

Notes and Requirements for Mainland Exchange Tour (MET)

Objective of MET

- (1) The objective of MET under DF is to enhance the understanding of NGOs staff on national affairs (particularly on social welfare services) and awareness of national security. The MET and related activities must not be used for political, religious or commercial propaganda for individuals or groups; and must be consistent with the purposes and objectives of the MET. The MET must not be used for profit-making, fund-raising, commercial purposes, and must be in line with the government policies.
- (2) NGOs should make good use of the approved fund, avoid extravagance, and make prudent decisions to plan the itineraries for maximising the learning opportunities. Activities purely for entertaining or sight-seeing purposes will not be approved. All itineraries will be assessed by the SWD in order to be qualified for funding allocation.

Subsidy

- (3) The DF will support each MET for three days. The unit subsidy¹ for each participant ranging from HK\$3,500 to \$4,000 is subject to factors such as location and itinerary of the proposed MET, and will be assessed and approved by the SWD. For Board members, 50% of the unit subsidy will be supported by DF for each person. The NGO concerned has to contribute for the remaining expenses of the Board members for MET and should not charge the expenses to the Lump Sum Grant (LSG) or LSG reserve.
- (4) The subsidy of a MET (i.e. unit subsidy x total no. of actual participants) must be all inclusive to meet all service requirements and cover all the expenses of the MET including but not limited to transportation from Hong Kong to the Mainland, transportation in the Mainland between each visitation spots, accommodation and meals (including breakfast, lunch and dinner) throughout the tour, tour assistants, travel agent (where applicable), insurance, training materials, other miscellaneous expenses, administrative costs, contingency arrangement. The subsidy will not cover the expenses on non-consumable items required (such as computers, computer software, camcorders, recorders), personal items/expenses (such as baggages, additional meals or accommodation expenses that are not included in the MET), etc. The above examples are for reference only and are not exhaustive.

Cost to be borne by the participant

- (5) NGOs should not charge any cost on the participants. However, participants should pay for the cost of their own personal items/expenses and individual travel insurance.

Service Requirements

- (6) The MET must at least be a 3-day tour with activities start in the morning of Day 1 and end in the afternoon of Day 3. NGOs are required to submit itinerary in Appendix B1 and are strongly recommended to follow the protocol of MET and sample itineraries provided by the SWD. The first sample itinerary will be provided for NGOs' reference in the third quarter of 2024.
- (7) The NGO shall plan the detailed contents and provide the logistic arrangements of visits, training and meetings through connecting with the Mainland officials, including but not limited to those of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in Hong Kong and other relevant government officials, and welfare agencies in the Mainland.
- (8) The NGO shall coordinate a MET and lead the participants during the MET to visit and exchange with relevant Mainland officials, welfare agencies, community units and/or other concerned stakeholders to understand national affairs, national security, and the development of welfare services.
- (9) NGOs should implement the MET as approved by the SWD. If there are major changes on the projects such as destination of the tour or cancellation of MET, the applicant NGO should notify the SWD as soon as possible by completing the Updating Form (**Annex 3**). If the changes on a MET are considered as outside the funding scope or contrary to the terms stipulated in the DF Guidance Notes on Application,

¹ The unit subsidy shall become payable only upon that a participant who has fully completed the MET concerned or a participant who has joined the MET but is unable to complete it due to unforeseeable circumstance with justifiable reason(s) accepted by the SWD. For the avoidance of doubt, no subsidy or any amount is payable by the SWD if a place arranged by the NGO concerned is unfilled with any participant.

the SWD reserves the right to withdraw all or part of the allocated funding.

- (10) To maximise the number of beneficiaries, NGOs should avoid nominating the same individual staff to join the MET repeatedly. If a staff is nominated more than once, the NGO concerned should provide explanation to the SWD. Moreover, participants of MET are preferably social workers while non-social work staff can also be nominated to join METs. The NGOs are required to keep figures on participation of social work staff and non-social work staff, and to provide such figures in the evaluation report of the MET.
- (11) The NGO shall be responsible for all the enrolment and logistic arrangements for participants prior to and after the MET such as accommodation and transportation arrangements, procurement of insurance, and handling of special needs and special incidents of the participants. If the MET is arranged through hire of service with an independent contractor, the NGO concerned should ensure the MET provided by the contractor comply with all the requirements set out in the Guidance Notes on Applications for Dedicated Fund and this Notes and Requirements for MET.
- (12) The NGO shall provide twin rooms with two individual beds in each room (or other alternative of comparable or better standard if twin room is not available due to unforeseeable circumstance) for the participants' accommodation at a 3-star or above hotel(s) or equivalent in the Mainland during the METs. The NGO is responsible to ensure that contingency accommodation arrangement at equivalent quality is available on the same day in any case. For the avoidance of doubt, no amount will be payable in addition to the approved subsidy should there be any increase in cost for providing the alternative accommodation.
- (13) The NGO shall provide transportation for the round trip between Hong Kong and the Mainland by second class seats or above of high-speed railway or other appropriate public transport. The NGO must ensure that contingency transportation is arranged in the event of breakdown of railway service or due to other unforeseeable circumstance.
- (14) The NGO shall provide other services pertaining to smooth operation of each MET including but not limited to:
 - (a) all of the logistic support services and necessary arrangements including booking of meeting rooms, lecture fees, provision of audio-visual equipment, souvenirs, booklets, uniforms, photo banners, and certificates for participants;
 - (b) provision of easy access and all necessary support for persons with disabilities during the METs;
 - (c) payment for the charges of participants' tips for tour guides, drivers and other related charges; and
 - (d) provision of support and assistance to the participants in time of special need or urgency such as sickness.
- (15) The SWD will not bear any responsibilities for claims, demands and legal liabilities arising from the funded MET. NGOs must ensure that relevant insurances for the MET (including public liability insurance, third-party liability insurance, etc.) are purchased from an insurance company recognised in Hong Kong and also purchase appropriate group comprehensive travel insurance for participants (including but not limited to illness and accident medical protection with support services outside Hong Kong, etc.). Participants may purchase appropriate additional personal comprehensive travel insurances based on their personal needs (including but not limited to personal accident protection, medical expenses, emergency rescue services, etc.) which will not be covered by the DF.
- (16) All published publications and audio-visual productions in relation to MET must not infringe the copyright or intellectual property rights of others and should not be used for sales. The NGO must ensure that the provision to and the use by the NGO of such materials and information shall not constitute an infringement of any Intellectual Property Rights of any third party.