

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

HAB181

(Question Serial No.0862)

Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (3) Heritage and Museums

Controlling Officer: Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Mrs. Betty FUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Home Affairs

Question (Member Question No. 30):

1. The Government has indicated that it would allocate \$9.05 million from the Capital Account of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in 2014-15 to acquire and commission artworks by local artists, more than double this year's amount of \$4.28 million. What are the reasons?
2. What is the estimated proportion between directly acquired and commissioned artworks? Through what channel(s) will the artworks be acquired and commissioned? Who/What organisation(s) will be responsible for the valuation of the artworks to be acquired? How will conflict of interest be prevented?

Asked by: Hon. CHUNG Shu-kun, Christopher

Reply:

1. Following the funding approval of the Finance Committee of Legislative Council for acquiring and commissioning artworks by local artists in June 2013, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has been actively identifying suitable artworks for acquisition. Since it takes time for the LCSD to conduct detailed assessment of each piece of artwork to be acquired, to consult Museum Expert Advisers (Advisers) on the proposed acquisition and to negotiate with the artists/owners concerned, the Department has earmarked \$4.28 million for acquiring artworks of local artists in 2013-14. It is anticipated about \$9.05 million will be spent in the full year of 2014-15.
2. The amount and proportion of the approved funding to be spent on acquisition and commissioning of artworks respectively will depend on the availability of suitable artworks for acquisition and the need for commissioning artworks in the coming years. The LCSD acquires artworks through various channels, such as individual artists, private collectors, art dealers, auction houses and art galleries, while commissioning work is selected through two channels, namely, open competition and collaboration with art related non-government organisations (NGOs). It is envisaged that a large proportion of the approved funding will be spent on the acquisition of artworks including public art works commissioned by the LCSD or other parties, while a smaller proportion will be used for commissioning new artworks for specific purposes or locations.

The LCSD has a set of prevailing procedures and assessment criteria for acquisition of artworks for museums. The assessment criteria include the artistic merit of the artwork, its relevance to museums' collections, its physical condition, price, display and education value, and the reputation of the artist, etc. The LCSD will invite Advisers from the relevant panel to give independent advice on the proposed acquisition in accordance with the established assessment criteria and procedures. All the LCSD officers participating in the preparation, assessment and approval of the acquisition of artworks, as well as the Advisers concerned are required to declare interest to avoid possible conflict of interest. Having regard to the latest advice given by the Corruption Prevention Department of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), the LCSD is updating the set of procedures.