

**Fifty-second Meeting of
the Business Facilitation Advisory Committee**

***Agenda Item 4 : Report on the progress of the
“Be the Smart Regulator” Programme
– August 2023 update***

Purpose

This paper provides updates on the progress of the “Be the Smart Regulator” Programme (the Programme) since the last Business Facilitation Advisory Committee (BFAC) meeting held on 28 June 2023.

Latest progress

Overview

2. The 28 participating bureaux and departments (B/Ds) continue to sustain their momentum in enhancing their licensing services. Good progress has been made on various fronts to further improve the business facilitation and regulatory environment in Hong Kong with a view to boosting the long-term competitiveness. Major progress is highlighted below.

Major progress in various departments

3. From 2020-21 to 2022-23, the participating B/Ds developed a total of 333 business facilitation measures to continue improving the efficiency and transparency of licensing services and reducing compliance costs to trades, through streamlined procedures, effective use of innovation and technology, enhanced regulatory requirements, as well as strengthened support and guidance to the trades. Examples of the measures implemented in recent months are highlighted as follows –

- (a) The Buildings Department (BD) has enriched the “Registration Guides” with samples of completed forms on BD’s website for applicants of Registered Building Professionals, Registered General Building Contractors and Specialist Contractors and Registered Minor Works Contractors to enhance user experience and minimise the need for re-submission of application.
- (b) The Labour Department has introduced e-notification and e-tracking functions in the “e-Service for Employment Agencies” to facilitate

applicants for Employment Agencies Licence to conveniently check the progress of their applications.

- (c) The Marine Department has provided e-licence for Minimum Safety Manning Certificate which fully replaces the hard copy, thus reducing administrative burden and time for the trades and increasing the efficiency of the licensing service.

Progress of meeting policy pledges on full digitalisation of government services

4. As pledged in the 2022 Policy Address, submission of application, payment and collection of documents for all licences, services involving application and approval and forms by electronic means will be enabled by mid-2024. If in-person submission or collection of documents is required by law or international practice, applicants will only need to visit the government offices once. Relevant B/Ds are on track in implementing the required e-services. The Efficiency Office (EffO) will continue to review the implementation progress with the B/Ds, understand the challenges they faced and render necessary support. B/Ds will continue their efforts in meeting the commitment of providing the e-services for licence application so as to provide trades with a more business-friendly environment.

World Bank Group's Business Ready project

5. The World Bank Group (WBG) invited public sector experts of Hong Kong to provide responses to the 21 questionnaires for Business Ready (B-READY) in June 2023. We have submitted the return to the WBG on time. To boost the response rate of the firm-level survey, we issued a support letter appealing to the private sector's participation to the data collection exercise at the request of the WBG. The firm-level survey will last until November 2023. We sincerely appeal to the trades to respond to the survey if invited by 'Policy 21'.

Way forward

- 6. Members are invited to note the progress of the Programme.

**Business Facilitation Team
Efficiency Office
Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau
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