

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

***Agenda Item 4 : Report on the progress of the
“Be the Smart Regulator” Programme
– December 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 22 September 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 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department has provided e-licence for Pesticide Licence and Pesticide Permit, reducing administrative burden on the trades. The e-licence, issued via the e-Services Platform, will contain the same information as that in paper copy. A QR code will be embedded in the e-licence to facilitate online verification of validity.
- (b) The Civil Aviation Department obviates the need for the trade to submit copies of Business Registration Certificate when applying for

Aircraft Registration, Design Organisation Approval, Hong Kong Parts Manufacturer Approval and Production Organisation Approval. Validation of company information will be conducted by leveraging the e-services of the Inland Revenue Department, and thus reducing administrative burden on the trades.

- (c) The Companies Registry has launched the Revamped Integrated Companies Registry Information System and the new e-Services Portal. Electronic services previously scattered across different platforms are collated and concurrent application for registration of limited partnership fund and business registration is allowed, thus enhancing efficiency and convenience of application process and reducing administrative burden on the trades.
- (d) The Trade and Industry Department has provided an option of electronic submission via the Trade Single Window Phase 2 for applications of Import and Export Licences, such as Strategic Commodities Licence and Licence for Rice, thus enhancing the efficiency of cargo clearance and maintaining Hong Kong's status as a prominent international trade centre and logistics hub.

Digitalisation of government services and e-payment 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. B/Ds are on track in implementing the required e-services. The Efficiency Office (EffO) will continue to review the implementation progress with B/Ds with a view to meeting the targets.

5. The Chief Executive stated in the 2023 Policy Address that e-payment option will be provided for all government services by Q3 2024 to enable the public to settle relevant service payment online and offline (including service counters and self-service kiosks) through the Faster Payment System. The Government will also provide an option for making payment by Mainland e-wallets for government services commonly used by Mainland visitors (e.g. booking of various leisure facilities, application for immigration-related services and settling public medical consultation services fees, etc.) for their convenience. B/Ds are taking proactive actions to implement relevant e-services and EffO will review the implementation progress with B/Ds and render necessary support.

World Bank Group's Business Ready project

6. The EffO is examining and analysing the questionnaire responses from the public sector experts of Hong Kong for Business Ready project. Relevant B/Ds will work out and implement improvement measures to continuously enhance Hong Kong's business environment.

Way forward

7. Members are invited to note the progress of the Programme.

**Business Facilitation Team
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January 2024**