

**For discussion
on 17 October 2017**

Legislative Council Panel on Manpower

Policy Initiative on Qualifications Framework by Education Bureau

Purpose

The Chief Executive's 2017 Policy Address was announced on 11 October 2017. This paper aims to brief Members on the major development of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF) in the past year, and seek Members' views on the proposal to inject \$1.2 billion into the Qualifications Framework (QF) Fund so as to continue implementing the relevant initiatives that promote lifelong learning and support the manpower needs of Hong Kong.

Background

2. The HKQF defines clear and objective standards applicable to qualifications in the academic, vocational and professional, as well as continuing education sectors. The primary objective of establishing the HKQF is to promote lifelong learning with a view to continuously enhancing the quality, professionalism and competitiveness of our workforce in an increasingly globalised and knowledge-based economy. The latest developments in the key components of the HKQF are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

(a) Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs)

3. At present, we have set up 21 ITACs for 22 industries/sector¹, covering 53% of the workforce in Hong Kong for implementation of the

¹ Arboriculture & Horticulture, Automotive, Banking, Beauty and Hairdressing, Catering, Elderly Care Service, Electrical & Mechanical Services, Fashion, Human Resource Management, Import & Export, Information & Communications Technology, Insurance, Jewellery, Logistics, Manufacturing Technology (Tooling, Metals & Plastics), Printing & Publishing, Property Management, Retail, Security Services, Testing, Inspection & Certification as well as Watch & Clock.

HKQF. A new ITAC for the travel industry is expected to be established in the fourth quarter of 2017. We shall continue to reach out to stakeholders of other industries for a wider implementation of the HKQF.

(b) Specification of Competency Standards (SCSs)

4. ITACs are tasked to draw up SCSs for the relevant sectors, which set out the skills, knowledge and outcome standards required of employees in different functional areas of the respective sectors to facilitate the formulation of training programmes for recognition under the HKQF. The ITACs of 19 industries have already drawn up their SCSs, and the ITACs of three industries/sector² will complete drawing up their SCSs between 2017 and 2019. As at 30 September 2017, over 980 SCS-based courses have been developed by education and training providers. We will continue to promote the SCSs to gain wider acceptance by employers as useful guides for the development of in-house training and human resources management, such as staff recruitment and performance assessment.

(c) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Mechanism

5. The HKQF not only covers qualifications obtained from academic education and training, but also enables formal recognition of the skills, knowledge and relevant experience acquired by practitioners in the workplace through the RPL mechanism which is based on the competency standards set out in the SCSs of various industries. Practitioners may pursue further learning with their RPL qualifications as a starting point to acquire higher and broader qualifications. In 2016, implementation of the RPL mechanism has been extended to the Manufacturing Technology (Tooling, Metals & Plastics) industry, and a total of 15 industries³ have implemented the RPL so far. As at 30 September 2017, over 25 000 applications from practitioners for assessment of RPL involving over 47 000 clusters of competencies were processed/are being processed by the assessment agencies concerned. Details are set out at **Annex A**. We will continue to work closely with other industries with a view to extending the RPL mechanism to those which have completed their respective SCSs.

² Arboriculture & Horticulture, Fashion and Human Resource Management.

³ Automotive, Beauty, Chinese Catering, Elderly Care Service, Electrical & Mechanical Services, Hairdressing, Import & Export, Jewellery, Logistics, Manufacturing Technology (Tooling, Metals & Plastics), Printing & Publishing, Property Management, Retail, Testing, Inspection & Certification, as well as Watch & Clock.

(d) *Specification of Generic (Foundation) Competencies (SGCs)*

6. Generic (Foundation) Competencies are generic skills and knowledge that are shared across different industries and trades and are relevant to most people in the workplace. SGC covers four strands of foundation skills, namely, English, Chinese, Numeracy and Information Technology. As at 30 September 2017, about 70 SGC-based courses have been developed by education and training providers.

(e) *Qualifications Register (QR)*

7. QR, a web-based database containing information on qualifications and their respective learning programmes that have been quality assured and recognised under HKQF, is available to the public free of charge. As at 30 September 2017, there were over 8 000 academic and vocational qualifications, involving about 240 education and training providers, registered in QR. As the statutory Accreditation Authority and QR Authority, the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) will continue to ensure the quality and standards of HKQF-recognised programmes. Statistical information on the qualifications registered in QR is set out at **Annex B**.

(f) *Award Titles Scheme (ATS) and the use of QF Credit*

8. The ATS and the use of QF credit were introduced in October 2012, where the ATS specifies the award titles that can be used for qualifications at various QF levels whereas QF credit is a measure of volume or size of learning programmes recognised under QF. As of 1 January 2016, the titles of all programmes registered in the QR conformed to the ATS and the QF credit values of all programmes at QF Levels 1 to 4 were shown on the QR. As for programmes at QF Levels 5 to 7, the Education Bureau (EDB) has commenced in March 2017 a project on the use of QF credit in higher education sector.

(g) *Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT)*

9. To promote learners' mobility and progression by minimising duplication of learning, EDB promulgated in July 2014 the policy and principles for CAT which apply to all programmes from QF Levels 1 to 7 as Phase 1 of the CAT project. Subsequently, the *Policy, Principles and Operational Guidelines for CAT under QF in Hong Kong* was promulgated in 2016 to facilitate the review of existing CAT systems

by providers or establishing a CAT system that suits their own circumstances. As at 30 September 2017, there were about 1 200 and 70 qualifications registered in the QR indicating CAT arrangements at the institutional and programme level respectively.

(h) Co-operation with Other Places on QF

10. The intention to develop the country's QF was announced in the National 13th Five-Year Plan in 2016. Over the years, EDB and the QF Secretariat have shared on different occasions our experience in developing and implementing the HKQF to various organisations and parties in the Mainland. We will continue to liaise with the relevant authorities with a view to sharing our experience and playing an active role in the setting up of the country's QF.

11. We have also been actively establishing network with QF and QA authorities of other places to facilitate qualifications recognition, support mobility of learners and labour, and enhance opportunities for future cooperation between Hong Kong and other places. Referencing projects have been undertaken to provide a translation device to understand the corresponding levels of qualifications between the HKQF and the QF of other places. We have completed referencing / comparability projects with the European Qualifications Framework, Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, and the Irish National Framework of Qualifications. The referencing project with the New Zealand Qualifications Framework and the pilot project on comparing the competency standards in the elderly care sector between the HKQF and the Thailand Professional QF are expected to be completed by the end of 2017.

(i) Budget initiatives

12. As announced by the then Financial Secretary in the 2013-14 Budget, EDB allocates a recurrent funding of \$10 million per year to support ITACs to launch new initiatives to further enhance the knowledge and skills of workers in the industries, and their competitiveness in the labour market. These initiatives include –

- (a) introducing the QF Award Scheme for Learning Experiences for outstanding practitioners to engage in learning activities in different places around the world;
- (b) designing SCS-based Training Packages that meet the needs of the industries; and

- (c) stepping up promotion and publicity of HKQF for its wider acceptance among all sectors.

Major developments of the above initiatives over the past year are set out at **Annex C**.

Qualifications Framework Fund

Establishment of the QF Fund

13. With the approval of the Finance Committee (FC) of the Legislative Council (LegCo) in 2007, a non-recurrent commitment of \$208 million was created to implement a basket of financial assistance schemes, known as Qualifications Framework Support Schemes (QFSS) to provide time-limited financial assistance to encourage relevant stakeholders to participate in HKQF. Recognising the importance of HKQF in maintaining a quality workforce, the Chief Executive announced in the 2014 Policy Address to establish an endowment fund of \$1 billion, namely the QF Fund, to provide a steady source of income to support the sustainable development and implementation of HKQF. With FC's approval on 12 July 2014, the QF Fund was established on 1 September 2014. A Steering Committee on QF Fund (Steering Committee) was set up to advise the Secretary for Education on the policy, strategy and administration of the QF Fund. The terms of reference and membership of the Steering Committee are set out at **Annex D**.

Uses of the QF Fund

14. The QF Fund supports schemes/initiatives for the sustainable development and implementation of HKQF, including but not limited to the following two areas –

- (a) Designated Support Schemes for QF (with the previous time-limited QFSS incorporated and regrouped as the Accreditation Grant Scheme, RPL Support Scheme, Programme Development Grant Scheme and QR Subsidy Scheme) as set out at **Annex E**; and
- (b) Funding for ITACs, QF-related studies or projects and public education, such as referencing projects with the QF in other places, study to align the HKQF with professional qualifications, etc. Details of the projects approved by the Steering Committee that are being conducted in 2017 are set out at **Annex F**.

Investment and Financial Position of the QF Fund

15. Starting from March 2016, the QF Fund has been placed with the Exchange Fund (EF) which is administered by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) for investment⁴. When the QF Fund was established in 2014, an annual rate of return from investment was estimated to be 5% per annum (i.e. \$50 million). However, after placement of the QF Fund with the EF in March 2016, the rate of return⁵ has been fixed at 3.3% (or \$26.8 million) and 2.8% (\$28 million) per annum for year 2016 and 2017 respectively. Taking into account the recent performance of the financial market, it is estimated that the rate of return would be in the range of 2.4% to 3.3% for year 2018 to 2021, representing an annual return of \$24 million to \$33 million.

16. As it takes time for the QF Fund to generate and accumulate investment income to meet the funding requirements, EDB has been deploying funds out of the remaining balance of the approved commitment for QFSS for meeting the cash flow requirements of the initiatives under the QF Fund. Since the establishment of the QF Fund in 2014, there has been a continuous increase in annual expenditure of QFSS from \$22.5 million in 2014-15 to \$40 million and \$50.5 million in 2015-16 and 2016-17 respectively owing to more participation of stakeholders in HKQF, such as arranging accreditation of training programmes for recognition under HKQF and developing SCS-based training programmes to meet specific needs of industries. It is expected that the annual expenditure from the QF Fund will remain at around \$50 million in the coming few years.

17. As at 30 September 2017, the remaining balance of QFSS was about \$3.2 million and is expected to be exhausted in the October 2017. The investment income from the QF Fund will then be utilised to meet the expenditure under HKQF. Given the latest estimated investment income of the QF Fund in paragraph 15 above, there will be an annual shortfall of funding of around \$17 million to \$26 million.

⁴ The term of the placement in EF is six years during which the amount of principal sum cannot be withdrawn.

⁵ The rate of return is the average annual investment return of the EF's Investment Portfolio for the past six years or the average annual yield of three-year government bond for the previous year subject to a minimum of zero percent, whichever is the higher.

Proposed injection to QF Fund

18. Having regard to the funding shortfall in the coming few years in paragraph 17 above, and the Government's commitment to support the sustainable development and implementation of HKQF, we propose to inject \$1.2 billion into the QF Fund. The investment income from the additional injection will enable EDB to continue implementing the relevant initiatives that support various stakeholders to participate in HKQF, promotion and public education of HKQF, so as to promote lifelong learning and support the manpower need of Hong Kong. EDB will also further consolidate and promote the development of HKQF, enhance recognition of qualifications in different industries and provide quality assured pathways for further studies and employment for youngsters.

19. The QF Fund including the proposed injection, will continue to be established as a trust fund under the Permanent Secretary for Education Incorporated as its trustee. The annual audited accounts will continue to be tabled in the LegCo.

Financial Implications

20. The Government has reserved sufficient provision in the 2017-18 Estimates for the injection of \$1.2 billion into the QF Fund. If the proposed injection is approved, we will make appropriate investment arrangements. On assumption that the rate of return is from 2.4% to 3.3% per annum, the total annual funding available from the investment of the QF Fund would be around \$52.8 million to \$72.6 million in the coming few years, vis-à-vis \$24 million to \$33 million without the proposed injection.

21. Generally, expenditure from the QF Fund should be met by its investment return. However, there may be times of market volatility where we may have to adjust our expenditure in the light of the reduced income or use a small part of the principal to finance the funding required under very exceptional circumstances.

Advice Sought

22. Members are invited to note the major development of HKQF in 2017. Subject to Members' support on proposed injection into the QF

Fund, we will seek FC's approval for the funding commitment in 2017-18.

Education Bureau
October 2017

**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mechanism
(as at 30 September 2017)**

Industry	Current Appointed Assessment Agency	Launch Date	No. of applications processed/ being processed	No. of clusters of competencies	Success rate
Hairdressing	Vocational Training Council (VTC)	Jun 2008	935	4 984	99.5%
Printing & Publishing	VTC	Jun 2008	841	1 493	97.9%
Watch & Clock	VTC	Jun 2008	848	964	99.9%
Property Management	VTC	Mar 2011	11 165	16 962	99.2%
Automotive	VTC	Nov 2011	1 490	2 903	98.3%
Jewellery	VTC	Nov 2011	1 564	1 891	99.5%
Logistics	HKU School of Professional and Continuing Education	Mar 2012	2 009	3 037	99.9%
Chinese Catering	VTC	Jan 2013	2 455	3 213	99.8%
Beauty	VTC	Jul 2014	851	6 158	96.4%
Retail	VTC	Dec 2014	2 492	3 540	100%
Import & Export	Shipping Research Centre of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University	Sept 2015	108	171	100%
Elderly Care Service	Hong Kong Association of Gerontology	Sept 2015	214	1 221	99.9%
Testing, Inspection & Certification	School of Science and Technology of the Open University of Hong Kong	Nov 2015	8	8	100%
Electrical & Mechanical Services	VTC	Dec 2015	190	434	99.5%
Manufacturing Technology (Tooling, Metals & Plastics)	Hong Kong Productivity Council	Mar 2017	108	108	100%
		Total	25 278	47 087	99%

**Qualifications registered in the Qualifications Register
(as at 30 September 2017)**

Category	No. of qualifications
(1) Qualifications offered by self-accrediting institutions	3 122
(2) Qualifications offered by non-self-accrediting institutions	4 190
(3) Qualifications offered under the Recognition of Prior Learning mechanism	767
Total:	8 079

Major Developments of the 2013-14 Budget Initiatives on Qualifications Framework (QF) in 2017

QF Award Scheme for Learning Experiences (Award Scheme)

The Award Scheme aims to recognise outstanding or emerging practitioners who can serve as exemplars and role models for their respective industries and help attract the younger generation to pursue career in these fields. For the 2017-18 Award Scheme, a total of 68 practitioners have been selected by the respective Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) for the award. Awardees engaging in learning activities in Hong Kong receive an award of \$10,000 while those engaging in learning activities outside Hong Kong receive an award of \$30,000. We shall invite applications for the 2018-19 Award Scheme starting from the first quarter of 2018.

Specification of Competency Standards (SCS)-based Training Packages

2. The SCS-based Training Packages, developed with reference to SCSs of respective industries, aim to serve as a catalyst for the development of SCS-based training and assessment materials for wider adoption by enterprises and course providers to meet the needs of the industries. The first three batches of training packages developed for nine ITACs from 2013 to 2017 involve 22 job functions. The fourth batch of development for three ITACs involving a total of 14 job functions will commence in early 2018.

Promotion and Publicity of QF

3. In 2017, we have continued our promotion and publicity targeting at three groups –

- (i) **School sector:** Riding on the ITAC networks and the competency standards and progression pathways developed for the respective industries, we organised 11 school projects with ITACs to promote QF and the relevant industries to senior secondary school students in the 2016/17 academic year. Over 1 600 students from more than 120 schools attended the talks, workshops or visits. This is also in response to an earlier suggestion of the Panel on Manpower of the Legislative Council in providing a platform under QF to facilitate secondary students to experience the workplace. We also conducted talks to introduce QF to secondary schools students and career masters from time to time. All these efforts aimed at enabling teachers, students, parents

and the community at large to understand how QF can facilitate students' career and life planning.

- (ii) ***Industry sector:*** In 2017, we organised/co-organised over 70 activities, events, and briefing sessions to promote QF for 22 industries, which were attended by stakeholders including employers, employees and representatives from industry organisations.
- (iii) ***Community at large:*** In 2017, we published more than 30 QF-related articles in newspapers as well as publications of professional bodies, trade unions and trade associations to enhance stakeholders' understanding and awareness of QF. Radio interview was conducted to promulgate the various articulation pathways under the HKQF for graduates of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination. We have also made use of various publicity channels, such MTR Digital Motion Network, bus body advertisements and Facebook, to promote QF and the spirit of lifelong learning to the general public.

Steering Committee on Qualifications Framework Fund

Terms of Reference

The Steering Committee advises the Secretary for Education on –

- (a) the overall strategy for making use of the Qualifications Framework Fund (the Fund) as a vehicle to support the sustainable development and implementation of the Qualifications Framework;
- (b) the scope and parameters of schemes, initiatives and activities to be covered by the Fund; and
- (c) any other matters that may be referred to the Steering Committee by the Education Bureau concerning the policy and administration of the Fund.

Where necessary, the Steering Committee also advises the Trustee of the Fund on the formulation of policies for and monitoring of the investment of the Fund.

In discharging its functions, the Steering Committee may set up sub-committees, conduct studies, engage professional services and co-opt members as and when necessary.

Membership (from 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2018)

Chairperson: Dr York LIAO, SBS, JP
Vice-Chairperson: Ms Caroline MAK Sui-king, JP
Members: Dr Lawrence CHAN Wan-ching
Mr Winston CHOW Wun-sing
Mr Dennis HO Chiu-ping
Mr IP Wai-ming, MH
Mr LAM Chun-sing
Mr Sunny LEE Wai-kwong, JP
Ms Carrie LEUNG Ka-lai
Dr Kim MAK Kin-wah, BBS, JP
Mrs Agnes MAK TANG Pik-yee, MH, JP
Mr Jonathan NG Tai-shing
Mr WONG Kit-loong
Prof Peter YUEN Pok-man

Ex-officio Members: Executive Director, Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications
Secretary for Education or his/her representative

Designated Support Schemes for Qualifications Framework

1. Accreditation Grant Scheme

Scope	<p>The scheme aims to encourage education and training providers to seek accreditation at the institutional and programme levels under the Qualifications Framework (QF), and assist mature providers in seeking self-accrediting status in specified programme areas. Accreditation grant will be provided for the following activities –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Evaluation • Institutional Review and Periodic Review • Programme Validation and Re-validation • Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) (covering both first-time and subsequent exercises; the latter takes the form of Periodic Review) 			
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers and qualifications concerned must be successfully accredited by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) • Programmes/qualifications concerned must be registered in the Qualifications Register (QR) 			
Level of Subsidy		Courses subsidised by the Education Bureau (then Education and Manpower Bureau) ¹	Non-profit-making providers	Other providers
	Initial Evaluation / Institutional Review fees ²	100%	100%	50%
	Programme Validation / Programme Re-validation fees			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specification of Competency Standards (SCS)-based or Specification of Generic (Foundation) Competencies (SGC)-based programmes 	100%	100%	50%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other programmes 	100%	70%	35%
PAA/Periodic Review fees	100%	70%	35%	

¹ These courses include those under the “Skills Upgrading Scheme” (which is now renamed “Skills Upgrading Scheme Plus”) and the “Employees Retraining Scheme” (which is now renamed “Manpower Development Scheme”).

² Institutional Review (IR) includes IR for registration under the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance and IR for private university title.

2. RPL Support Scheme

Scope	The scheme covers the fees for accreditation of RPL assessment agencies (AAs) and collaborating organisations, one-off start-up/maintenance grant for the actual expenditure including the staff costs incurred by the AAs in setting up/maintaining the assessment mechanism, retainer grant to AAs for operating RPL for “mature” industries (i.e. the five-year transitional period has lapsed), subsidy for each new application of RPL cluster processed by the AAs and reimbursement to practitioners who have successfully applied for RPL assessment.				
	<i>Accreditation grant/Assessment fee to RPL AAs /collaborating organisations</i>	<i>Start-up /Maintenance grant to RPL AAs</i>	<i>Retainer Grant to RPL AAs</i>	<i>Subsidy to RPL AAs</i>	<i>Reimbursement of RPL assessment fees</i>
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First time and subsequent accreditations • Successful accreditation by HKCAAVQ • Appointed by the Secretary for Education (SED) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful accreditation by HKCAAVQ (first-time accreditation) • Appointed by SED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAs for “mature industry” (i.e. the five-year transitional period has lapsed) • Appointed by SED 	Appointed by SED	Practitioners successfully completed the RPL assessments
Level of Subsidy	100% of accreditation/ re-accreditation and assessment fee for RPL AAs and collaborating organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to \$500,000 per agency for the actual expenditure including the staff costs incurred in setting up the assessment mechanism for each phase of RPL implementation • Up to \$300,000 per agency for the actual expenditure including the staff costs incurred in the adjustment of the assessment mechanism arising from the revision/addition of RPL clusters initiated by the Industry Training Advisory Committee concerned 	An annual recurrent grant of \$200,000	\$500 for each new application of RPL cluster processed	100% of RPL assessment fees. To be reimbursed in two stages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully completed RPL assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 75% of RPL assessment fees • Completed a QF-recognised training course afterwards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - remaining 25% of RPL assessment fees

3. Programme Development Grant Scheme

Scope	The scheme provides a one-off grant for education and training providers to develop SCS-based or SGC-based courses.	
	<i>SCS-based</i>	<i>SGC-based</i>
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newly developed and operating SCS-based courses 12 QF credits or above Qualifications concerned must be successfully accredited Must be registered in QR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newly developed and operating SGC-based courses Six QF credits or above Qualifications concerned must be successfully accredited Must be registered in QR
Level of Subsidy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For courses with 12 to 35 QF credits - \$30,000 each For courses with 36 QF credits or above - \$50,000 each 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For courses with six to 17 QF credits - \$20,000 each For courses with 18 QF credits or above - \$40,000 each

4. QR Subsidy Scheme

Scope	The scheme covers the registration and hosting fees of the qualifications/programmes onto QR, and provides an annual maintenance fee of QR to the QR Authority.	
	<i>Subsidy of the registration and hosting fees</i>	<i>Maintenance fee of QR</i>
Eligibility	All qualifications and their associated programmes registered in QR	QR Authority
Level of Subsidy	100% for both registration fees and hosting fees	\$3 million per year

Projects approved by the Steering Committee on Qualifications Framework (QF) Fund (Steering Committee) that are being conducted in 2017

The following projects, approved by the Steering Committee, are being conducted in 2017 -

- (i) *Review of Accreditation Criteria and Standards under the Hong Kong QF (HKQF)*: Since the launch of the HKQF and the Four-stage Quality Assurance Process in 2008, there have been a number of important developments and changes in the education and training sector in Hong Kong. In this connection, Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) is conducting a review on its accreditation criteria and standards with a view to ensuring that they are up-to-date with the prevailing local and international standards, and are capable of meeting community expectations. The project is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2018.
- (ii) *Referencing Project of HKQF and the New Zealand QF (NZQF)*: The project aims to provide a translation device to understand the corresponding levels of qualifications between HKQF and NZQF, thereby promoting the transparency and comparability of qualifications awarded in Hong Kong and New Zealand. The project is expected to be completed by end of 2017.
- (iii) *Phase II of Exploratory Study on Possible Alignment of Professional Qualifications under HKQF*: Phase I of the Study, which was approved by the Steering Committee in 2015, has been completed in March 2016. Phase II of the Study has commenced in August 2016 so as to test out the feasibility of the criteria, principles and procedures for the recognition/alignment processes of professional qualifications under the HKQF, as recommended under the Phase I Study. Upon completion of the Study by end of 2017, EDB will consider the way forward of recognising/aligning professional qualifications under the HKQF.
- (iv) *Pilot projects on the development of vocational qualifications pathway (VQP)*: The pilot projects conducted for the Automotive, Banking and Property Management industries were completed in 2017. The vocational qualifications developed will further link up QF-recognised qualifications to the workplace and attract new blood and encourage practitioners to pursue learning and upgrading. Based on the outcomes of these pilot projects, some education and training providers are preparing to accredit and deliver the vocational qualifications developed for manpower training. To promote the concept and uses of VQP to other industries, a joint sharing session on the

deliverables of the pilot projects is scheduled for December 2017. In the meantime, we will extend the VQP development to other industries as appropriate and in phases, in consultation with various Industry Training Advisory Committees to ascertain the readiness in doing so.

- (v) *Review of Generic Level Descriptors (GLD)*: Developed and adopted since 2004, the GLD are generally effective in describing the learning outcomes at each QF level. On the other hand, feedback from stakeholders in the past have shed light on the need to review and refine the outcome statements of the GLD to better reflect the outcome standards at each QF level. With the above, a service provider has been engaged to review the GLD and to develop practical tools, such as manuals and guidelines, so as to better support different user groups in adopting the GLD. A public consultation of the revised GLD and practical tools are held on 5 September 2017 and online consultation was also conducted from September to October 2017. Feedback received is being consolidated with a view to promulgating the revised GLD and practical tools in the fourth quarter of 2017.
- (vi) *Overall Action Plan for Enhancing Brand Image of HKQF*: As part of the overall action plan to enhance the brand image of HKQF which was approved by the Steering Committee in 2016, we have completed in May 2017 a baseline survey on the impact of implementation and perception of HKQF. Based on the results of the baseline survey, promotional efforts will be fine-tuned with a view to achieving enhanced awareness and impact in the next two years. A final survey will then be conducted in the 2019-20 financial year in order to compare the branding and promotion progress made.

EDB has also continued to feature QF language in its civil service recruitment exercises with a view to raising public awareness of HKQF. We expect to extend the arrangement to more recruitment exercises of other Government departments in the coming year. This is also in response to an earlier suggestion of the Panel on Manpower of the Legislative Council in making use of QF in recruitment by the Government.