

Expression of interest invited for vacant school premises and greenfield sites for international school development

The Education Bureau today (March 31) invited expression of interest (EoI) for allocation of vacant school premises and greenfield sites for international school development.

The bureau has identified two vacant school premises and three greenfield sites for possible international school development. The EoI exercise is open to all existing non-profit-making international school operators in Hong Kong and other interested parties which meet the relevant prescribed requirements.

A spokesman for the bureau said, "The Government is committed to developing a vibrant international school sector mainly to meet the demand for international school places from overseas families living in Hong Kong and families coming to Hong Kong for work or investment.

"In view of the expansion plan of the business community, the increase in student population from overseas families coming to Hong Kong, the local demand for international school places, and the unmet demand as derived from the waiting list of international schools, it is projected under a consultancy study that based on the position of the 2011/12 school year, there would be a shortfall of around 4 200 primary places in the 2016/17 school year. The study also reveals that the proportion of international school students residing in the New Territories is higher than that enrolled in schools in the same area. In other words, a number of students residing in the New Territories have to go to schools on Hong Kong Island or in Kowloon.

"In light of the projected shortfall, we have, for the first phase, allocated three vacant school premises for international school development in April 2013, which is expected to provide 1 150 additional primary places and 210 secondary places by the 2016/17 school year. To meet the remaining projected shortfall, we are prepared to further increase the supply of international school places through allocating additional vacant premises and sites. Two premises and three sites in the Southern District, Sai Kung and Tai Po are earmarked for the

purpose,” the spokesman said. Details of the vacant premises and the greenfield sites are at [Annex](#).

"The EoI is the first step for us to ascertain the development needs of the international school sector and their interests in the premises and sites identified. Subject to response received in the EoI, we will finalise the list of vacant premises and/or greenfield sites to be made available and proceed with one or more School Allocation Exercise(s) later this year. Interested operators who have responded to the EoI and have met the prescribed requirements will be invited to submit detailed proposals for consideration under an open and competitive bidding process," the spokesman added.

Under the prevailing policy implemented since 2009, international schools (with no boarding facilities) receiving government assistance in the form of vacant premises or sites are required to allocate at least 70% of the school places to target students who hold foreign passport (except the British National (Overseas) Passport) or student visas for entry into Hong Kong for studies. Favourable consideration will be given to proposals accepting a higher proportion of target students (say, 80% of the total student population or above).

The international schools operating at the vacant school premises and/or greenfield sites covered in this exercise and their school sponsoring bodies should be exempted from tax under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112). In selecting the most appropriate school operators, factors including good organisation structure, proper management, sound financial footing, good track record, proven experience and expertise, and quality of the school proposal including feasible measures to cater for the needs of target students especially those from incoming families will be considered. Applicants are required to assess the potential demand for the curriculum they propose to offer and how the curriculum would meet the needs of their students.

International schools should be run on a self-financing basis. Applicants are expected to fund any renovation and construction works required. In accordance with existing policy on assistance for international schools, successful applicants will normally enjoy nominal rent or nominal premium treatment as appropriate. Interest-free capital

loans for school building on the greenfield sites may also be considered upon application.

Interested parties are required to respond to the EoI by May 30, 2014. They are reminded to read carefully the basic requirements and relevant instructions set out in the note to respondents before submitting the reply form. The note to respondents and the reply form are available at the bureau homepage

(<http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/sch-premises-info/allocation-of-sch/index.html>). The reply form should be submitted to the Infrastructure and Research Support Division by post (6/F, East Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong) or by fax ((852) 2119 9107).

Ends/Monday, March 31, 2014