

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Disaster Relief Fund

Guide to Grant Application

Purpose of establishing the Disaster Relief Fund

- (1) The Disaster Relief Fund was established on 1 December 1993 under the Public Finance Ordinance to provide a ready mechanism for Hong Kong to respond swiftly to appeals for humanitarian aid in relief of disasters that occur outside Hong Kong.

Eligibility

- (2) The applicant organisation¹ must be registered in Hong Kong and exempt from tax under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112). Those applying for Disaster Relief Fund for the first time must submit their annual reports and audited accounts for the past three years, documentary proof of registration in Hong Kong, and documentary proof of being a charitable institution exempt from tax under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112).

Application timeframe

- (3) To ensure that the Disaster Relief Fund meets the purpose of providing time-critical response, applicant organisations should submit their applications as soon as possible after the occurrence of disasters. Grant applications made more than three months after the occurrence of disasters may not be considered as they fail to meet the purpose of providing time-critical response. For disasters such as floodings or droughts that may last for a long time, the applicant organisations may determine the onset date of the disasters by making reference to other information, such as the date an appeal was made by a government or an international relief organisation for disaster relief aid in the country or locality affected.

¹ “Applicant organisation” is defined as follows: It is a charitable institution registered in Hong Kong and exempt from tax under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112). It is responsible for submitting the grant application to the Secretariat of the Disaster Relief Fund Advisory Committee, liaising with the Secretariat, coordinating and implementing the relief project and/or monitoring the implementation of the relief project by the local office and local relief partner (“local partner”).

Application procedure

- (4) Relief organisations wishing to apply for the grants should complete the attached [application form](#) and have it successfully delivered to the DRFAC Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) by post or email.

Relief location

- (5) Applicant organisations should propose the target relief areas in the application form, such as setting out one or more target relief locations at provincial, county and township/municipality levels. To avoid overlap of resources, applications which overlap with the proposals of other applicant organisations in terms of target relief location(s) and relief support/items for the same disaster may not be considered.

Relief support/items

- (6) If the applicant organisation plans to distribute relief items, it should assess the disaster situation and take into account factors, such as the needs of victims and the local living and eating habits, before determining the type and quantity of items to be distributed, so as to ensure that the relief items will meet the purpose of providing time-critical response as well as the needs of victims.
- (7) The applicant organisation is required to obtain no fewer than three quotations in each procurement exercise to ensure that the grants are properly used for procuring relief items. The procurement procedures should also be conducted in a fair and open manner.
- (8) If the applicant organisation plans to provide non-tangible relief support, please also refer to the [relevant guidelines](#) on providing non-tangible relief support and provide information in the application form accordingly.

Administrative expenses

- (9) Administrative expenses must be one-off in nature, and should only be used for the approved project. The relevant amount should not exceed 5% of the grant or 5% of the total expenditure, whichever is the less. Such expenses should not be used to support the daily operation of the applicant organisation

(including salaries of staff). However, if additional staff expenses arise as a result of the applicant organisation deploying its staff to take part in the relief work, the costs so incurred can be funded through the administrative expenses of the project. The applicant organisation should provide supporting documents for verifying the relevant circumstances.

Roles and responsibilities

- (10) The applicant organisation is responsible for the following areas of work:
- (a) Procurement procedures: It should be implemented by the applicant organisation or the local office². The local partner³ can provide assistance if necessary;
 - (b) Distribution of relief items/delivery of services: It should be implemented by the applicant organisation or the local office. The local partner can provide assistance if necessary;
 - (c) Monitoring the implementation of the relief project; and
 - (d) Submission of evaluation report and audited accounts of the relief project to the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (“HKSAR”). If the evaluation report and audited accounts are prepared with the help of the local office and/or local partner, the applicant organisation should carefully vet the documents before submission.

Processing of grant applications

- (11) The Secretariat will process each application in accordance with the existing guidelines and conditions for grants for DRF. Where necessary, the Secretariat may request further information on the project from the applicant organisation.

² “Local office” is defined as follows: It is the local headquarters or office of the international organisation the applicant organisation belongs to. It is responsible for the implementation of the relief project.

³ “Local partner” is defined as follows: It is generally a local government or non-government organisation with established local communication network. It is responsible for assisting the applicant organisation or the local office to implement the relief project.

Guidelines for grants from the DRF

(12) The guidelines for grants from the DRF are listed as follows:

(a) Coverage

- (i) Grants should only be made in cases of a specific disaster⁴, not an on-going problem⁵.
- (ii) Grants should only be made in cases of disasters of such nature and scale that stimulate a response by the international community.
- (iii) The relief support should be confined to time-critical response in the emergency context.

(b) Assessment of Proposals

- (iv) Grants should be made in response to-
 - I. an appeal made to the international community by a government or a relief organisation for disaster relief aid in the country or locality concerned; or
 - II. an application submitted by a locally registered relief organisation⁶ for a disaster relief project being or to be carried out by the organisation. Application for completed relief project is not supported.
- (v) The appeal/application should be based on humanitarian grounds. Political considerations will not be taken into account.
- (vi) The appeal/application should have received a measure of public support in Hong Kong.
- (vii) Any application by an applicant organisation should outline the nature and scale of the aid project, the number and type of beneficiaries and the size of grant required.

⁴ Including natural disasters and non-natural catastrophes, e.g. explosion of nuclear/chemical facilities and terrorist attacks causing substantial damages and casualties.

⁵ Such as refugee problems, wars or post-disaster rehabilitation/reconstruction.

⁶ The relief organisation should be a charitable institutions exempted from tax under Section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance, Cap. 112.

- (viii) The applicant organisation should have demonstrated a sound track record in providing similar types of disaster relief services and activities.
 - (ix) The size of the grant should be sufficient to make an impact.
 - (x) When there is more than one application of a similar nature and for the same disaster, regard should be given to the anticipated number of beneficiaries, the promptness with which the relief may be provided and the nature of the relief to be provided.
- (c) Conditions of Grant
- (xi) Individual grant should take the form of one-off cash payments.
 - (xii) The grant should be given to the government concerned or to a reputable relief organisation in the field.
 - (xiii) Not more than 5% of the grant may be used to cover overheads or other administrative costs. The rest should be spent entirely on disaster relief services and activities.
 - (xiv) The government/applicant organisation concerned is obliged to submit an evaluation report and/or an audited account as appropriate to the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on the use of the grant within a specified period.

Monitoring measures

- (13) The Disaster Relief Fund has adopted the following measures to monitor the use of grants by the applicant organisation –
- (a) the applicant organisation is required to lay down a relief schedule setting out, among other things, the commencement and completion dates of the programme, and report to the Secretariat of the Disaster Relief Fund Advisory Committee (“the Committee”) the critical programme milestones within one month from the respective scheduled dates;

- (b) if the applicant organisation has made specific minor variations to an approved relief programme with its delegated authority⁷, it is required to notify the Committee within one month from the effective date of the variations;
- (c) save for the minor variations mentioned in (b) above, should there be signs of deviation from the approved targets (such as the schedule, relief location and type of relief items), the applicant organisation is required to obtain prior approval from the Committee;
- (d) the applicant organisation is required to obtain at least three quotations in each procurement exercise to ensure proper use of funding for procuring relief items and the procedures should be conducted in a fair and open manner;
- (e) overheads or other administrative costs of the relief programme borne by the applicant organisation should not exceed 5% of the grant or 5% of the total expenditure, whichever is the less. Such expenditures should not be used to support the daily operation of the organisation;
- (f) the applicant organisation is required to display prominently the message that the relief items are “Funded by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region” or “Funded by the Disaster Relief Fund, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region”, and provide photographs in the evaluation report as proof of compliance with this requirement;
- (g) the applicant organisation is required to submit an evaluation report and an audited account within six months upon completion of the relief programme. The evaluation report submitted should give an overall assessment of the programme targets (including the number of beneficiaries and the time needed for delivery of emergency relief). The evaluation report and the audited account are examined by the Secretariat before submitting to the Committee for information. The Audit Commission will also inspect the evaluation report and the audited

⁷ The applicant organisations are allowed to make minor variations to (including increasing or reshuffling) the number of beneficiaries, quantities of relief items and the budget for individual spending items as authorised, provided that there is no change to the approved grant amount and the total number of beneficiaries will not be reduced. Any increase in the number of beneficiaries and quantities of relief items should not exceed 20% of their original targets. The level of change for the budget of individual spending items will not be capped.

account during the annual audit exercise to ensure that the relief programme is conducted according to the funding requirements;

- (h) the relief organisation is required to provide information in the application to confirm that it has established a code of conduct, disciplinary procedures, recruitment vetting and reporting system to guard against and handle staff misconduct cases properly. In the event of any incident detrimental to the beneficiaries and the Fund, such as sexual harassment or exploitation, abuse, fraud and improper use of the grant, the organisation shall, within two weeks upon such incident coming to its knowledge, provide a brief report to the Secretariat on, inter alia, the nature of the incident and actions taken; and
- (i) if an applicant organisation commits serious violation of grant conditions, it must submit a concrete review report (e.g. review the applicant organisation's implementation procedures and monitoring measures of the relief programme) in addition to providing explanation of the circumstances. The Secretariat will make recommendations according to individual circumstances for the Committee to consider whether further action is required. When processing the applicant organisation's future funding applications, the Secretariat will make recommendations for the Committee's consideration based on the organisation's non-compliance record in the past three financial years.

Enquiries

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