

**SUPPORT SCHEMES
FOR NON-ANCHOR OPERATORS WITH A SOCIAL MISSION
ECDA WEBSITE FAQs – 14 AUGUST 2013**

A. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What are the Support Schemes?

The Support Schemes are a suite of measures introduced to support quality and affordable non-anchor operator centres who, together with the anchor operators, will provide for a diverse range of good pre-school centres to meet the overall pre-school demand in Singapore, and cater to parents and children with differing needs.

Operators may refer to the media release on ECDA's website (www.ecda.gov.sg) for more information.

2. Who will qualify for the Support Schemes?

Non-anchor operators who meet the respective eligibility criteria set out for the Support Schemes will qualify for them. This includes both private and VWO operators.

Anchor operators receive funding under the Anchor Operator Scheme and thus will not be eligible for further support under the Support Schemes.

3. What kind of support is available for operators under the Support Schemes?

The first suite of Support Schemes that has been rolled out is targeted at non-anchor operators with a social mission to help less advantaged children in Singapore. The schemes include:

- i) **Enhanced Development Grant** for VWOs operating child care centres in HDB premises

Under this scheme, VWOs who are successfully allocated HDB premises through the open selection process will receive development grant support for the construction of their centres. The development grant support has been enhanced from the current 20% to 50% at the norm cost of \$665psm; or the actual cost incurred, whichever is lower. More details are available on ECDA's website (www.ecda.gov.sg)

- ii) **Pre-school Opportunity Fund** for less advantaged children in kindergartens and child care centres.

Non-anchor operators wishing to embark on projects that promote the holistic development of less advantaged children at their centres can apply for the Fund. Funding support is awarded on a project basis.

More details are available on ECDA's website (www.ecda.gov.sg).

ECDA will be progressively rolling out the other Support Schemes over the next few months. More details will be released when ready.

4. How will parents and children benefit from these Support Schemes for non-anchor operators with a social mission?

Parents and children can look forward to more VWO-run centres over the next few years, increasing the affordability options for pre-school programmes. Those from less advantaged backgrounds can look forward to funding support for holistic development opportunities.

5. Do non-anchor operators have to qualify for both the Development Grant and the Pre-school Opportunity Fund in order to apply? Can they apply for both the Development Grant and Pre-school Opportunity Fund?

The Support Schemes comprises several schemes that cater to the needs of the different groups of non-anchor operators. Each scheme has its own set of eligibility criteria. Non-anchor operators are free to apply to whichever scheme based on their needs, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria set out for the respective schemes.

6. Will there be a cap/quota on applications for each scheme?

There will not be any specific quota for the number of successful applicants for each scheme. The number of successful operators depends on the number of applicants and the quality of the proposals submitted for each of the schemes.

7. When will the other Support Schemes be rolled out?

There will be other Support Schemes to raise centre quality by building capabilities within the pre-school sector and to improve accessibility of pre-school services. They will be announced over the coming months.

B. QUESTIONS ON ENHANCED DEVELOPMENT GRANT**8. What does the Grant cover?**

The development grant covers the cost of developing the centre and includes, but not limited to, items such as internal partitioning, installation of sanitary fittings and mechanical and electrical fittings.

9. Are there terms and conditions tied to the Grant?

All child care operators receiving a development grant will be bound contractually to the following:

- a. To use the grant strictly for the purpose of development of the premises for child care centre use;
- b. To meet any prevailing rules, regulations or statutory requirements relevant to the operation and management of the facility;
- c. To meet the standard of care/programmes set out in the proposal for operating the child care service;
- d. To operate the child care centre for a minimum of 5 years;
- e. To open the child care centre to all Singapore citizens or permanent residents regardless of race, language or religion;
- f. To use the premises only for child care centre use and no other purpose; and
- g. Not to proselytize at the child care centre.

10. Who is eligible for the Enhanced Development Grant?

The Enhanced Development Grant is open to all VWOs who are awarded child care centre sites in HDB premises under the Open Selection Process after 14 August 2013.

Interested VWOs may refer to the criteria for open selection process at http://www.childcarelink.gov.sg/ccls/uploads/OSP_criteria.pdf

11. What are the criteria for applying for the Grant?

VWOs apply for HDB sites through the Open Selection Process, which entails evaluation of the quality and affordability of the operator's early childhood development programmes. In addition, successful applicants must commit to improve their centres' quality by attaining SPARK certification within two years of operations.

12. How do interested VWOs apply for the Grant?

VWOs who participate in the Open Selection Process after 14 August 2013 would automatically be eligible for the enhanced development grant upon successful award of premises through this process.

As part of the competitive bidding process, interested VWOs have to log on to ECDA's Child Care Link Website (www.childcarelink.gov.sg) and submit their proposals online.

13. Where can VWOs access the list of sites available for Open Selection?

The list of available sites for open selection is available on ECDA's Child Care Link Website:

http://www.childcarelink.gov.sg/ccls/home/CCLS_HomeSitesTenderDetail_VWO.jsp

C. QUESTIONS ON PRE-SCHOOL OPPORTUNITY FUND

14. What is the Pre-school Opportunity Fund?

The Pre-school Opportunity Fund aims to provide funding support to promote the holistic development of less advantaged children in pre-school centres. The Fund supports projects that address one or more of the following key aspects of a child's development: Cognitive, Aesthetic, Moral, Physical and Social & Emotional development.

The media release, as well as the application details for the Pre-school Opportunity Fund, can be found on ECDA's website (www.ecda.gov.sg).

15. Who can apply for the Fund?

Kindergartens and child care centres registered/licensed with ECDA, who are not anchor operators, are eligible to apply for the Fund.

16. How do I apply for the Fund?

Interested applicants have to submit a Project Proposal which includes the following details:

- Objective(s) of the Project;
- Background of the Project (current challenges / needs)
- Project Outline
- Implementation Plan & Timeline
- Evaluation Plan
- Estimated Cost
- Target Group of Children

For the upcoming application window, the application period starts on 15th August 2013 and ends on 15th October 2013. Interested applicants may refer to ECDA's website (www.ecda.gov.sg) for the Project Proposal template and further details of the application.

17. Is there a limit to the number of projects I can apply for any qualifying child?

There is no limit to the number of projects submitted for any qualifying child. Centres should however take into consideration the needs of the children and ensure a spread of opportunities to develop the children holistically in the different areas of cognitive, aesthetic, moral, physical and social and emotional.

18. How are the projects evaluated?

ECDA will evaluate project proposals received from operators. Some of the key criteria considered are:

- a. Quality – Benefits of the project for the target group of children;
- b. Sustainability – Projects that are sustainable over time and could benefit the children’s holistic development in the longer run are preferred; and
- c. Impact¹ – Number of children who can potentially benefit from the project.

19. How much funding can operators expect to receive?

Funding is awarded on project basis and the quantum varies from project to project. In general, projects will be supported for up to \$1,300 per less advantaged child over a one-year period. Renewal of support will be subject to ECDA’s assessment of project outcomes.

20. Will the Pre-school Opportunity Fund be extended to special needs children?

The Pre-school Opportunity Fund aims to provide greater support for the holistic development of children from less advantaged backgrounds, and this includes special needs children from such backgrounds as well.

Centres can tap on the Fund to ensure special needs children from less advantaged backgrounds enjoy holistic development opportunities in the different aspects of development: Cognitive, Aesthetics, Moral, Physical and Social and emotional. Examples include learning journeys, school-based concerts, mentoring programmes, etc.

For funding pertaining to special needs intervention programmes, applicants can refer to SG Enable’s support schemes.

21. When and how will the results of the application be announced?

For the upcoming application window in August – September, the outcome of the application will be announced over November – December this year. A Letter of Acceptance, stating the in-principle approved funding, will be issued to successful applicants. To accept the offer, applicants are required to complete the Acceptance Form and return it to ECDA within the stipulated deadline. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified via email.

22. How many rounds of applications are there each year?

There will be two windows for application each year - September and March. The upcoming application window will commence on 15th August this year.

¹ This will be considered in the event that there is an overwhelming number of deserving proposals received.

23. Are there any deliverables tied to the Fund?

Recipients of the Fund are required to submit a Project Report. They will be given two windows each year for the submission of their Project Report, in May - June and November - December respectively, starting from 2014.

24. What are the funding guidelines for the projects?

As a guide, the expenditure items must contribute towards the holistic development of the less advantaged children, in one or more areas of Cognitive, Aesthetic, Moral, Physical and Social & Emotional development of the children. They must also directly support the intended objective(s) of the proposed project. The details of the expenditure guidelines can be found on ECDA's website (www.ecda.gov.sg).

25. When will the funding for approved projects be disbursed?

Recipients will be given two windows each year for the submission of their reports and claims, in May - June and November - December respectively, starting from 2014. The grant will be disbursed to the recipients within four weeks, upon receipt of the project report and details of the expenditure such as supported receipts, quotes etc.

26. How long is the Fund expected to last?

The Fund is expected to last for at least 5 years.

More Specific Questions

27. Our centre may not be ready to put up our project proposal in time for the application this year. Can the deadline be extended?

There will not be any extension of the application deadline. However, you may wish to note that there are two application windows – September and March each year – and you may opt to go for a later application window, if need be.

28. Our centre plans to implement a project for the needy children at our centre in September next year. Do we submit our application this year or next year?

Since the project is slated for the third quarter of 2014, you have the option to submit your project proposal in August 2013 or in the next application window in March 2014.

You may wish to note that reimbursement of project expenditures will only take place following the submission of project report and claims, in May - June or November - December, each year.

- 29. We plan to pilot a project with the less advantaged 5 year old children at our centre. The project will stretch over a period of 2 years. Are projects of such duration eligible for funding support under the Pre-school Opportunity Fund?**

Typically, the funding support under the Pre-school Opportunity Fund is for a period of one year. Renewal of support will be subject to ECDA's assessment of project outcomes.

D. OTHERS

- 30. Can operators concurrently apply for the Enhanced Anchor Operator Scheme and the Support Schemes?**

The selection of new anchor operators is expected to be completed at the end of 2013. In the meantime, operators who have applied for the Enhanced Anchor Operator Scheme in July – August 2013 are welcome to apply for the Support Schemes for non-anchor operators.

However, operators should note that should their centres be selected as anchor operators, their applications for Support Schemes will be withdrawn, as these are meant for non-anchor operators only.

- 31. Can anchor operators apply for the Enhanced Development Grant and the Pre-school Opportunity Fund?**

No, both schemes are for non-anchor operators only.

Anchor operators would be able to benefit from funding under the Enhanced Anchor Operator Scheme.