

Mega Events Fund to support four events

The Government announced today (October 9) that the Mega Events Fund (MEF) Assessment Committee had decided to support four mega events to be held in Hong Kong.

"After careful deliberation, the Assessment Committee has earmarked a maximum of \$26.85 million to support four mega events, namely the UBS Hong Kong Open Championship 2012, Dragon and Lion Dance Extravaganza 2013, Hong Kong Well-wishing Festival 2013 and a soccer exhibition match between Kitchee and Manchester United. They will add colour and vibrancy to Hong Kong and will certainly enrich our events calendar. Apart from attracting more visitors to our city, these events will also help enhance Hong Kong's international profile and raise our status as the events capital of Asia," a Government spokesman said.

"It is expected that over 270,000 visitors and local people will participate in these four events," he added.

Details of the four selected events are as follows:

(1) UBS Hong Kong Open Championship 2012

The Hong Kong Golf Association will organise this golf championship, which has a long history, from November 15 to 18, 2012. With MEF support this renowned international golf tournament will strengthen its line-up by inviting leading professional golfers from around the world. The organiser will also step up publicity and promotional activities as well as tap more opportunities to promote Hong Kong. The tournament will be broadcast worldwide and is expected to draw more than 33,000 participants, including over 5,100 tourists. A maximum of \$15 million has been earmarked for this event.

(2) Dragon and Lion Dance Extravaganza 2013

This event, to be organised by the Hong Kong Dragon and Lion Festival Preparatory Committee, will be held in Tsim Sha Tsui on January 1, 2013. The theme of this year's event is "Five Celestial Guardians", with about 750 dragons, lions and mascots of other auspicious beasts participating in the performance. Events will include 50 lions performing on high bamboo poles simultaneously, with the aim of

breaking the Guinness World Record; a dragon and lion dance parade along Canton Road, the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, the Avenue of Stars and the Centenary Garden; and a dragon and lion dance performance at the Garden. The Dragon and Lion Dance Extravaganza will fully showcase the traditional culture and festive ambience of Hong Kong, bringing our traditional Chinese dragon and lion dance into direct contact with visitors and sharing the joy of the New Year. The event is expected to draw around 65,000 participants, including around 15,000 tourists. A maximum of \$1.4 million has been earmarked for this event.

(3) Hong Kong Well-wishing Festival 2013

Lam Tsuen Wishing Square Development Ltd will hold this festival in Lam Tsuen Wishing Square, Tai Po, in February, 2013. This event comprises a variety of activities featuring traditional Chinese culture and local rural village customs. The Festival aims to promote traditional Chinese culture in the festive ambience of the Lunar New Year. The organiser will incorporate new elements into the event, including a Hakka Cultural Heritage Village and a windmill landmark. The event is expected to attract more than 110,000 participants, including around 10,000 tourists. A maximum of \$2.45 million has been earmarked for this event.

(4) Soccer exhibition match between Kitchee and Manchester United

The Kitchee Foundation Limited (Kitchee) plans to organise a soccer exhibition match with Manchester United at the Hong Kong Stadium in mid-July, 2013. The Assessment Committee agrees to support Kitchee to organise this event. The event is expected to attract around 40,000 participants, including about 8,000 tourists. A maximum of \$8 million has been earmarked for this event.

The Assessment Committee, chaired by Mr Jeffrey Lam and comprising members from the relevant fields, is responsible for considering the applications and monitoring the progress of the funded events. In assessing the applications, the Committee has taken into account a number of factors, including economic, publicity and other benefits of the events; the scale of the events; the background, governance structure, resources, capability and track record of the applicants; the feasibility of the events; and the reasonableness of the budget.

The MEF was established in 2009 for a term of three years. In his 2012-13 Budget, the Financial Secretary proposed to allocate \$150 million to the MEF and extend its

operation for five years. Funding approval was subsequently obtained from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council to extend the operation of the Fund under a modified two-tier scheme. Under the new scheme, Tier 1 aims to attract internationally acclaimed mega events to Hong Kong, and Tier 2 is an enhanced version of the previous scheme which aims to provide funding support to local non-profit-making organisations to host mega arts, culture, sports and entertainment events in Hong Kong.

The second round of applications under Tier 2 will commence later this month. For details of the fund, please visit the MEF dedicated website (www.tourism.gov.hk/english/mef/mef_tier2.html). Interested parties are also welcome to contact the MEF secretariat (Tel: 2810 2500; Fax: 2121 8791; Email: mefsecretariat@cedb.gov.hk).

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