

Scope of Dedicated Fund (DF)

1. Staff Training

Target of Staff Training

- 1.1 Staff training projects/programmes should primarily target subvented staff¹; nevertheless, NGOs may flexibly allow non-subvented staff² to participate in the training programmes, on the condition that their numbers **do not exceed 40%** of the total enrolled participants in each programme. As such, NGOs are not required to apportion costs³ between subvented and non-subvented staff participating in the training programmes.
- 1.2 NGOs should have a mechanism to nominate staff for the training programmes in an open and fair manner so as to maximise staff participation and the number of beneficiaries under the allocated resources. Therefore, NGOs should avoid repeatedly nominating the same staff member for identical/similar training programmes.
- 1.3 To enhance social work staff's understanding of national affairs (particularly in relation to social welfare services), participants of **Mainland exchange tours** should preferably be social workers. However, non-social work staff may also be nominated to participate. The NGOs concerned are required to keep track of the number of social work and non-social work staff participating, and to provide such figures in the evaluation report of the Mainland exchange tour.
- 1.4 If an **online staff training programme**, such as a sharing session, talk or seminar, can accommodate more participants at no additional cost, NGOs are encouraged to open the online training programme to staff from other NGOs that do not operate subvented welfare services. The NGOs concerned are required to keep track of the number of participants from other NGOs not operating subvented welfare services, and to provide such figures in the evaluation report of the training programme.

Nature of Staff Training

Training under Agency-based Funding

- 1.5 NGOs may apply for funding to organise staff training programmes **on an organisation basis**, according to the shared training needs of their staff and their human resources management policies. **Joint applications** with other NGOs to optimise resource utilisation and benefits are welcome. Examples of training programmes include workshops, seminars, talks, sharing sessions, staff retreats, overseas training/exchange programmes, etc.
- 1.6 For **training programmes conducted outside Hong Kong**, the funding may cover course registration fees, transportation costs (air/land/sea passage), relevant taxes and surcharges, as well as board and lodging. Such expenses should be planned in the most cost-effective manner (e.g. travel in economy class only). If the participant is a member of the NGO's governing board, the NGO shall bear **50% of the related expenses**. Such expenses shall not be charged to the Lump Sum Grant (LSG) or its reserve.

¹ Subvented staff refers to staff employed by NGOs using SWD subvention.

² Non-subvented staff refers to staff employed by NGOs using their own resources or non-SWD subvention.

³ Detailed requirements for cost apportionment are stipulated in the Lump Sum Grant Subvention Manual.

- 1.7 The funding may cover the cost of deploying manpower to maintain the operation of the service unit concerned when current **subvented staff** attend training programmes funded by the DF (limited to Agency-based Funding only). If the relief staff are deployed to perform duties other than the aforementioned purpose, the cost should be apportioned accordingly.
- 1.8 Topics of training programmes may include but not limited to –
- (i) Enhancement of staff’s professional knowledge and skills, such as preventing and handling suspected child maltreatment cases, managing crises, and promoting inter-disciplinary collaboration.
 - (ii) Management and administration, such as improving supervisory skills and management capabilities.
 - (iii) Applications of IT, such as enhancing knowledge of IT security, and the use of gerontechnology.

Specified Training Programmes

- 1.9 The SWD will, from time to time, invite NGOs to apply for additional funding to conduct specified training programmes that align with the Government’s policy objectives and welfare service needs. The SWD will announce the launch dates of these specified training programmes separately. To facilitate NGOs in better planning their training under agency-based funding and avoiding overlap with specified training programmes, the SWD will announce the training themes of these training programmes for each year in advance. The **training themes for 2026** will cover the following areas –
- (i) identification and handling of suspected child abuse cases and at-risk families;
 - (ii) identification of and support for persons of all ages with mental health concerns;
 - (iii) identification of and support for carers in need of welfare/community support;
 - (iv) enhancement of knowledge and skills in protecting service users from abuse; and
 - (v) Information Technology (IT)/data security, IT project management and AI applications .
- 1.10 In October 2025, the SWD will invite NGOs to submit funding applications for training programmes under the themes specified in paragraph 1.9 above. Training themes for the subsequent years will be formulated and announced in due course. NGOs should refer to the latest training themes and comply with the requirements set out in the “Notes and Requirements for Specified Training Programmes” (see **Appendix C** of the Application Form) when organising specified training programmes.

Mainland Exchange Tours and National Studies Programmes

- 1.11 To facilitate NGOs in arranging for their staff to participate in Mainland exchange tours, the SWD has engaged an agency to organise the Mainland Exchange Programmes (MEPs) for NGO staff, with a view to enhancing their understanding of national affairs, national security and social welfare development in the Mainland through exchanges with government officials and non-governmental stakeholders and visits to welfare organisations in the Mainland. The SWD or its designated agents will invite NGOs to arrange for their staff to join the MEPs when and where appropriate.
- 1.12 NGOs are also encouraged to organise their own Mainland exchange tours. Based on the consolidated experience of designated agents in organising MEPs, the SWD has provided

detailed protocols and sample itineraries for Mainland exchange tours, which are available on the DF webpage, for NGOs' reference. NGOs are strongly advised to follow these protocols and sample itineraries when organising their own Mainland exchange tours. They should also comply with the requirements set out in the "Notes and Requirements for Mainland Exchange Tour" (see **Appendix B1** of the Application Form).

- 1.13 NGOs may also apply for funding to organise national studies programmes (see **Appendix B2** of the Application Form) for their staff, either on their own or in collaboration with other NGOs. Proposed training programmes should be relevant and conducive to enhancing staff's understanding of national affairs and the necessity of safeguarding national security. The amount of funding requested should be cost-effective and justifiable.

Other Costs

- 1.14 Purchasing materials/tools/reference books directly for training purposes is allowed. Unless there is sufficient justification and prior approval from the SWD, the amount for purchasing such items is capped at \$20,000 per project/programme, regardless of the size of the NGO.
- 1.15 Salaries for staff on training leave are not covered under the DF.

2. System Enhancement

Objective

- 2.1 Enhancing both IT and non-IT systems aims to strengthen NGOs' management capabilities, facilitate the re-engineering of business processes, and/or improve efficiency, which, in turn, could lead to savings in expenses, energy consumption, and/or manpower, etc.
- 2.2 The DF does not cover works projects, fitting-out or renovation works, or the purchase or replenishment of furniture and equipment, etc., which are funded under the grants outlined in the Lotteries Fund Manual.

Target of System Enhancement

- 2.3 System enhancement should primarily cover subvented welfare services funded or administrated by the SWD. Nevertheless, NGOs are not required to apportion costs³ between subvented and non-subvented services for system enhancement projects covered under the DF.

IT Projects

- 2.4 To promote the application of IT and technology in welfare services, IT projects should align with the prevailing IT Strategy for the Social Welfare Sector⁴. Proper project management mechanisms, such as setting up a Project Steering Committee, should be put in place to steer and oversee the implementation of IT projects.
- 2.5 IT projects may include consultancy studies, IT infrastructure enhancement, system planning

⁴ Please refer to the IT Strategy for the Social Welfare Sector on SWD Homepage at <https://www.swd.gov.hk/ngoitcorner/en/strategy.html> for details.

and upgrades, customisation of tools/application software, enhancement of NGOs' websites, Security Risk Assessment and Audit (SRAA), Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA), etc. IT projects may also cover IT facilities required for the development and operation of the IT system(s) specified in the service contract⁵, as well as their upkeep/maintenance/enhancement, and cloud services.

- 2.6 IT projects that aim at improving service delivery or enhancing e-services (which may involve upgrading existing webpages and system security) may also be considered.
- 2.7 To ensure the proper implementation of IT security and data protection measures, NGOs are required to conduct SRAA and PIA (if the system involves restricted data, particularly personal data) ahead of rollout.
- 2.8 NGOs are encouraged to adopt technology to facilitate the exchange/sharing of information on IT projects where practicable. The approach to data exchange should comply with the relevant requirements for data security, digital equity, and personal data protection.
- 2.9 To facilitate NGOs in smoothly implementing their IT projects, the DF may be used to hire IT staff for project management and monitoring. The staff costs incurred should be non-recurrent, and calculated on a project-by-project basis.

Non-IT Projects

- 2.10 NGOs may apply for funding to carry out projects aimed at enhancing non-IT systems. These projects include, but are not limited to –
 - (i) Comprehensive reviews and enhancements of organisational structures, review and development of guidelines, and process analysis and improvement to optimise the utilisation of shared facilities/resources among service units.
 - (ii) Human resources management projects, including staff appraisal, rescheduling of duties, rationalisation of staff and salary structures, and maintenance of staff training records.
 - (iii) Accounting and financial management projects, such as actuarial or related studies, budgeting and cost control, financial management practices, and maintenance of inventory records.
 - (iv) Service management projects, including the delivery and monitoring of services, such as programme planning and evaluation, marketing research on service users' feedback, membership development, and prescription drug management, etc.
 - (v) Continuous quality improvement projects, such as the installation of illumination systems, ozone laundry systems, solar-powered water heating systems, automatic sensor faucets, and garbage and waste disposal systems, etc.
- 3. If NGOs have any questions regarding the scope of funding under the DF, they may contact their designated Liaison Officer in the Subventions Section for enquiries and/or clarifications before submitting their applications.

Social Welfare Department
Updated in October 2025

⁵ While the maximum period for the implementation of a funded IT project is three years from the date of approval, the service period for upkeep/maintenance and cloud services of an individual IT project will not be constrained by the three-year implementation period and is subject to the terms and conditions as stipulated in the respective service contract.