WoC.
- 7.9 The funding for the funded project will be disbursed on an accountable basis. The amount of funding for an approved expenditure item shall not exceed the funding cap of the item. If the actual expenditure is less than the approved funding amount, only the actual amount of expenditure will be reimbursed by the Government / WoC. The actual amount reimbursed by the Government / WoC will also depend on the actual number of activities organised. If some of the activities cannot be conducted as planned, the funding amount may be reduced proportionally regardless of the actual expenditure. Furthermore, if the outcome of the funded project fails to meet the expected target, the Government / WoC reserves the right to reduce the funding amount or cancel the reimbursement.
- 7.10 The funded organisation may decide whether to impose a refundable deposit on participants at its own merits. If the organisation opts to impose a refundable deposit on participants, they must enter an agreement with participants in aspect of the arrangement of collecting the deposit before the activity. The organisation is responsible for explaining the terms and conditions of the agreement to the participants and ensure that they fully understand it before signature. If the WoC considers it necessary, the funded organisation must impose the refundable deposit on the participants according to the instruction. All records pertaining to

the agreement shall be recorded properly and kept for seven years after the completion of the project for the WoC's inspection as and when necessary.

- 7.11 The funded organisation may charge a reasonable fee from participants and must list the breakdown of the fees in the proposed budget. If the funded organisation wish to raise the participants' fee after the approval of the project, it must submit an application with full justifications to the WoC. The WoC reserves the right to request the funded organisation to submit the relevant information for consideration.
- 7.12 Irrespective of whether it has so declared in the application, the funded organisation shall utilise all income (including interest generated from the project fund) in the first instance before the funding under the WEF is used to meet project expenses. The same arrangement shall apply to sponsorship, cash donations and other funding sources of income. All records pertaining to the receipt of income shall be kept for seven years after the completion of the project for the Government's / WoC's inspection as and when necessary.
- 7.13 The Government / WoC will not provide additional funding to the funded organisation other than the funds approved for the project. In case the actual expenditure of the project exceeds the approved budget, the funded organisation is required to cover the shortfall on its own.
- 7.14 In any case, the funded organisation must return to the Government any unspent funding (including all unspent advance payment and interest generated from the allocated fund) upon the acceptance of the submitted financial report and auditor's report (if applicable) by the WoC.
- 7.15 All expenses should be prudent, pragmatic and economical to achieve the maximum cost effectiveness. The funded organisation shall use the funding in accordance with the approved budget attached to the Approval Letter and for the sole and exclusive purpose of implementing and completing the funded project directly. Any expense outside the approved budget is not reimbursable.
- 7.16 The Government / WoC reserves the right to cancel or reduce the approved funding for the funded project if the Government / WoC considers that the funded organisation has used the approved funding or any part thereof for any purpose other than the specified purposes, or the expenditure items are unreasonable.
- 7.17 The Government / WoC may require the funded organisation to return all or any part of the funding to the Government / WoC and refer the case to law enforcement agencies (if applicable) should any irregularities or criminal elements are discovered after the disbursement of funds to the funded organisation.
- 7.18 No reimbursement will be made for any unapproved expenses. The



Government / WoC reserves the right to make the final decision on whether or not to disburse the funding. The final funding amount shall be as deemed reasonable by the Government / WoC. The decision of the Government / WoC shall be final and the funded organisation shall raise no objection.

## **(VIII) Project Implementation**

### **8.1 Overall Arrangement**

- 8.1.1 The person-in-charge must be a person authorised by the funded organisation or authorised to represent the organisation in accordance with the relevant regulations (such as Companies Ordinance (Cap. 622 of the Laws of Hong Kong). Such person shall take the full responsibility for the funded project and is required to sign the Undertaking Form.
- 8.1.2 The applicant organisation must appoint an officer-in-charge of the project to oversee the implementation of the project, monitor the funding to ensure its proper use in accordance with the approved budget, adhere to the principle of economy in the use of funds, liaise with the Secretariat and report on the progress or performance of the project.
- 8.1.3 The funded organisation is required to designate a staff of the organisation as an authorised person to provide support to the implementation of the project, and designate its staff or members as procurement officer to be responsible for procurement of goods and/or services.
- 8.1.4 The officer-in-charge of the project shall not be the same person as the person-in-charge of the organisation or the authorised person.
- 8.1.5 If the applicant organisation delegates other organisations to organise activities, the applicant organisation must serve as the organiser of these activities, get involved in supervision and planning, and appoint a representative to participate in activities.
- 8.1.6 In terms of recruitment and publicity, the funded organisation should endeavour to recruit women participants through various open channels. The participants must not be confined to the members of the funded organisations. The funded organisation is required to adopt an open, fair and impartial procedure and criteria in the recruitment of participants.
- 8.1.7 The funded organisation shall submit all publicity materials and articles bearing the names of the WoC and the WEF (if any) (whether or not funded by WEF) for the activity to the Secretariat for approval at least 14 days prior to the activity. The WoC has the right to request the funded organisation to postpone the activity, reduce or revoke the funding if the funded organisation fails to comply with this

requirement. The funded organisation shall bear any additional expenses relating to administration, reproduction of the publicity materials and articles, etc. arising from its failure to submit the publicity materials and articles on time. If the funded organisation prints or produces the publicity materials and articles (whether or not funded by WEF) without the approval of the WoC, the Government / WoC has the right to revoke the funding and the funded organisation must refund the amount involved (if any).

- 8.1.8 For its own protection, the funded organisation should take out an appropriate insurance plan for the funded project, including but not limited to employees' compensation, public liability insurance covering all risks (with coverage for occupiers' liability), to meet any claims arising from or in connection with the funded project.
- 8.1.9 The applicant organisation shall not seek funding from other Government Bureaux/Departments/funding schemes for the same project. After acceptance of the WEF funding, the funded organisation shall not accept any other forms of sponsorship, including funding or in-kind sponsorship from the Government for the same funded project throughout its whole term (except for rental of Government premises with fee waiver in accordance with the established rental guidelines).
- 8.1.10 In general, the funded organisation may accept sponsorships and donations in cash or in kind. Under no circumstances is the applicant organisation allowed to seek and/or accept donations that may, in the opinion of the Government / WoC, be in direct conflict with the policies and interests of the WEF or any Government Bureaux or Departments (including but not limited to donations and/or sponsorships from businesses involving tobacco, alcohol, advocacy of gambling and obscenity, etc.). If the Government / WoC considers the acceptance of sponsorships and donations by the organisation inappropriate, the Government / WoC reserves the right to revoke the funding and the funded organisation must refund the amount involved (if any).
- 8.1.11 If the applicant organisation needs additional funding to meet the costs of activities which exceed the funding cap or to cope with expenditure items which are not approved, it may commit internal resources and/or apply for financial assistance from parties outside the Government and/or charge the participants, provided that the details are included in the budget of the application form. To avoid duplication of resources, the WoC will not approve an activity which has already secured funding from other sources of the Government. If the application result of other funding sources has yet to be known at the time of submission of application to the WoC, the applicant organisation must inform the WoC of the concerned result within 7 days upon receipt of the result. If the applicant organisation wishes to apply for funding from parties other than the Government after the application is approved or during the implementation of the funded project, written approval from the Government / WoC must be

obtained. If the applicant organisation fails to comply with the requirements, the WoC may revoke the funding. If the applicant organisation has secured funding from other sources, the WoC may revoke or reduce the approved funding amount.

- 8.1.12 If the applicant organisation needs additional funding to implement the project, the funded organisation must first consider other sources of income (such as the internal resource) before consideration is given to impose a fee on participants or raise such fee.
- 8.1.13 The funded organisation shall uphold the principles of openness, fairness, competitiveness and value for money in procuring goods and services with the funding in accordance with the requirements of the Rules.
- 8.1.14 The funded organisation or any person involved in any way in the funded project or any of its or his associated persons or companies (including co-organisers) shall not participate in the quotation for procurement of goods and services.
- 8.1.15 The funded organisation is required to provide information on the funded projects as requested by the Secretariat to facilitate the handling of enquiries or complaints. Where necessary, the Secretariat may refer enquiries or complaints to the funded organisation and the funded organisation shall provide the necessary assistance.

## **8.2 Monitoring of Project**

- 8.2.1 The funded organisation should obtain prior written approval from the WoC for any changes to the content of the activity under the project. If the funded organisation fails to conduct the project as planned and prior approval from the WoC is not obtained, the Government / WoC reserves the right to revoke the funding and require the funded organisation to refund the amount received (if any) within one month.
- 8.2.2 In the event that the funded organisation decides to cancel the whole project or an individual activity under the project during the preparation period, the funded organisation must provide reasonable explanation and seek the approval of the WoC. If the original activities are temporarily suspended under unexpected circumstances, the funded organisation shall give written notice with reasonable explanation to the Secretariat immediately. If the WoC considers that the cancellation of the activity is the responsibility of the funded organisation (e.g. due to its negligence), no reimbursement shall be made and the funded organisation shall be required to return within one month to the Government / WoC the full / partial amount received (if any).
- 8.2.3 The Government / WoC reserves the right to reduce the funding amount proportionally based on the reduced scope and scale of activities under the

funded project where prior written approval has been given by WoC. The Government / WoC has the absolute right to decide on the final funding amount to be approved.

- 8.2.4 If the funded organisation fails to provide the progress of the project at the request of the WoC without a reasonable explanation, the WoC will treat the organisation as having cancelled the entire project or individual activities under the project, and will request the organisation to refund the amount received (if any). The WoC will record it accordingly for future reference on assessing the organisation's funding applications.
- 8.2.5 The funded organisation shall ensure that the activities under the funded project will not be held or promoted concurrently with any activities that are not under the funded project (such as distributing materials of other projects and / or provide information which is irrelevant to the funded project to the participants at the same occasion). The publicity materials of the activity can only cover the activities of the funded project.
- 8.2.6 The funded organisation shall submit a final report, photographs and videos (saved on USB), promotional materials, publications (if any), a summary report on participants' opinion survey of each activity, financial report, auditor's report (if applicable), and any other relevant information (e.g. audio-visual materials, sound recordings, etc.) to the WoC within two months after the completion of the project or by the specified date (whichever is earlier).
- 8.2.7 If the final funding amount is HK\$50,000 or below, the funded organisation shall submit a financial report on income and expenditure with all original receipts duly certified by the officer-in-charge of the project or the authorised person. If the final funding amount exceeds HK\$50,000, the funded organisation shall submit a financial report with the accounts audited and an auditor's report issued by an independent CPA or auditor. The aim of such a requirement is to assure the Government and the WoC that all expenditure items under the funded project fall within the scope of the approved expenditure items (including sub-items) stipulated in the approved budget attached to the WoC's Approval Letter, and the administration and management of the project (including the use of the funds) are in compliance with the requirements set out in the Approval Letter, the Undertaking form, the Rules and other guidelines specified by the Government / WoC (if applicable). The funded organisation is not required to submit the original receipts for payments under the project but such receipts should be kept for seven years for checking by the Government / WoC. The expenses for hiring services from a CPA or an auditor can be listed as one of expenditure items of the funded project (please refer to paragraph 5.9(l))
- 8.2.8 If the funded organisation fails to provide the required reports or compile the reports in accordance with the WoC's requirements, the WoC will record it accordingly for future reference on assessing that organisation's applications for

other funding. The Government / WoC also has the right to revoke the funding. If the funding is revoked, the funded organisation must refund the amount received (if any) within one month.

- 8.2.9 For two-year projects, apart from the reports upon completion of the project, the funded organisation is required to submit a progress report every six months from the approval of funding. All progress reports should be submitted within one month after each six-month period.

### **8.3 WoC Visit / Arrangement to Attend Activity**

- 8.3.1 The WoC may appoint authorised representatives to inspect or visit in any sessions of the activities of the funded project as observers. The WoC will normally inform the funded organisation of the relevant arrangement, but the WoC can also conduct the inspection or observation without prior notice.
- 8.3.2 The funded organisation should inform the Secretariat of the date, time and venue, etc. of the activity under the funded project by submitting the Notification of Activity of Funded Project Form at least 14 days prior to the activity. The Government / WoC has the right to request the funded organisation to postpone the activity, reduce or revoke the funding if the funded organisation fails to comply with this requirement or conduct the activity without prior notification to the WoC.
- 8.3.3 The funded organisation is required to brief the WoC and/or its WG on the progress and result of the project as and when necessary in accordance with the Secretariat's arrangements. The WoC may appoint a third party organisation to assess a funded project. The funded organisation shall assist and facilitate the relevant assessment.
- 8.3.4 During the project period and/or following the completion or termination of a funded project, the funded organisation may be invited to attend the Government's / WoC's meeting/sharing sessions to present its funded project's progress and/or outcome so as to gain experience for future reference. Furthermore, the Government / WoC may from time to time invite and/or request the funded organisation to attend activities which they deem appropriate (including but not limited to development training, seminars, etc.). If invited, the funded organisation shall delegate representative(s) to attend and participate in the meeting/sharing sessions/activities.
- 8.3.5 Participants of activities may be invited to share their views on their participation in the funded project with the mass media; participate in activities mentioned in paragraph 8.3.4 above and/or participate in other activities organised by the Government / WoC. The funded organisation shall assist in arranging the relevant activities and encourage the invited participants to join the activities.

## **(IX) Others**

### **9.1 Prevention of Bribery**

- 9.1.1 The funded organisation shall observe the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Cap.201) and shall inform its project team, directors, employees, agents, consultants, contractors and other personnel who are in any way involved in the project that they shall not offer to or solicit or accept from any person any money, gifts or advantages (as defined in the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance) in relation to the project.
- 9.1.2 The offer of an advantage to members of the WoC or the WG with an intention to influence the outcome of the application is an offence under the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Cap. 201). Any such offer by an applicant organisation or its directors, employees, agents, consultants, contractors and other personnel who are in any way involved in the project will render the application invalid and will not be accepted for further consideration. The Government / WoC has the right to cancel or terminate the grant to the applicant organisation if funding has already been approved for the application, and hold the funded organisation concerned liable for any loss or damages, which the Government / WoC may sustain.

### **9.2 Intellectual Property**

- 9.2.1 The Government shall be the exclusive owner of the materials created or developed by the funded organisation for the approved project (hereinafter referred to as “Project Materials”). All the Intellectual Property Rights in the Project Materials shall vest in the Government at the time they are created.
- 9.2.2 Publications and audio-visual productions funded by the WEF must not infringe the copyrights or intellectual property rights of others and should not be used for sale. The funded organisation shall be responsible for any claims or liabilities incurred. If the funded organisation intends to include or use materials created by others, prior approval from the copyright owner must be sought.

### **9.3 Personal Data**

- 9.3.1 The funded organisation shall ensure that the various requirements of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486) are complied with when collecting the personal data in the course of implementation of the funded project (including but not limited to participants and staff).
- 9.3.2 The personal data provided as part of the application process will be used by the

Government / WoC to process the application, and to conduct research and surveys, and to enforce its rights and powers under the Approval Letter. The provision of personal data in the application is voluntary. However, if the applicant organisation does not provide sufficient information, the Government / WoC may not be able to process its application.

- 9.3.3 The funded organisation shall seek each participant's consent for disclosing the personal data provided by the participant to the Secretariat. The Government / WoC may use the data in verifying the eligibility of participants, conducting questionnaires, assessing research, organising training/sharing sessions, implementing the operation of the WEF, monitoring the performance of the funded organisation, meeting the requirements to make disclosure under the requirements of any law, and any other matters related to the above purposes.
- 9.3.4 Photographs and/or video clips submitted by the funded organisation may be posted on the website(s) of the Government / the WoC and/or the WEF and/or used in activities organised by the Government and/or the WoC. The funded organisation should ensure that all stakeholders agree to and are aware of the arrangement.

## **(X) Important Notes**

- 10.1 Before submission of the application, the applicant organisation shall confirm all the information provided is true, complete and accurate. The Government / WoC reserves the right to pursue legal action if it is found that the applicant organisation has submitted wrong or false information or withheld any material information. If the organisation uses false information to obtain the funding or provide forged documents, the Government / WoC will refer the case to the police and the person involved must accept the legal liability.
- 10.2 The Government / WoC shall not in any circumstances be liable for making any compensation to an applicant organisation.
- 10.3 Under any circumstances, the Government / WoC shall not be liable for any claims, demands or liabilities arising from a funded project. The funded organisation must bear any legal liability arising from the funded project at its own.
- 10.4 When implementing a funded project, a funded organisation shall ensure the project's compliance with all laws and legislation applicable to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (hereinafter referred to as "Hong Kong"), including but not limited to laws and legislation in force or applied in Hong Kong from time to time and related to safeguarding national security (including the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong

Kong Special Administrative Region applied in Hong Kong in accordance with the Promulgation of National Law 2020 (L.N. 136 of 2020) and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (6 of 2024) (hereinafter referred to as “National Security Law”)), all legal provisions applicable to Hong Kong, as well as requirements and rules imposed from time to time by the Government or the WoC (hereinafter referred to as “the relevant laws, legislation and government/WoC requirements”). The funded organisation shall also remind all its directors, partners, management, employees, agents or contractors involving in the funded project to comply with the relevant laws, legislation and government/WoC requirements. In the event that the funded organisation or any of its directors, partners, management and employees, or any personnel, agents or contractors involved in the implementation of the funded project is found to have violated the relevant laws, legislation and government/WoC requirements, the Government or the WoC may withdraw, suspend or terminate the approved funding.

- 10.5 It is the responsibility of the funded organisation to obtain all approvals and licences that are necessary for carrying out the funded project and to ensure that, during the implementation of the funded project, all activity contents and formats, information produced, shown and/or distributed in relation to the activity (e.g. publicity materials, publications, audio/visual productions, questionnaires, messages, written materials and images, etc.) are consistent with the details as set out in the application submitted with funding approved (including the concepts of the project and the objectives and details of the activities, etc.) and the facts, and are in compliance with the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as “the Basic Law”) and all laws and statutes applicable to Hong Kong, including the Hong Kong National Security Law. For the avoidance of doubt, the funded organisation will not be exonerated from any legal liability by virtue of the Government’s / WoC’s funding of the project. The Government / WoC reserves the right to hold the organisation accountable for all claims, legal proceedings, losses (including any direct and indirect losses), liabilities and damage (including any direct, special, indirect or consequential loss or any expense regardless of any nature) arising from breaches of the relevant laws, regulation and requirements of the Government / WoC, this guide, the Approval Letter, the Undertaking Form and the Rules.
- 10.6 If the funded organisation is found to be in breach of the terms and conditions of the Approval Letter, the Undertaking form and the Rules, instructions, terms and conditions issued by the Government / WoC from time to time in respect of the WEF and/or any Hong Kong laws and statutes (including but not limited to the Hong Kong National Security Law (as stated in paragraph 10.4 above) after the Government’s / WoC’s disbursement of approved funds, the Government / WoC may exercise the right to require the funded organisation to return the disbursed funds and cancel the disbursement of the remaining funds.
- 10.7 If the funded organisation is found to have failed to use the funds in good faith, to



have failed to enforce the terms of the grant or to have committed any default, including failure to comply with the approved details of the project set out in the application (except for changes agreed in advance by the WoC) and the terms and conditions of the Approval Letter, the Undertaking Form and the Rules and instructions, terms and conditions issued by the Government / WoC from time to time in respect of the WEF without providing a reasonable explanation, the Government / WoC shall have the right not to disburse the funds and the organisation has to refund the full amount of the funds received (if any). In addition, the Government / WoC has the right to request the funded organisation to refund all amount received for other funded projects. The WoC will record the organisation's conduct and its future funding applications will be affected.

- 10.8 In no event shall the Government be liable for any loss or damage incurred by a third party as a result of, or in connection with, the funded project or for any claim for loss or damage in connection with the project.
- 10.9 The funded organisation shall not assign, transfer, subcontract or otherwise dispose of any or all of its interests, rights, benefits or obligations under the project details set out in the application form, the Approval Letter, the Undertaking Form and the Rules unless prior written approval of the Government / WoC has been obtained.
- 10.10 The Government / WoC shall in no circumstances be liable for any losses and/or responsibilities incurred in the funded project. The funded organisation shall be responsible for any losses and responsibilities incurred in the funded project and shall make up the shortfall to complete the funded project at its own.
- 10.11 The decision made by the Government / WoC in relation to the funding arrangements, including but not limited to the maximum funding amount approved, is final and absolute and cannot be disputed by the funded organisation.

## **(XI) Not a Binding Agreement**

- 11.1 Nothing in this Guide shall constitute a contract. Notwithstanding anything provided in other paragraphs of this Guide, no binding agreement will be made between the Government and the funded organisation unless and until an agreement is duly executed by all parties thereto.
- 11.2 This Guide sets out the details and arrangements of the General Projects under the WEF. If there is any inconsistency or ambiguity between the Chinese and the English versions, the Chinese version shall prevail.
- 11.3 The Government and the WoC shall have the right to prescribe and revise from time to time the details of funding as they see fit in the light of individual funding

applications. No objection can be made by the funded organisation.

- 11.4 The content of this Guide may be reviewed and updated based on actual operational experience. Subsequent amendments will be promulgated via the WEF website ([www.wef.gov.hk](http://www.wef.gov.hk)) and/or by the Secretariat.

## **(XII) Enquiries**

- 12.1 For enquiries, please contact the Implementation Team of Women Empowerment Fund of the Secretariat:

Address : Home and Youth Affairs Bureau  
3/F, The Hub, 23 Yip Kan Street, Wong Chuk Hang,  
Hong Kong  
Email : [wef@hyab.gov.hk](mailto:wef@hyab.gov.hk)  
Telephone : 3845 4518

**Women's Commission**  
**June 2025**