

**Forty-fourth Meeting of
the Business Facilitation Advisory Committee**

***Agenda Item 4(a) : Report on the work of the
Wholesale and Retail Task Force***

Purpose

This paper reports on the work of the Wholesale and Retail Task Force (WRTF) since the last Business Facilitation Advisory Committee meeting held on 7 October 2020.

Work progress of WRTF

Integrated Services to Support SMEs

2. At the WRTF meeting held on 26 November 2020, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, Trade and Industry Department (TID), and Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC) briefed Members on the integrated services provided by SME centres and the setting up of “SME ReachOut”.

3. There are four SME centres, namely the Support and Consultation Centre for SMEs under TID, the SME Centre under the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, SME One under HKPC and TecONE under the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation. The Government consolidated the services of the four SME centres in October 2019 to provide "four-in-one" integrated services and instituted a one-stop referral system to strengthen support for SMEs and raise their awareness of the various funding schemes. Enterprises can obtain business information, funding schemes information, advisory services, etc. at any service point. To step up the support for SMEs to obtain funding, a dedicated service team entitled “SME ReachOut” has commenced operation since January 2020 to help SMEs identify suitable funding schemes and provide direct support in applying for funding through face-to-face or online meetings.

4. WRTF welcomed the support services provided by the SME centres and “SME ReachOut” and appreciated the Government’s efforts in helping local enterprises, particularly SMEs.

Amendment to Pharmacy and Poisons Regulations to remove the requirement to submit the actual sales packs of pharmaceutical products for registration

5. At the same meeting, the Department of Health (DH) briefed Members on the amendment to Pharmacy and Poisons Regulations to remove the regulatory requirement on submission of the actual sales packs of pharmaceutical products for registration. The current requirement of submitting actual sales pack has become outdated with technological advancement. It imposes an unnecessary hurdle for registration given the scarcity of materials for certain biological products and related ethical issues. Upon enactment of the Amendment Ordinance, applicants for registration for pharmaceutical products will only be required to provide the prototypes of the sales packs and proposed wordings of the labels of the product or substance for inspection.

6. To allow sufficient time for the pharmaceutical trade to understand the new arrangement, DH has set up a dedicated webpage for publishing draft guidance documents and relevant information. The current guidance notes on registration of pharmaceutical products/substances will also be updated to prior to the Amendment Ordinance coming into effect.

7. WRTF welcomed the amendment which facilitates trade and appreciated DH's efforts in the publicity work.

Way forward

8. Members are invited to note the work progress of WRTF. WRTF will continue to monitor the development of the above initiatives.

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