

Training for Construction Practitioners and Promotion Activities

We obtained approval from the Legislative Council in 2010 and 2012 to allocate a total funding of \$320 million to the Construction Industry Council (CIC) to enhance training and trade testing for new and in-service construction personnel and to step up promotion activities to attract more people to join the industry. In 2015, we created a further commitment of \$100 million to support CIC in launching new measures under a pilot scheme to upgrade semi-skilled construction workers to skilled workers. Progress of these training and promotion measures is set out below.

\$320 million for Investing in Construction Manpower

(I) Enhanced Construction Manpower Training Scheme

The “Enhanced Construction Manpower Training Scheme” (ECMTS) aims at training semi-skilled workers for trades with projected labour shortage with enhanced training allowances. As of end 2015, 9 200 semi-skilled workers were trained under ECMTS, exceeding the target of 7 600 by 20%. In view of its effectiveness, CIC continues the ECMTS initiative using the Construction Industry Levy and has trained about 4 700 semi-skilled workers from 2016 to end August 2017.

(II) Enhanced Construction Supervisor/Technician Training Scheme

The “Enhanced Construction Supervisor/Technician Training Scheme” (ECSTS) aims to attract more young people to join the industry as construction supervisors and technicians. As of end August 2017, 884 trainees had undertaken the training courses. Of them, 641 trainees had graduated. CIC expects that the target of training 1 000 construction supervisors and technicians will be met by end 2018 and plans to continue this programme afterwards.

(III) Subsidies for In-service Workers Attending Skill Enhancement Training Courses and Trade Tests

To attract in-service workers with adequate skills and experience to register as semi-skilled or skilled workers, subsidies were provided for a target of 12 500 in-service workers to attend skill enhancement training courses and trade tests. The target was met in early 2015. Since then, CIC has been using the Construction Industry Levy to continue to provide the subsidies. From 2010 to August 2017, the percentage of registered skilled/semi-skilled workers has increased from 40% to 50% of total registered construction workers.

(IV) Promotion Activities

From 2011 to 2015, we collaborated with CIC to conduct the “Build-Up Publicity Campaign”¹ to project a positive image of the industry. Based on the findings of CIC’s image tracking surveys, young interviewees willing to join the industry has increased significantly from about 8% in 2011 to about 24% in 2017. The number of registered construction workers has also increased by about 65% in the same period. In June 2017, the average age of newly registered construction workers is 38 (versus 46 for all registered workers), showing that our promotion efforts have effectively attracted more young people to join the industry.

\$100 million for Pilot Scheme of Training Skilled Workers

(V) Advanced Construction Manpower Training Scheme – Pilot Scheme

The “Advanced Construction Manpower Training Scheme – Pilot Scheme”² (ACMTS) was launched in September 2015 for lifting the skills of semi-skilled workers to the level of skilled workers. Sufficient supply of skilled workers is essential to the timely delivery of various major infrastructure and public housing projects.

¹ Major initiatives under the “Build Up Publicity Campaign” included launching two series of RTHK TV drama “Dreams Come True” on the construction industry, launching the Build Up Ambassadors, displaying of selected trade and industry posters, organising roving exhibitions, outreaching to schools, arranging visits to the Construction Industry Resource Centre, etc.

² CIC has budgeted with \$217 million for the Pilot Scheme which includes the amount of \$100 million to be funded by the Government. The commitment of \$100 million covers part of the training allowance for structured on-the-job training while CIC funds the other costs and outstanding balance for training allowance.

There are two training modes under this scheme, namely structured on-the-job training and skills enhancement courses. Structured on-the-job training provides one to two years' on-the-job training in collaboration with contractors and sub-contractors, whereas skills enhancement courses provide 90-hour training in partnership with labour unions for in-service semi-skilled workers with post-registration experience ranging from one to three years.

In mid-2017, we, in conjunction with CIC, have conducted a review of ACMTS. We interviewed some trainees and consulted industry stakeholders. Furthermore, we considered indicators such as the retention and passing rates of trainees in interim assessments as well as trade tests. In general, ACMTS is effective in upgrading the skill levels of semi-skilled workers. As of August 2017, about 340 semi-skilled workers have completed training and become skilled workers.

In view of the positive response, the training quota for skills enhancement courses conducted by labour unions has been increased from 200 to 800. For structured on-the-job training, we are working with CIC to devise a suite of enhancement measures (e.g. introducing retention bonus in the middle of the training period, increasing the existing bonus to trainees upon passing of trade test with a view to improving the retention rate, etc). In August 2017, we introduced a new technical score on worker training in evaluating tenders for public works contracts, with a view to encouraging contractors and their subcontractors to enhance worker training through collaborative training schemes including ACMTS. Further reviews would be conducted at a later stage of the pilot scheme. We expect to meet the target training quota in 2019.

(VI) Summary Table

Measures	Funding originally earmarked (\$million)	Revised funding earmarked (\$million)	Training target	Achievements*
1. Investing in Construction Manpower				
(i) ECMTS	210	222	7 600	9 200
(ii) ECSTS	75	75	1 000	884#
(iii) Subsidies for in-service workers attending skills enhancement training courses and trade tests	15	3	12 500	12 500
(iv) Promotion	20	20	--	--
Sub-total	320	320		
2. Pilot Scheme of Training Skilled Workers				
(v) ACMTS – Pilot Scheme (Structured On-the-job Training) ³	100	100	800	437# ⁴
Total	420	420		

* As at 31 August 2017, measured by number of training places/courses/subsidy quota provided.

Total number of graduates and trainees under training.

³ The commitment of \$100 million by the Government only covers part of the training allowance for structured on-the-job training.

⁴ CIC is proactively promoting the scheme to industry stakeholders to recruit more trainees.