

Pilot Green and Sustainable Finance Capacity Building Support Scheme Guide to Reimbursement Application of Eligible Programmes (“Guide”)

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1 Introduction

As announced by the Financial Secretary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (“Hong Kong”) in the 2022-23 Budget Speech, the Pilot Green and Sustainable Finance Capacity Building Support Scheme (“Scheme”) aims to support talent development in green and sustainable finance (“GSF”) by providing subsidies to market practitioners as well as prospective practitioners in undertaking relevant training and acquiring relevant professional qualifications. The Scheme will run for a pilot period of three years and is administered by the Secretariat of the Centre for Green and Sustainable Finance¹ (“Secretariat”).

The Government of Hong Kong has earmarked HK\$200 million for the Scheme. Only relevant fees of programmes registered under the Scheme as “Eligible Programmes” are reimbursable under the Scheme. Eligible applicants may apply for reimbursement of relevant fees upon successful completion of Eligible Programmes, subject to a number of conditions set forth in this Guide.

The detailed requirements as well as required supporting documents and application procedures are set out in the subsequent sections, which may be changed by the Secretariat at its discretion from time to time.

2 Eligibility Requirement

To be eligible for reimbursement under the Scheme, applicants must be:

- 1) Hong Kong residents; and
- 2) Either:
 - (i) Practitioners in the financial services industry (currently or previously in service); or
 - (ii) Practitioners in non-financial services industries whose roles and/or responsibilities involve GSF considerations² (currently or previously in service); or

¹ The Centre for Green and Sustainable Finance (“Centre”) is a cross-sector platform launched by the Green and Sustainable Finance Cross-Agency Steering Group in July 2021. The Centre co-ordinates the efforts of financial regulators, relevant Hong Kong Government agencies, industry stakeholders and academia in capacity building and to improve data availability for the financial industry.

² GSF considerations refer to GSF-related job duties/nature including, but not limited to, those relating to financing and investment, product development, disclosure, reporting and standards, regulation and compliance, corporate strategies and policies, data collection and analysis, rating assessment, risk management, consultancy and advisory services, marketing and investor relations, academic analysis and research or internal audit.

- (iii) Full-time or part-time students at a university or local tertiary institution, with a view to obtaining a bachelor's degree or higher qualifications in relevant disciplines³; or
- (iv) Holders of bachelor's degrees or postgraduate degrees in relevant disciplines.

In addition, applicants must enrol in an Eligible Programme **after** the Eligible Programme is registered under the Scheme, and must have successfully completed the Eligible Programme on or before 12 December 2028. Successful completion of an Eligible Programme means that the applicant has completed the Eligible Programme according to the programme requirements.

Applicants may access the list of Eligible Programmes currently registered under the Scheme on its website (<https://greentalent.org.hk/Individuals/EligibleProgrammes>). For information on the Eligible Programmes, please visit the Scheme website or contact the programme providers.

3 Reimbursement

3.1 Reimbursable Fees

Reimbursable fees of an Eligible Programme should be clearly stated by the programme provider. Please contact the programme provider(s) should applicants have any queries on the scope of reimbursable fees of an Eligible Programme under the Scheme.

3.2 Amount of Reimbursement

Generally, the amount of reimbursement for an Eligible Programme is up to 80% of the reimbursable fees of the Eligible Programme. However, applicants who are full-time students during the **whole period** of the Eligible Programme (i.e. from the enrolment date to the completion date of the Eligible Programme, both dates inclusive) are eligible to claim up to 100% of the reimbursable fees. There are no restrictions on the number of Eligible Programmes that each applicant may apply reimbursement for, but the total amount of reimbursement(s) for each applicant under the Scheme is subject to a ceiling of HK\$10,000.

An eligible applicant may only claim for the reimbursement of the reimbursable fees of each successfully completed Eligible Programme once.

Applicants may estimate the amount of reimbursement they are eligible for using the reimbursement calculator on the Scheme website (<https://greentalent.org.hk/Individuals/Calculator>).

3.3 Other Subsidy or Financial Assistance for the Eligible Programme

If an applicant has obtained other subsidy or financial assistance (e.g. from privately- or publicly-funded scheme or the applicant's employer) for the fees of an Eligible Programme, the amount of reimbursement that the applicant may be eligible for will be the lesser of:

- (i) the reimbursable fees under the appropriate reimbursement percentage (80% or 100%); and

³ Relevant disciplines generally include business administration, finance, environment, science, technology, and public policy, etc.

- (ii) the reimbursable fees minus any subsidy or financial assistance with respect to the same Eligible Programme,
and the total amount of reimbursement(s) for each applicant under the Scheme is subject to the ceiling of HK\$10,000.

Applicants may estimate the amount of reimbursement they are eligible for using the reimbursement calculator on the Scheme website (<https://greentalent.org.hk/Individuals/Calculator>).

Where an applicant is in the process of applying for or obtaining other subsidy or financial assistance for the fees of an Eligible Programme at the time of submission of the application in respect of such Eligible Programme, the applicant shall indicate this accordingly in the application form and provide to the Secretariat and or its appointed person(s) promptly further information on such subsidy or financial assistance once such information becomes available via email to enquiry@greentalent.org.hk, quoting his/her Application Reference Number. The processing of the application would be put on hold until such information becomes available and any delay in providing such information may cause delay or termination in processing the application.

4 Required Supporting Documents

Applicants are required to provide the below supporting documents when they apply for reimbursement of fees of an Eligible Programme:

- a. Copy of Hong Kong Identity Card;
- b. In relation to the bank account nominated for receipt of reimbursement, copy of bank statement⁴ / front of bank card / front page of bank passbook showing the name of the account holder, account number and bank name or bank code;
- c. **ONE** of the following as applicable:
 - **For practitioners in the financial services industry** – Documentary proof of the latest relevant employment showing the applicant’s name, position, and name of company (e.g. employment contract, salary slip⁴); or
 - **For practitioners in non-financial services industries** – Documentary proof of the latest relevant employment showing the applicants’ name, position, name of company and GSF-related job duties/nature (e.g. employment contract, salary slip⁴, letter issued by the employer); or
 - **For full-time or part-time students at a university or local tertiary institution in relevant disciplines** – Documentary proof (e.g. academic transcript, tuition fee receipt, student card showing the applicant’s name, name of institution and field (s) of study); or
 - **For holders of bachelor’s degrees or postgraduate degrees in relevant disciplines** – Documentary proof (e.g. graduation certificate) showing the applicant’s name, name of institution, field (s) of study and graduation date (if any);
- d. (For applicants who were full-time students during the whole period of the Eligible Programme and wish to claim up to 100% of the reimbursable fees) – Documentary proof (e.g. academic transcript, tuition fee receipt, student card showing the applicant’s name, name of institution and field(s) of study) that demonstrates that the applicants were a full-

⁴ Applicants are encouraged to redact irrelevant information (e.g. transaction data).

- time student during the whole period of the Eligible Programme;
- e. Payment receipt(s) of the paid Eligible Programme fees issued by the programme provider;
- f. (For Eligible Programme fees denominated in currency other than Hong Kong dollars but settled in Hong Kong dollars) Invoice denominated in such foreign currency and the relevant payment records in **Hong Kong dollars** of the Eligible Programme;
- g. Documentary proof (e.g. stamped certificate of completion) of successful completion of the Eligible Programme; and
- h. Documentary proof of subsidy or financial assistance received for the Eligible Programme (e.g. notification of application results, record(s) of receipt of subsidy or financial assistance).

5 Procedures for Reimbursement Application

Applications must be made by the programme participants themselves. Submission of applications on behalf of the programme participants will not be accepted.

5.1 Account Creation

Each applicant should create a personal account on the Scheme website (<https://greentalent.org.hk/Individuals>) for submission of applications. Such account also provides other functions including tracking of application status and reviewing of unused amount of reimbursement.

Applicants will be asked to fill in their personal information (e.g. English and Chinese name, date of birth etc.) during account creation. Once they have submitted the request for account creation, a verification code will be sent via SMS message to the applicants' mobile number provided. Once the verification is complete, a new account will be created. Applicants may then activate their accounts by following the instructions provided in the account activation email sent to them.

5.2 Application Submission and Deadline for Applications

Applicants must apply for reimbursement by submitting a completed *Application Form for Reimbursement of Eligible Programmes* for the Scheme (“Application Form”), together with all the required supporting documents stated in Section 4 via the personal account on the Scheme website (<https://greentalent.org.hk/Individuals>) within 3 months from the date of completion of the Eligible Programme and before the expiry of the Scheme. Late applications will not be processed. The date of receipt of the completed Application Form and **all** required supporting documents by the Secretariat will be regarded as the date of application.

In the Application Form, applicants should quote the Programme Identification Code assigned to the Eligible Programme in question. Details are available on the Scheme website (<https://greentalent.org.hk/Individuals/EligibleProgrammes>). While applicants can apply for reimbursement for more than one Eligible Programme, applicants should submit a separate application for each Eligible Programme. Applicants can only select one Programme Identification Code in each application.

The Application Form will be automatically filled in with the personal particulars provided by the applicants during account creation. Applicants may revise any of such auto-filled information as they see appropriate when completing the Application Form.

The Secretariat reserves the right to request for additional information and documents for processing the application.

5.3 Timeframe for Processing of Applications

The applications are processed and reviewed on a regular basis. The processing time for an application will, subject to the provision of all required information, normally take around 3 months after receiving the Application Form and all required supporting documents.

The Secretariat and/or its appointed person(s) may contact the applicant by email (from enquiry@greentalent.org.hk) or phone (from +852 2258 6000) for clarification or further information in relation to the application. The applicant will promptly provide all such assistance and cooperation as may be required by the Secretariat and/or its appointed person(s) with respect to the processing of the application including, but not limited to, the following:

- (i) provide such information and documents as may be required by the Secretariat and/or its appointed person(s); and
- (ii) address any enquiries of the Secretariat and/or its appointed person(s).

Any incomplete information or late submission of supplementary information (if required) may cause delay or termination in processing the application.

5.4 Notification of Application Result

After the processing of an application is completed, a notification of result will be sent to the applicant (“Result Notice”). The applicant will be notified via both email (from no-reply@greentalent.org.hk) and SMS message from +852 6452 2670. For successful applications, reimbursement would be separately arranged (refer to Section 5.5).

If the applicant is not satisfied with the application result, he/she may write to enquiry@greentalent.org.hk within 1 month from the date of receipt of the Result Notice together with sufficient information on the alleged grounds for its objection to the assessment. Objection not raised in accordance with this paragraph will not be considered.

5.5 Reimbursement Payment

The applicant will be notified of any reimbursement by email or SMS message. The applicant may write to enquiry@greentalent.org.hk if the applicant has any queries.

If any information or materials provided in the application is incorrect or misleading, or the reimbursement amount is overpaid by the Secretariat and/or its appointed person(s), the applicant must refund promptly to the Government of Hong Kong any payment made to the applicant in one lump sum upon demand.

6 General

Applicants must comply with the terms and conditions of the Scheme (“Terms and Conditions”), as specified in this Guide, the Application Form (including the Declaration therein) and the Result Notice. The Secretariat reserves the right to amend the Terms and Conditions unilaterally at any time without prior approval from, and prior notice to, the applicants.

The Secretariat reserves the right of final decision on all matters relating to the Scheme including, but not limited to, the eligibility of any programme for registration under the Scheme, the suspension or de-registration of the registration of a programme, the reimbursement application, review of the application result and the reimbursement disbursement.

Applications for reimbursement under the Scheme are processed on a first-come-first-served basis, subject to utilisation of budget. If the available funds under the Scheme have been used up, an application will not be processed regardless of whether the applicant fulfils the eligibility requirements for claiming reimbursement under the Scheme or whether the Scheme period has expired.

Neither the Government of Hong Kong, nor the Secretariat, nor the Secretariat’s appointed person(s) including, but not limited to, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, the Securities and Futures Commission and the Insurance Authority, nor any of the Secretariat’s and its appointed person(s)’ officers, employees, agents or service providers, accepts any liability or responsibility as to, or in connection with, the implementation of the Scheme in good faith. For the avoidance of doubt, the programme providers of Eligible Programmes are not the persons or entities mentioned in the foregoing sentence and the above-mentioned persons and entities are not liable for any acts and omissions of the programme providers.

Unless otherwise expressly specified, all rights and powers of the Government of Hong Kong or of the Secretariat under the Scheme may be exercised by the Secretariat’s appointed person(s) including, but not limited to, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, the Securities and Futures Commission and the Insurance Authority, or an officer, employee, or agent of the Secretariat or the above-mentioned entities.

By submitting a reimbursement application under the Scheme, the applicant agrees to be bound by the Terms and Conditions unconditionally.