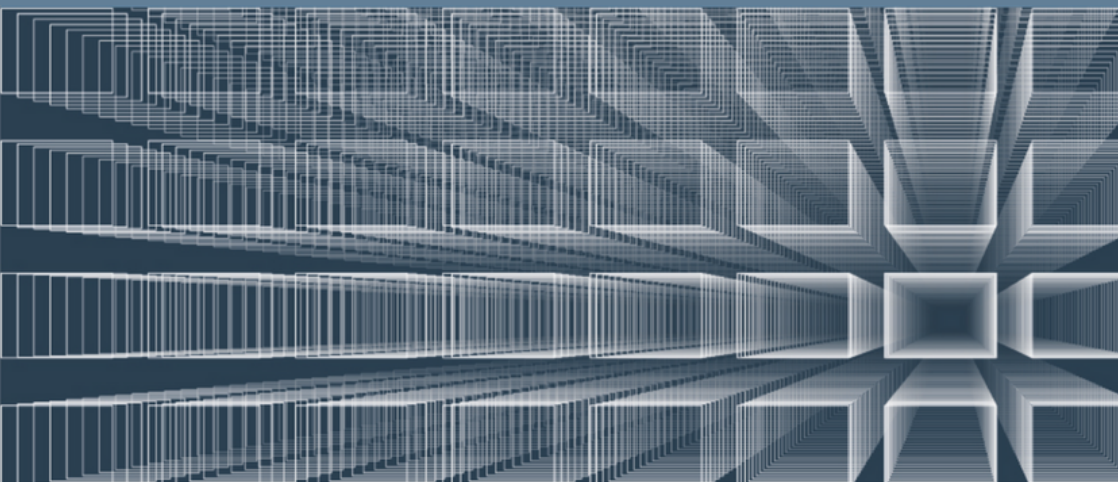


PoD-HKAPP  
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## Hong Kong Sports Policy: Reforming the Triangulation of Community Sports, Elite Sports, and Major Sports Events (CEM)



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October 2023



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- Promote a moderate political approach in a proactive manner, and to carve out a new political horizon in the society;
- Formulate an agenda and construct systematic political discourse;
- Establish new ideological dimensions in the politics, society, economics and culture of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region together with different stakeholders through research, dialogue and engagement.

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Opinions expressed in this publication are the authors'. They do not necessarily reflect those of Path of Democracy and the Hong Kong Academy of Politics and Public Policy.

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# Hong Kong Sports Policy: Reforming the Triangulation of Community Sports, Elite Sports, and Major Sports Events (CEM)

Dennis Chong, Alice Fok and Liang Wei

## Abstract

Sports regulations, policies and organisational structures are fundamentals for successful sports coordination and development, contributing to the flourishing and well-being of both individuals and whole societies. Hong Kong Sports Policy of community sports (C), elite sports (E) and major sports events (M) have had remarkable achievements in recent years. Given the background of a new Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau will be established to better safeguard the development of sports in Hong Kong. The current study aims to gain more understanding of current problems of the Hong Kong Sports Policy and to propose effective and pragmatic suggestions for addressing the existing problems. A qualitative research design has been used in this research. A proposed CEM framework was developed, offering potential guidelines for its future rollout. Key recommendations include: (1) Establishing the Culture, Sports, and Tourism Bureau with a clear blueprint, periodic CEM reviews, enhanced management over SF&OC and NSAs, and promoting Chinese Sports Tourism; (2) Bolstering sports culture by raising citizen awareness, partnering with RTHK, and involving higher-ed students as event volunteers; (3) Increasing support for emerging elite sports; (4) Introducing sponsorship platforms like the New Sports Pilot Scheme; and (5) Elevating professional standards in coaching, training, and facilities management.

# 香港體育政策：改革社區體育、精英體育和大型體育賽事 (CEM) 的三角關係

莊偉安 霍嘉怡 梁崑

## 摘要

體育規定、政策和組織結構是成功的體育協調和發展的基礎，有助於個人和整個社會的繁榮和福祉。近年來，香港的社區體育 (C)、精英體育 (E) 和大型體育賽事 (M) 政策取得了顯著的成就。鑒於政府即將建立新的文化、體育和旅遊局以更好保障香港體育的發展，本研究旨在深入地了解香港體育政策的當前問題，並提出有效和務實的建議來解決現有問題。這項研究採用了定性研究設計。本研究開發了一個建議的 CEM 框架，為未來推出的框架提供了潛在的指導方針。主要建議包括：(1) 建立文化、體育和旅遊局，具有明確的藍圖，定期進行 CEM 評估，加強對港協暨奧委會和體育總會的管理，並促進中國體育旅遊；(2) 加強體育文化，提高市民意識，與香港電台合作，並將高等教育學生作為活動志願者；(3) 增加對新興精英體育的支持；(4) 推出如新體育試點計劃的贊助平台；和 (5) 提高教練、培訓和設施管理的專業標準。

# 1. Background and introduction

## 1.1: Background

Sports play an important role for individuals and society. For individuals, sports focus on all rounded development such as improving their physical and mental health, and it can also promote individual socialisation. For society, sports are important for leisure and entertainment, and it cultivates a harmonious society. It plays an irreplaceable role in promoting a healthy culture by uniting all sectors of the society and building identity and patriotism. Sports also play an important role in promoting the development of the society and economy. In addition, sports also act as an important bridge to establish international partnerships, and it is an important way to build cultural confidence and influence.

Sports regulations, policies and organisational structures are important grounds for sports coordination and development (Hoye et al., 2010). Due to historical reasons, Hong Kong sports has its inherent characteristics and unique development process. After the Handover in 1997, HKSAR government ('HK government') paid more attention to the development of sports. After years of exploration, HK government gradually figured out a set of paths to develop its own sports business; and in 2002, it clearly proposed three directions for sports development in Hong Kong: Community Sports(C), Elite Sports (E) and Major Sports Events (M), which have the mission of "building a culture of love for sports within our community, encouraging and assisting elite athletes to pursue excellence, enhancing Hong Kong's status as a hub for international sports events, and creating a stimulating economy for growing opportunities". As there is no "Sports Law" in Hong Kong, HK government mainly controls and influences the development of sports with its sports policies and funding. Hong Kong Sports Organisation has undergone two changes since 2000, and it has formed a unique management structure that has been in operation until now.

In order to further implement "One Country, Two Systems", HK government has actively integrated sports development in the Greater Bay Area in response to the requirements for the development of sports and sports industries emphasised in China's "13th Five-Year Plan" and "14th Five-Year Plan". HK government successfully applied to co-host the 15th National Games in 2025 on 26th of August 2021. To better facilitate the development of sports in Hong Kong, then Chief Executive Carrie Lam put forward the preliminary idea of establishing a Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau in her "Policy Address" in 2021. Relevant plans would be made public at the first meeting. However, the meeting only discussed general terms about integrating the relevant policies originally scattered in the Home Affairs Bureau, Commerce and Economic Development Bureau to "create synergies" and lacked specific terms of reference in the future. Therefore, reflections and suggestions on the current sports policies in Hong Kong are of great significance for the formulation of new policies and regulations and the operation of new organisations in the future.

## 1.2: Objectives of the research

The purpose of this research is to discuss and investigate the current problems of the Hong Kong sports policy. Also, readers would understand the model and factors relating to the current policy and we provide possible recommendations and a direction for Hong Kong Sport Policy Reform in conclusion.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1: Legal basis

Hong Kong does not have a specific Sports Law, but the Basic Law has a relevant article for sports:

*“Article 143:*

*The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, on its own, formulate policies on sports. Non-governmental sports organisations may continue to exist and develop in accordance with law.”*

### 2.2: The establishment, function, and authority division of sports management institutions in Hong Kong

#### 2.2.1: Main administrative organisations

(1) Home Affairs Bureau (HAB): Established in 1998, the HAB serves as the highest administrative agency responsible for sports. Its primary functions include formulating and coordinating sports development policies and associated regulations, orchestrating recreational and sports activity planning, and deciding on resource allocation for major sports programs, activities, and facilities. Furthermore, the HAB, along with its various committees, provides both secretarial and financial support to the Hong Kong Sports Federation and Olympic Committee as well as the Hong Kong Sports Institute.

(2) Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD): Founded in 2000, the LCSD operates as the executive arm and falls under the jurisdiction of the Home Affairs Bureau. It champions the promotion and development of recreational and sports activities at the community level and manages related organizational matters. In terms of funding, the LCSD coordinates top-tier recreational and sports facilities. It also supports and organizes various sports training and competitive events with the aim of identifying promising

athletes and elevating sports standards.

(3) Hong Kong Sports Commission (HKSC): Established on 1 January 2005, the HKSC is a statutory, quasi-administrative body comprised of three subcommittees: the Community Sports Committee (formed in October 2003), the Major Sports Events Committee (formed in October 2003), and the Elite Sports Committee (created in April 2004). Although not a direct government agency, the HKSC acts on behalf of the government in establishing partnerships with major sports entities, implementing a wide array of sports policies, and devising general funding guidelines for sports-related organizations in Hong Kong. By primarily focusing on sports affairs management, the HKSC maintains a certain degree of separation from direct governmental oversight. This distinction allows sports to remain somewhat insulated from direct political control and facilitates more effortless communication and collaboration with other sports organizations and societal groups.

### ***2.2.2: The current sports management system structure and its operation model***

Although there are government departments in charge of sports affairs, they do not directly intervene in these affairs. Instead, these departments achieve tasks and goals through government funding and various cooperation plans, implementing macro-control and top-line influence. The specific organisational work is fully organised and executed by various sports organisations.

In Hong Kong, the sports associations with significant influence throughout the territory include the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC) and its member organisations, the National Sports Associations (NSAs). The SF&OC was formally recognized as a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), and East Asian Games Association (EAGA) in 1951, 1952, and 1991 respectively. It is responsible for the participation of the Hong Kong Delegation in the Olympic Games, Asian Games, and East Asian Games. The staff of the SF&OC work part-time and are not paid.



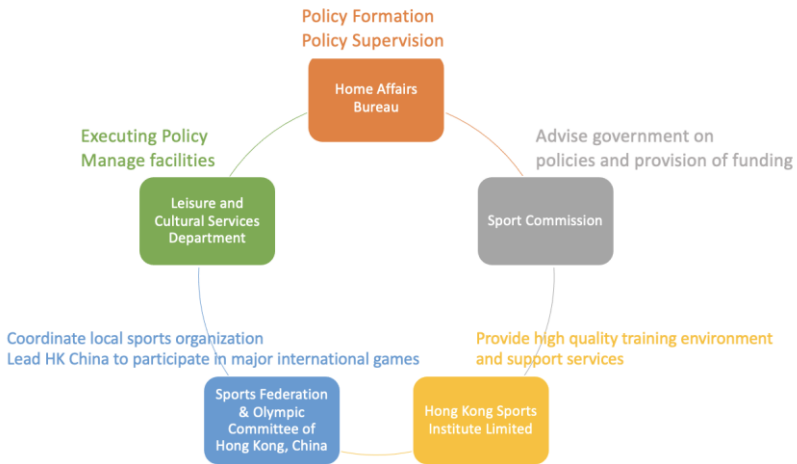
There is usually only one voluntary deputy Secretary-General handling daily operations. However, the SF&OC manages a wide range of matters, including local, regional, and international sports issues. The Hong Kong government provides recurrent grants to the SF&OC to cover operational costs and assists the SF&OC in organising seminars and training courses for NSAs.

NSAs are the local governing bodies for individual sports. They play an integral role in sports development and are responsible for the promotion and development of their respective sports projects. As of 1 May 2022, there are a total of 72 NSAs in Hong Kong. NSAs are affiliated with the relevant international associations and are members of the SF&OC, representing Hong Kong in international sports-related events. These sports associations and clubs in Hong Kong constitute the backbone of sports in the territory. While these individual sports associations are primarily civil society organisations with no vertical relationship with the government, they are supported by partial financial assistance. As a result, these organisations operate autonomously and independently. Although the SF&OC acts as the spokesperson for various sports associations, each association handles its affairs independently, manages its relationships with statutory bodies and international sports organisations, and organises Hong Kong's participation in competitions such as the Olympics.

Overall, the HAB, LCSD, HKSC, and SF&OC make up the management structure of Hong Kong sports and oversee the development of sports in the region (Figure 1). The Home Affairs Bureau coordinates the entire administrative structure of sports services. The LCSD and HKSC collaborate with a division of labour: the HKSC zeroes in on long-term sports development strategies, like elite sports, while the LCSD promotes recreation and grassroots sports activities for public physical fitness and social recreation. The LCSD coordinates venues and provides general staff assistance on the ground. This department collaborates closely with district councils, the SF&OC, national sports associations, regional sports associations, and schools to endorse the "sports for all" concept and motivate individuals of all ages and backgrounds to engage in

recreational and sports activities. Various organisations possess their unique characteristics, functions, roles, and advantages. Some disagreements and conflicts might arise during coordination, but all share the consistent goal of developing and enhancing sports in Hong Kong. The exchange of ideas, coupled with the interplay and coordination between different organisations and the sports system, foster a more evidence-based and democratic decision-making process in Hong Kong's sports industry.

Figure 2. Hypothesized CEM development model



## 2.3: Analysis of the current situation of sports policy in Hong Kong

### 2.3.1: Introduction to community sports (C), elite sports (E), and major sports events (M)

#### *Community sports (C)*

Community Sports aims to promote sports for all, encourage citizens to participate in various sports activities, build a sports-loving culture in the community, help them develop a healthy lifestyle, and improve their overall quality of life. In the HKSAR government's recurrent expenditure on sports development, the largest portion is used to promote and popularise sports. This amounted to \$4.2 billion in the year 2017-2018, accounting for more than 86% of the total expenditure on sports development. The Home Affairs Bureau, along with other government departments and related organisations such as the LCSD, Department of Health, Education Bureau, Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, National Sports Associations, District Sports Associations, other sports organisations, and schools, work to provide diversified community sports activities for citizens at all societal levels. They encourage people of different classes, ages, abilities, and interests to regularly participate in sports activities and promote the popularity of community sports (Home Affairs Bureau, 2022).

The community sports policy comprises several components:

Promotion of community sports by organising recreational and sports activities in all 18 districts of Hong Kong annually, such as large-scale publicity activities (e.g., “Healthy Exercise for All Campaign”, “Sports for All Day”) and multi-sports games (e.g., Hong Kong Games, Masters Games, and Corporate Games).

Provision of a district sports programmes funding scheme, known as the “Sports Subvention Scheme”, which supports overseas and local international events, squad training programmes, development schemes, and training for officials, as well as international sports conferences.

Promotion of school sports through the implementation of the School Sports Programme, the introduction of School Sports Promotion Coordinators, the Student Athlete Support Scheme, the initiative to open up school facilities for promoting sports development, and the organisation of school sports competitions.

Implementation of a territory-wide physical fitness survey for the community, aimed at facilitating the formulation of long-term targets and measures to promote sports in the community, encourage healthy lifestyles, and ensure the prevention and early intervention of diseases through collaboration with governmental organisations (e.g., the Education Bureau, the Food and Health Bureau, and the Department of Health).

Development of football in Hong Kong by allocating a maximum of \$25 million annually to the Hong Kong Football Association for the execution of the Five-Year Strategic Plan, spanning a fixed period of five years.

Promotion of sports for persons with disabilities, including the launch of a pilot scheme named the “Elite Vote Support System for Disability Sports” and the implementation of six key measures to bolster sports participation for those with disabilities.

Execution of the Five-Year Development Programme for Team Sports, which covers 8 team sports with team sizes of 5 or more, as featured in the 2018 Asian Games.

### *Elite sports (E)*

In 2005, the Sports Commission recommended that the Hong Kong government formulate a selection mechanism for elite sports in order to concentrate advantageous resources on developing Hong Kong's competitive sports and achieving key breakthroughs. This selection mechanism aims to classify sports projects in Hong Kong that have a certain competitive strength in the international arena and adjust them in real-time based on their development. Elite sports projects have a funding cycle of 4 years (Guo, Zhang &

Chen, 2018).

The Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI) offers comprehensive training programs and support for elite athletes, which includes direct financial assistance, sports science and sports medicine support, physical fitness support, and career and personal development support. Currently, HKSI supports approximately 1,300 elite athletes, of which about 460 are full-time athletes. The HKSI recognises 20 "A-level" categories, such as badminton, cycling, table tennis, windsurfing, track and field, billiards, equestrian, fencing, gymnastics, karate, rowing, sevens, sailing, ice skating, squash, swimming, tennis, bowling, triathlon, and martial arts. Additionally, HKSI has 6 "A-level" elite disability sports, including badminton (disabled), boccia (disabled), swimming (mentally disabled), table tennis (disabled), table tennis (mentally disabled), and fencing (disabled).

HKSI's primary support for elite athletes comprises: (1) Direct financial assistance (e.g., the highest level of full-time elite athletes can receive direct financial support of \$38,840/month, and outstanding athletes may be nominated for the Hong Kong Sports Stars Awards and Outstanding Junior Athlete Awards); (2) Training and competition support, such as professional coaching, opportunities for local and overseas competitions, support in sports science and sports medicine, and provision of the latest sports equipment; and (3) Dual career and personal development support, including the partnership school programme, elite athlete-friendly school network, tertiary institutions, Hong Kong Athletes Fund, Jockey Club Elite Athletes Continuing Education Subsidy, and Athletes Educational and Vocational Development Programmes (Home Affairs Bureau, 2022).

Moreover, the Hong Kong government allocates resources to the HKSI, the SF&OC, schools, and sports organisations to assist retired athletes in their educational and career transitions. This support includes: (1) Financial Subsidies, such as the Elite Athletes Performance Recognition Scheme; (2) Career Development and Education Support, including the Retired Athletes Transformation Programme, Sports Legacy Scheme, Elite Coaching Apprenticeship

Programme, and Hong Kong Athletes Fund; and (3) Personal Development Support, such as the Ambassador Programme, “Stars to Shine” Mentorship Programme, and other support from both the SF&OC and the HKSI (Home Affairs Bureau, 2022).

### *Major sports events (M)*

The Home Affairs Bureau actively promotes Hong Kong as a center for major international sports events. The “M” Mark System was launched in Nov 2004 with the aim of securing more participation and support from the commercial sector and the community. This was done to support NSAs in holding major sports events and to nurture a more sustainable presence of major international sports events in Hong Kong. Not only does this provide an opportunity for local athletes to compete on home ground, but it also offers Hong Kong residents more chances to enjoy top-level sports performances and cultivates a sports culture in the community. Recently, both the number and scale of major sports events hosted in Hong Kong have increased, and the level of participation has also risen remarkably (Home Affairs Bureau, 2022).

Under this scheme, organizers of the “M” Mark events can seek support, including financial support, from the Major Sports Events Committee. The Hong Kong government provides professional suggestions on the organization, sponsorship, promotion, and publicity strategies of the “M” Mark events and coordinates with relevant governmental or non-governmental organizations to provide logistical, publicity, and other types of support. The “M” Mark events are categorized into two types: “government-funded” and “self-funded”. The former can apply for interest-free loans, matching grants, or direct subsidies from the government, while the latter are primarily sponsored by commercial organizations and do not seek government funding. However, both types of events can apply for governmental permission or funding for the use of venues (Guo & Chan, 2018).

Over the past decade, the amount of grant approved for the “M” Mark event has exceeded \$100 million, and the number of events

has increased from 4 in 2004 to 12 in 2018 (e.g., Volvo Ocean Race, Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon, Cathay Pacific/HSBC Hong Kong Sevens, Prudential Hong Kong Tennis Open, and Honma Hong Kong Open-Golf). Furthermore, the Hong Kong government allocated \$500 million to the “Major Sports Events Matching Grant Scheme” to enhance the existing matching grant under the “M” Mark System. The goal is to attract more sponsorships from the business and private sectors and further improve the existing funding mechanisms, aiming to offer better support (Home Affairs Bureau, 2022).

## 2.4: Achievement and existing problem of CEM

### 2.4.1: Achievement of CEM

The HKSAR government has achieved undeniable success since formulating policies for the CEM policy. Since 2017, the HKSAR government has allocated more than \$60 billion in new resources to promote the development of sports. Its recurrent expenditure on sports development has continued to rise. The estimated expenditure for the year 2021/22 is \$6.57 billion, marking an increase of about 33% compared with four years prior.

Regarding Community Sports, the HKSAR government has consistently invested resources and has achieved remarkable milestones in recent years. For instance, Chief Executive Mrs. Carrie Lam acknowledged the accomplishments of Hong Kong's sports policy at the Executive Council on August 11, 2021. She particularly emphasized that the Kai Tak Sports Park is set to be completed and opened in 2023, enhancing the infrastructure for Community Sports. As per the latest report by LCSD, as of 2021, Hong Kong boasts 22 amphitheatres, 4 archery ranges, 41 beaches, 661 badminton courts, 531 basketball courts, 2 outdoor stadiums, and 234 hard-surface football pitches. Almost every community in Hong Kong offers a free football field and park for its residents, ensuring that all citizens have access to sports facilities. Between 2018 and 2020, more than 30,000 community sports programs and over 15,000 campus sports activities were organized. Even during the

epidemic, over 7,000 related sports activities took place. On August 18, 2021, as proposed by Council Member Vincent Cheng Wing-Shun, the Secretary for Home Affairs, Caspar Tsui Ying-wai, introduced the "Formulation of Sports Policy and Development Blueprint for the Next Ten Years" proposals during a Legislative Council meeting.

LCSD will introduce an online resource center titled "Edutainment Channel" to facilitate at-home exercises for citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of June 30, 2021, the channel has featured over 500 videos, garnering nearly 11 million views in total.

Furthermore, from 2020 to 2021, the HKSAR government plans to significantly increase its subsidy to sports organizations, including the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, and 60 sports associations, raising the sum from \$300 million to \$500 million annually. Caspar Tsui Ying-Wai also noted that LCSD will roll out the "Pilot Scheme on Subvention for New Sports", supporting emerging sports activities. This new initiative will develop a funding model distinct from the "Sports Subvention Scheme", aiming to subsidize local sports organizations and foster emerging sports. This move is expected to present more opportunities, diversify choices, and motivate the public to engage more in sports.

In terms of elite sports, the Hong Kong team achieved historic results at the Tokyo Olympics, securing 1 gold, two silvers, and three bronzes. Chief Executive Carrie Lam has stated that the HKSAR government will expedite the construction of new facilities at the Hong Kong Sports Institute to cater to the training needs of elite athletes. The HKSAR Government, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, will establish a fund tentatively titled "Sports Development Funding" to enhance the global competitiveness of elite athletes. Through the Elite Athletes Development Fund, the HKSAR government currently supplies the HKSI with over \$10 billion to back elite athletes and sports projects. At present, 1,300 athletes (including 500 full-time athletes) receive funding. Around 170 active athletes are pursuing higher education, with over 200 having completed post-secondary courses. Furthermore, 88 athletes have reaped the benefits of the "Elite



Athletes Development Fund", and over 70 retired athletes have availed the "Hong Kong Athletes Career & Education Programme".

Regarding mega events, the count of "M" events surged from 4 in 2005 to 12 in 2018. These events, such as the Standard Chartered Marathon, have drawn significant participation, witnessing 18,500 runners (as opposed to 74,000 in 2018) during the pandemic.

In conclusion, Hong Kong's sports sector has made commendable progress in community sports, elite sports, and mega events. However, the execution of these policies in recent years has also unveiled a series of challenges.

### ***2.4.2 Existing problem of CEM***

#### *Problem of community sports*

##### (1) Sports infrastructure needs to be optimised

Currently, various types of sports facilities and venues are located across different districts in Hong Kong, but the utilisation rate of these facilities is not ideal. Concurrently, previous research has indicated that many sports participants find it challenging to reserve LCSD venues, and these are not always user-friendly. For instance, some outdoor venues lack the necessary protection against rainy weather, while squash and table tennis courts are often too hollow, leading to low utilisation rates. This feedback suggests that the HKSAR government should undertake re-planning to make the best use of these facilities, aiming to maximise the utilisation rate of sports venues and facilities.

##### (2) Sports venue and facilities fail to adequately respond to public needs

While the LCSD organises a plethora of community and school sports activities, it's essential to consider the sports participation preferences of different age and gender groups. Previous research revealed that the three most popular sports are jogging, hiking, and swimming. However, the venues supplied by the government for

these activities are insufficient, resulting in a noticeable shortfall. The survey also indicated that the top three sports participants wanted to learn were swimming, tai chi, and badminton, but the associated community activities did not wholly satisfy citizens' demands.

### (3) Insufficient investment by HKSAR government in the cultivation of Community Sports and promotion of emerging sports

Participation in Community Sports is influenced by various factors. For instance, earlier surveys discovered age and gender-based differences in the motivation of citizens to engage in physical activity. Beyond merely organising sports activities, the HKSAR government has not adequately addressed comprehensive studies and promotions concerning citizens' sports preferences and motivations. Moreover, the HKSAR government's efforts to promote emerging sports like skateboarding, e-sports, and breakdance are lacking, both in terms of advocacy and financial support. In an interview with HK01, Kenneth Fok Kai-kong highlighted the HKSAR government's need for significant improvement in popularising emerging sports. Similarly, LCSD's Year 2020 "Sports Subvention Scheme" identified the same concern.

### (4) HKSAR government's sports resources need to improve

Even after investing significant resources, Community Sports have yet to achieve genuine success. Kenneth Fok opines that "there is no KPI", and the various sports associations have divergent objectives due to their unique targets. "LCSD lacks KPIs, and there aren't any indicators to encourage citizens to participate in sports or to measure aspects like the degree of participation or the social cohesion achieved through sports." LCSD's Year 2020 "Comprehensive Review of the Sports Subvention Scheme" also underscored the pressing need for improvement in resource management, institutional governance, and monitoring systems.

## *Problem of elite sports*

### (1) Lack of sustainable development policies

Although there is significant financial investment in elite sports training, most of the resources are allocated to short-term projects or one-offs. Both Patrick WC LAU and Louie Lobo Hung Tak mentioned in their interviews that elite sports require mid-term and long-term development strategies to better achieve the ultimate goal of elite performance. The current funding model primarily focuses on immediate interests, and most allocations are for "package projects", which are not conducive to the long-term healthy development of elite athletes.

### (2) Unbalanced allocation of resources for elite athletes

According to media reports, the principle of "medal first and funding follows" has been controversial within the industry. The elite sports funding system places excessive emphasis on achievements in the Olympics and Asian Games. For instance, some sports such as billiards are consistently featured in the Olympics, but other sports like taekwondo may not be included, leading them to be categorized as "non-mainstream sports" by the government. Currently, HKSI's resources are primarily concentrated on A\*, A, and B sports, and there's an inadequate resource allocation for other potential elite sports (for example, there's a lack of support services such as nutritionists, physiotherapists, and sports psychologists). Quoted from a media interview, Kenneth Fok also highlighted a gap in Hong Kong's elite sports management. For some emerging Olympic sports, there is no future planning, which directly affects Hong Kong's chances of winning medals in international competitions.

### (3) Allocation of resources is not comprehensive enough

According to LCSD's Year 2020 "Comprehensive Review of Sports Subvention Scheme", financial subsidies are insufficient to support underprivileged athletes and those who have retired. Furthermore, based on research findings, there are existing injury concerns,

especially related to the mental health of elite athletes. The relevant government bodies or associations have not yet established a comprehensive screening, prevention, intervention, and follow-up scheme. Additionally, there's a notable lack of support for athletes participating in regional and international events.

### *Problem of Mega Events*

According to the government report, there is significant room for improvement in the policy guidance and evaluation of "M" Events. The HKSAR government lacks directional guidance for future M events, leading to issues of low mass participation and enthusiasm. Additionally, the government does not offer assistance in securing sponsors for M events, rendering the existing M events potentially non-repeatable.

### *Existing problem of the interrelationships between CEM*

In addition to the problems mentioned above for CEM, there exists another key issue: the current CEM is fragmented and not cohesively integrated. Specifically, Community Sports form the foundation for both Elite Sports and Mega Events. However, the current policy does not cultivate young elite athletes sufficiently. Some potential elite athletes choose to abandon sports due to inadequate resources. Community Sports have not fully leveraged their role in elite athlete selection. The promotion of a strong sports atmosphere could also be enhanced, given that Mega Events often lack the support of the general public, and Hong Kong hosts very few globally recognized Mega Events. Regarding Elite Sports, elite athletes don't capitalize on their status to bolster Community Sports or enhance the branding of Mega Events. The economic benefits generated by Mega Events have not been fully optimized for the benefit of Community Sports.

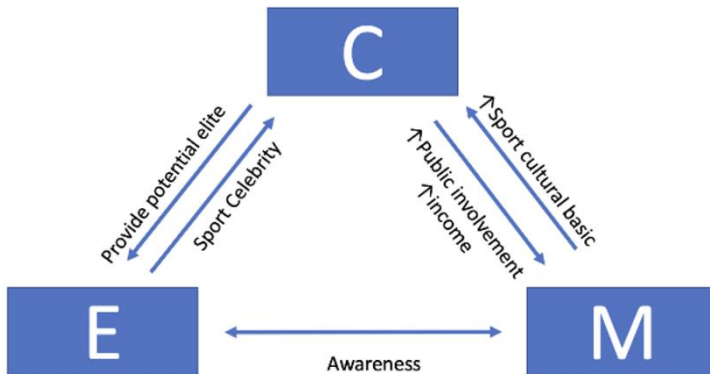
Furthermore, since Hong Kong lacks a "Sports Law", the HKSAR government has not played an adequate role in overseeing CEM, providing logistical support, evaluating its effects, and extending long-term policy support. Lastly, CEM tends to prioritize short-term

objectives. For example, countries like the United States, mainland China, and several others have advanced substantially in developing their sports industries. The sports industry in Hong Kong could experience better development if CEM were more interconnected.

### *Hypothesised framework of CEM*

Based on a review of the relevant literature, we propose a hypothetical CEM development model (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Hypothesized CEM development model



In this model, the connection and synergy between the three existing policies should be addressed instead of reviewing them independently. The government has the responsibility to coordinate and plan holistically. C provides elite athlete seedlings for E and furnishes M with public participation and resource sponsorship. E helps promote the development of C through the social influence of athletes and enhances its brand effect through participation in M. M, in return, can help enhance the sports culture atmosphere of the entire society, thus supporting C. Additionally, M can address many resource support issues for athletes in E, especially the career development of retired athletes from E.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Study design

We applied a qualitative design: descriptive phenomenology in our research (Husserl, 1962). Based on the study aims, we conducted several one-to-one and face-to-face/online semi-structured interviews, including three type of questions (Flick, 2014):

- (1) Open-ended questions, allowing the participants to express their opinions freely (e.g., “What do you think about the HKSI policy support for athletes?”).
- (2) Closed-ended questions, which are directed by the interests of interviewers (e.g., “Do you think your NSA gets adequate support from government funding or managerial set up?”).
- (3) Conformational questions, which is used for forcing the interviewees to critically re-address their answers (e.g., “you said the financial support for developing community sports is enough, right?”).

### 3.2 Participants

To reach theoretical saturation based on the “rule of thumb” of qualitative studies (Bryman, 2016), we recruited 6 interviewees using a convenience sampling approach. Table 1 shows the demographics of the interviewees.

Table 1. Characteristics of interviewees

| Name                 | Gender | Age | Occupation                     | Position/Achievement  |
|----------------------|--------|-----|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Interviewee A</b> | Female | 40  | Founder of sports agency       | Asian Games medallist and organized most sports mega events |
| <b>Interviewee B</b> | Male   | 48  | Registered physiotherapist     | Former staff of HKSI  |
| <b>Interviewee C</b> | Male   | 36  | HKSI staff                     | Five appearances in international games                     |
| <b>Interviewee D</b> | Female | 27  | Academic staff in universities | Asian Games medallist and former elite athletes of HKSI     |
| <b>Interviewee E</b> | Male   | 37  | Sports teacher                 | Hong Kong representative team member                        |
| <b>Interviewee F</b> | Male   | 25  | Qualified coach                | Executive committee of an NSA                               |

### 3.3 Data collection

The research team jointly developed an interview guide based on the suggestions from Bryman (2016) and comments of Prof. Lo and other classmates in the Path of Democracy (see Appendix 1). The interview procedure began with building rapport, presenting the purpose of the interview, and explaining the process, followed by the main content of the interview. The main question was used to invite

the participants to talk freely, such as “What is your opinion about the community sports policy?” Additional questions were asked during the interview for clarification and elaboration. The interview took place in quiet places via an online platform (e.g., ZOOM, WhatsApp), phone call or face-to-face in a cafe. Each interview was audio-recorded and lasted around 40-60 minutes. Only the researcher was present during data collection with the participants.

### 3.4 Data analysis

The audio-recorded interview data were transcribed orthographically and organised using Word/Excel. According to the suggestions of Braun and Clarke (2006), the data were edited for brevity, and content not essential for understanding the overall meaning was removed during the transcription process. Using a thematic analysis approach, all research team members conducted the data analysis independently, which included familiarising themselves with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing potential themes, defining and naming the themes, and producing the report. All disagreements regarding the themes were discussed until a consensus was reached. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the qualitative research, the entire procedure was conducted in line with the principles of “sensitivity, commitment, rigour, transparency, coherence, impact, and importance” as suggested by Yardley (2017).



## 4. Findings

Even interviewees are from different backgrounds and have different positions in the sports industry, they tried to illustrate problems and solutions from their own point of view over current sports policy. Hence, we concluded similar opinions and common understanding over several aspects, which are sports awareness, national sports associations, sportsman's support, major sports events, and prospects.

### 4.1: Sports awareness

Interviewees mentioned that one of the greatest challenges of sports development in Hong Kong is the lack of sports awareness and acceptance. Interviewee E, a sports teacher in a local secondary school, said parents focus more on academic results and interests relating to future school admission rather than on sports. He emphasised that this way of thinking is a common norm in Hong Kong and indeed, the career path and unstable income of full-time athletes in reality are not convincing either. Parents only allow limited time for sports training or participation in their children's packed schedules, which also reduces the possibility of discovering potential and talented athletes. Besides, Interviewee D revealed that public sports awareness and lifelong sports consciousness in Hong Kong are still insufficient. The government should take up the responsibility to guide and cultivate a positive perception towards sports.

Interviewees also suggested possible ways for the government to enhance the basic sports culture in Hong Kong. Interviewee F indicated that the Hong Kong Dodgeball Association has been invited to several sports program interviews by local television broadcast companies. Comparatively speaking, this method of sports promotion is more efficient than their own marketing efforts on social media. However, the programs are usually on a one-time basis, and the low frequency cannot help build momentum. Interviewee A concurred with the same idea and advised that the government should work more on community promotion to set a

better mindset in the mass market. Additionally, Interviewee C recommended the government should make good use of the 18-district network and consider featuring sports for each district. Interviewee B also added that major sports events help boost community sports interest, especially those open to public participation, such as the Hong Kong Marathon and Harbour Race. Furthermore, Interviewee E believed that NSAs should leverage players' influence in social media marketing and the promotion of sports culture. Individual athletes usually collaborate with business partners in product promotion or single events but lack regular involvement and roles in community promotion. However, this approach could have more branding effects under an organised effort by NSAs.

#### 4.2: National sports associations

Interviewees primarily addressed the NSAs from two perspectives: the Sports Subvention Scheme and the management of NSAs.

Regarding the Sports Subvention Scheme, Interviewee A explained that NSAs first apply to become members of SF&OC annually, and then they secure operational funding by submitting proposals and budgets to the government. The SF&OC encompasses a broader range of sports than the HKSI, incorporating many new and niche sports. Government funding primarily serves as the operational fund for NSAs to manage their associations. However, Interviewee F highlighted that certain associations, like the Hong Kong Dodgeball Association—which has actively promoted sports in Hong Kong—are still not entitled to the Sports Subvention Scheme or any financial assistance from the government. This is because there are multiple dodgeball-related associations in Hong Kong. The SF&OC only grants membership to one association deemed as the most dominant representative in Hong Kong. Presently, the SF&OC remains neutral, waiting for the associations to find a solution. This funding principle doesn't support the development of new sports, forcing associations to depend on corporate sponsorship and self-financing in their initial stages.

Conversely, Interviewee E lamented that the management structure within NSAs still operates under a closed or hereditary system. The board of committee members aren't sufficiently representative and often fail to maintain robust communication with industry stakeholders. Consequently, NSAs lack a strong impetus to advocate for and enhance the welfare of the sports sector. For instance, the Hong Kong Basketball Association recently decided, without prior notification or explanation, to withdraw from the FIBA Asia Cup. This decision elicited widespread backlash from players, the media, and the public, given that the FIBA Asia Cup is a crucial platform for Hong Kong players to engage in high-level competition. Following the intervention of the Commissioner of Sports, the Hong Kong Basketball Association eventually rescinded their initial decision. This incident underscores the absence of a mechanism for the government to proactively oversee NSA operations and decisions. Interviewee C also emphasized that the government plays a limited role in guiding or supervising NSA operations. An NSA has autonomy in all decision-making facets, from management and execution to assessment, based on its regulations. This system evidently lacks transparency to the public and necessitates greater government involvement.

### 4.3: Sportsman support

#### 4.3.1 *Financial assistance*

Interviewee B explained that the current funding criteria is based on the yearly marking system of the Elite Vote Support Scheme (EVSS), which uses a generic scoring table as a benchmark for all sports. Depending on their performance ratings, sports and athletes are categorized into Tier A\*, Tier A, and Tier B. Sports meeting the criteria receive support for four years, with a review of sports performance conducted every two years. Athletes must maintain their rankings and awards to stay within their respective tiers. Interviewee B also pointed out that the HKSI offers a sports scholarship scheme for Elite, junior, and potential Tier A athletes.

However, individuals must first secure victories and achieve decent rankings before being recruited by HKSI and NSAs as elite sportspeople, thus gaining access to their support and funding. Until that point, individual sportspeople in Hong Kong typically rely on their families to finance their participation in competitions. Sponsorship from major brands such as Nike and Reebok is uncommon in Hong Kong.

Interviewees consistently highlighted the lack of adequate financial support for athletes not affiliated with HKSI. Interviewee A acknowledged that while HKSI has a commendable framework under EVSS and offers substantial funding, it mainly focuses on major sports. There are certain sports, like skiing and golf, that don't fall under HKSI's purview. As a result, young athletes in these fields often rely heavily on family support, especially since they must travel abroad for training and competition. Interviewee E also noted that team sports might face challenges when trying to join HKSI and secure related support. Interviewee D provided her own experience to illustrate this point. While swimming is categorized as Tier A, open-water swimming is excluded from funding schemes. Consequently, Interviewee D had to finance her own transportation, lodging, and other associated travel costs for competitions. Although HKSI offers some subsidies, it still imposes a significant financial strain, particularly on athletes without family backing or ample income. This financial pressure has led some promising athletes to abandon sports after secondary school, resulting in a gap in the identification and grooming of young talent in the early stages of elite sports training.

#### ***4.3.2 Educational and Career Assistance***

Interviewees generally believed there is room for improvement in educational assistance and career development. Interviewee D argued that the current educational and career assistance is based on an incorrect assumption. HKSI offers dual-career development and nominates athletes for full-time bachelor's degree or higher diploma programmes at tertiary institutions. However, many athletes do not excel academically. Moreover, these programmes, due to

entry quotas, are limited to certain professions, thereby restricting athletes' future career choices. Interviewee A suggested that the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and Education Bureau (EB) should collaborate more closely. For instance, while HAB promotes sports and seeks elite athletes to represent Hong Kong, the education policy does not favour sports scholars. In other successful countries, governments support youths as sports scholars, offering tutorials to help them keep up with their studies. There is a growing momentum, but further improvements can be made. For instance, Hong Kong University, which offered only two sports scholarships 20 years ago, provided 20-30 sports scholarships last year. There is a lack of retirement programmes in Hong Kong, although the Government introduced the Retired Athletes Transformation Programme in 2018, benefiting roughly 70 retired athletes to date. While HKSI has made efforts to develop sportsmen retirement programmes, corporations are currently more inclined to hire sportsmen for their resilience, making them less dependent on government support.

#### ***4.3.3 Back-end Support***

Interviewees emphasized the development of sports professionals, such as sports psychologists and coaching quality, to create a better environment for athletes. Interviewee C explained that the entire process of maintaining a healthy mindset includes the screening, guidance, intervention, and prevention of mental problems. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, the training schedules of elite athletes have been severely impacted, revealing many psychological challenges. However, relevant policies in this area are not yet fully developed. There is still a shortage of professionals to support elite athletes in areas like physical training and sports rehabilitation. The recruitment, training, and welfare of relevant staff also need improvement.

Interviewee B pointed out that HKSI recruits head coaches either from local NSAs or internationally using a points system. Points are awarded based on coaches' success in helping athletes win at regional or international competitions. Interviewee E suggested that

the government should allocate more resources for coaches to further their education and embrace scientific methodologies. Otherwise, the performance standards of athletes might not keep pace with other countries.

#### ***4.4 Major Sports Events***

Interviewees affirmed the past performance of major sports events in general, but they expect more involvement from the corporate and private sectors in the future. Interviewee B explained that government funding is a crucial component for the success of major sports events, as corporate sponsorship is often inadequate. Established events take around 10 to 20 years to build momentum, so it's a matter of time for events to improve. However, under the current pandemic, some associations might not survive if hosting events is their primary source of income. For instance, the Hong Kong Sevens (Rugby) was cancelled for two consecutive years due to social distancing measures and inbound control measures. Associations may need to sustain themselves by generating cash flow from running their own buildings or clubhouses.

Interviewee A proposed that the government should allow corporations or companies to host a wider variety of sports events. Currently, one of the prerequisites to qualify for "M" Marks Events is that they be applied for and hosted by NSAs, which limits the range of major sports events, as some newer sports are not recognized by SF&OC yet. In other countries, like Singapore, any corporation or company can host events in line with new trends, leading to a greater variety of events. Corporate sponsorship is the main source of funding for most international events. It ensures their long-term operation and sustainability. The Hong Kong government should therefore offer corporate sponsors tax exemptions or tax benefit allowances to encourage more commercial support.

#### ***4.5 Prospects***

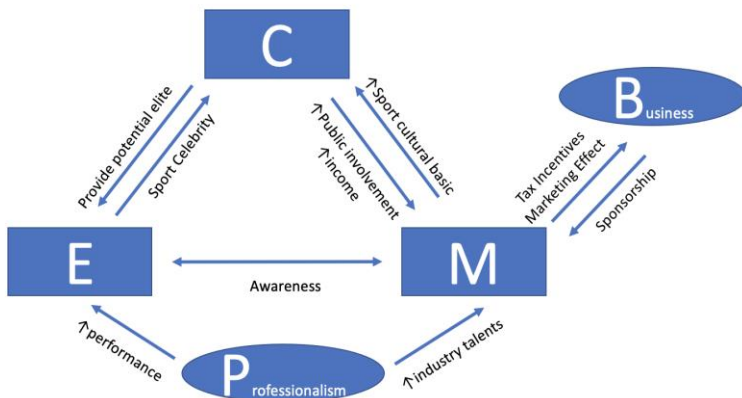
Interviewees agreed that more competitions and exchanges with nearby regions and countries would benefit the future development of the sports industry. Under current practices, NSAs provide

opportunities for elite players to participate in overseas exchanges. Interviewee E said the Hong Kong Basketball Team maintains a very close relationship with Macau, Guangdong Province, and Taiwan in competitions and exchanges. He has also been to Macau, South Korea, Mongolia, and other places through NSA arrangements. However, players and teams still have to cover their own expenses. Interviewee C mentioned that the training facilities and support measures for some sports are still inadequate. Offering beneficial policies and opportunities for sportspeople and NSAs to interact with other countries and regions would enhance overall quality. Interviewee A also suggested that Hong Kong should collaborate with the Greater Bay Area to host more major sports events.

## 5. Discussion

From findings, interviewee's responses validated our hypothesised framework of CEM and agreed synergy of CEM should be well addressed. At the same time strengthened the framework by adding the business sector and the idea of professionalism in sports policy (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Revised CEM development model



More sports professionals are needed in the industry, both for better support for elite athletes and for more management and operational talents for major sports events. In the HKSAR government structure, when formulating policies, more sports talents can provide more effective and targeted suggestions based on the characteristics and needs of CEMs. At the same time, the HKSAR government should help catalyse the industry's development, such as strengthening the atmosphere of C and sports awareness, to lay a solid mass market foundation for industry development. It should also attract more businesses to participate in the industry through measures such as tax incentives and market economic effects provided by M. Thus, M can also secure more sponsorships, thereby enhancing its brand effect and expanding its influence. Ultimately, the entire CEM can form a more efficient and successful loop. Furthermore, by combining both the literature review and our findings, the following potential policy recommendations are suggested to reform the overall sports policy.

### 5.1: Formation of Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau

According to the Policy Address 2021, Chief Executive Mrs Carrie Lam proposed setting up a Culture, Sports, and Tourism Bureau to consolidate the culture portfolio with the creative industries and tourism portfolio, thereby facilitating the development of Hong Kong as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. This suggested government structure is also expected to be implemented in the coming term.

First, the new bureau, or more specifically the sports commission under the new bureau, is essential for developing a clear and goal-oriented blueprint for Hong Kong's sports industry. It should be responsible for reviewing sports policy and the CEM framework regularly, setting a solid timetable for short- and long-term goals, and evaluating by setting key performance indicators for all three committees underneath. For example, some high-performing athletes at the world-class level, without family financial support, do not receive a significant direct financial grant to sustain because of the rigid requirements of the elite vote support system. Resource



allocation should be fair, but special attention should still be given to talented athletes. This problem has been discussed for years without any improvement. Second, the new bureau should have more active and effective management over SF&OC and the operation of NSAs. Beyond approving proposals and funding each year, NSAs should be responsible for reporting their situations and challenges regularly to maintain good communication and transparency with the government. The execution and performance of LCSD should also be addressed. Lastly, under the new structure of the Culture, Sports, and Tourism Bureau, closer coordination between sports and tourism policy is expected. Sport Tourism is not a new concept. It refers to travel involving either observing or participating in a sporting event while staying apart from the tourists' usual environment. Cook (2020) revealed that the most popular Chinese Sports Tourism activities are hiking, marathon, dragon boating, cycling, and surfing, which are popular and common sports in Hong Kong. Hong Kong has the potential and uniqueness to attract more mainland and overseas visitors through sports tourism. However, infrastructure and relevant tourism measures should be considered.

## 5.2: Micro-demand

On the micro-demand issues, we see the same problem with the lack of demand again, but this time is from non-state actors. One could argue theoretically, that even if there was little macro-demand -- demand coming from the system or government itself -- perhaps there could be a need for think tanks if various non-state actors (such as businesses) found think tanks which would be useful to promote their proposals. However, as mentioned in Section 4, post-colonial Hong Kong's political system is unique because business interests were very well secured and their access to power was well enshrined within the Hong Kong Basic Law. Unlike Taiwan's liberalization, where Taiwan's identity and future was very uncertain for both the territory and businesses, Taiwan businesses took it into their own hands to craft a future that fits their vision. They did this with the help of using think tanks as a tool to craft and help justify

their proposals. Furthermore, Hong Kong does not have a two-party system like the US or Taiwan where there is consistent competition for different directions for the country.

### 5.3: Enhancement of sports cultural basis

To achieve more sustainable and long-term growth in sports development, one of the critical tasks is enhancing the cultural foundation of sports. Lo (2009) proposed an ideal model for the promotion of sports for all (Figure 4). The model clearly states that the success of promoting sports in the community should consist of education, participation, and services. The government has invested significant resources to encourage public direct participation, which includes community-level activities (such as sports training courses, competitions, and recreational activities in LCSD), the annual Sport for All Day, and the biennial Hong Kong Games, Corporate Games, and Masters Games. Additionally, the government has continued to improve the number and quality of recreational and sports facilities in Hong Kong, especially the ongoing project of the Kai Tak Sports Park. However, public indirect participation and awareness have been overlooked.

Figure 4. Idea model for the promotion of Sport for All



Source: Lo, 2009

To improve citizens' sports awareness and indirect participation, the government could implement a softer approach by reaching the audience through media, including television programmes and social sharing platforms. Currently, LCSD has an "Edutainment Channel" with informative sports content, but it isn't widely popular among the public. Using trendy elements, popular artists or elite athletes as icons, and outsourcing production to private companies might draw more attention through branding effects. For instance, the Taiwanese entertainment programme "All Stars Sports Day" sets sports as the main theme and invites artists to participate, successfully raising public interest and awareness. Besides purchasing broadcasting rights for international tournaments or games, the new bureau could also collaborate with RTHK to provide more dedicated channels for local sports. Currently, sports-related programmes occupy only a limited number of hours in the RTHK schedule. By continuously broadcasting inter-school, local league, and regional competitions, the public, especially parents, can participate indirectly with the youths even if they aren't physically attending the competitions. Some emerging sports associations could benefit from this kind of organized effort, potentially reaching a wider audience. Furthermore, training students from higher education institutions to volunteer at sports events could provide adequate manpower for major events. This valuable volunteer experience also fosters a sense of belonging and responsibility towards the city.

### 5.3: Enhancement of sustainability and support for emerging elite sports

The government has announced various measures to promote the sustainable development of sports in Hong Kong (Information Service Department, 2021). The new building project of the HKSI will provide more space for additional training, resting, and accommodation facilities for athletes. HKSI also plans to expand its Scientific Conditioning Centre and Sports Medicine Centre. The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust will finance a special fund to conduct research in sports science and sports medicine, improve

athletes' gear, and purchase additional equipment for these centres. The government should maintain this direction and broaden the scope to other areas of athlete support, including comprehensive systems for injury and mental health. During the pandemic and border closures, the need and importance of a mental health system have been highlighted.

For emerging elite sports such as dodgeball and E-sports, the government should consider allocating a larger budget and providing more assistance for the selection, training, and competitions of elite athletes in the early stages. Even though they are not currently recognized as official Olympic sports, the number of participants, both athletes and audience, is rising sharply worldwide. Hong Kong athletes could gain an early advantage and excel on the world stage. However, a lack of concern and continuous support has compromised the leading position in the early years. Hong Kong should adopt a long-term vision for the development of new sports and leverage its position as a vibrant and leading city.

#### 5.4 Corporate sponsorship matching platform and new sports pilot scheme

Under the current funding criteria for “M” Park events (Major Sports Events Committee, 2020), for major sports events, such as world championships, world-class level competitions, or intercontinental championships, the funding scheme is more flexible, offering options like interest-free loans, matching funds, and direct grants. However, for exhibition matches or tournaments, recognised NSAs must secure corporate cash sponsorship before applying for dollar-to-dollar matching grants, with an upper limit of HK\$10 million per event. This proves challenging for some NSAs representing newer sports, those with a shorter history, or those operating on a smaller scale. Corporations might be hesitant to sponsor NSAs with less popularity, resulting in the number and variety of major sports events remaining largely unchanged over the past decade. The government should consider launching a corporate sponsorship matching platform. On this platform, interested corporations could

be publicly listed, allowing NSAs to contact them directly, saving the effort of approaching potential sponsors individually. Tax benefits or allowances should be extended to corporations that actively participate in and sponsor sports events. For emerging sports, the new bureau should encourage NSAs to organise more local, regional, or international competitions or events. A New Sports pilot scheme, which offers flexible measures regarding mandatory requirements and financial arrangements in funding applications, should also be established. Initially, the frequency could be set at one new sports “M” Park event per year.

### 5.5 Professionalisation

The Policy Address 2021 mentioned that the government will explore ways to further promote sports development in Hong Kong through enhanced professionalism in the sports sector and the development of sports as an industry. With the commissioning of the Kai Tak Sports Park in 2023 and opportunities arising from the GBA, the sports industry is expected to become more diversified and create more job and development opportunities for young people and retired athletes. To achieve professionalism, comprehensive support for elite athletes should be prioritized. Such support encompasses not only the quality of coaches, trainers, physiotherapists, sports psychologists, and team staff, but also research and development personnel in sports technology, systematic training routines, and recovery treatments. While current policies predominantly focus on associations and athletes, the government should also direct more attention to sports support measures, as superior environments foster better athletes.

Moreover, with the increasing demand for talent in the sports industry, the government should collaborate with tertiary institutions to offer more positions in related fields. To bolster Hong Kong's capacity to become a hub for international sports competitions and events, programmes could include Facilities Management, Sports Administration, Sports Technology, and Major Sports Event Management, among others. Implementing a study subsidy scheme for designated professions or sectors (e.g., Bachelor of Social

Sciences (Honours) in Sports and Recreation Management) would also enhance the appeal of these programmes. In terms of lifelong learning or career transitions, designing more sports-related programmes that qualify under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework and the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Mechanism could heighten interest in the sports industry. Such initiatives would also serve as objective measurements of professional knowledge, aiding corporations in talent acquisition.

## 5.6 Limitations

Conducting interviews with athletes or focus groups in the sports industry helps glean more in-depth information and views from the target group. However, due to the limited number of interviewees, the research focused only on athletes and individuals with related backgrounds in the sports industry, neglecting the perspective of the government and other target groups. A small number of interviewees might lead to biased views and a specific understanding based on their personal experiences and interpretations. Furthermore, some interviews were conducted in Cantonese or Mandarin but ultimately written in English. This might lead to translation issues and potential misunderstandings of the content. To address this, we attempted to overcome the challenge by sending finalized transcripts and reports to the interviewees and obtaining their confirmation on ideas and wordings. For future studies, mixed-method research could be employed. By incorporating additional quantitative research methods, the research could assess current policy performance using data analysis methods or gauge public perception and understanding using rating scale observation methods.

## 6. Conclusion

Our research findings offer fresh insights into the development of Hong Kong Sports Policy reform. While the Hong Kong Sports Policy has a solid foundation, it has remained unchanged for over a decade. CEM policies were executed independently and have led to the challenges discussed. This research developed a new CEM framework that suggests potential guidelines for future implementation. We provided several policy recommendations to enhance the cohesiveness of this framework. Most crucially, the synergistic effects between each policy must be considered. With the introduction of the new Cultural, Sports, and Tourism Bureau in the government structure, it's the opportune moment to review the overall sports policy.

The government plays a leading role in sports development and should adopt a visionary approach to long-term planning. Beyond just policy execution and public funding, the government's role is to cultivate an environment that's both conducive and sustainable for sports growth. This involves fostering greater social awareness and a sports culture, exerting more active management over NSAs, and allocating continuous resources to professionalism, all of which contribute to creating a better environment for nurturing young athletes. The government should also seek opportunities in the Greater Bay Area. As more competitions and major sports events will be hosted in a mass market reaching an audience of over 86 million, the involvement of the business sector will likely grow. Over time, private sponsorship for elite athletes should account for a larger share of funding, leading to a more sustainable model. The 2025 China's National Games will serve as a significant benchmark to assess the progress of sports development during the next government term.

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## 8. Appendix

### Interview content

#### *Proposed Questions*

##### *For Government:*

- 1) Looking back for 5 years, Policy Address did increasingly stress on sport development and proposed a new bureau for sport, cultural and tourism. Do you think the new bureau will only transfer existing structures or will they redesign it?
- 2) Policy Address 2021 mentioned sport professionalism and industrialization, what is the progress now? Do you think Hong Kong has the capacity (talents, career opportunities etc) to develop its sports ecosystem? What are the main challenges?
- 3) Recently, you criticised government policy over sport related industry under pandemic, especially sport facilities. Do you think it is proper to clean, cut and close all sports facilities? Government usually uses sport facilities for other purposes due to its size, and from the research of sport facilities, it said HK has enough facilities.
- 4) Hong Kong School Sport Federation was established in 1997 and held numerous inter school competitions. Do you think Hong Kong policy should try to work more over indirect participation? Do you think it is practical to use RTHK to broadcast?
- 5) Hong Kong will co-host the National Games in 2025. How can the government encourage more volunteers for indirect participation?
- 6) What do you think about government positioning over C, E, M? Did they relate three policies together or separation like fragmentation?
- 7) With GBA development, how can Hong Kong cooperate with the mainland to enhance sport development?

*For Institutions:*

*NSA (non-mainstream)*

- 1) Can you briefly explain your NSA?
- 2) To promote support culture, what is the most difficult issue in operation your NSA is facing? Facilities? Funding? Guidelines?
- 3) Do you think your NSA gets adequate support from government funding or managerial set up?
- 4) Who will you seek for assistance? Government or
- 5) Did your NSA participate in Opening up School Facilities for Promotion of Sports Development Scheme? Any difficulties did you face during application?
- 6) Do you want to organise sport events or competition on a larger scale? What limits you from doing that?

*HKSI*

- 1) What do you think about the HKSI policy support for athletes? (pros & cons)
- 2) Do you think the elite scheme is fair to sportsmen? Can you name a few examples of how individuals may not benefit from policy even if they have good results?
- 3) Do you think with the new facilities built, does HKSI have enough capacity for more types of sport?
- 4) Any suggestions?

*For Sportsman:*

- 1) Are you full time or part time athletes? What sport are you in?
- 2) What do you think about the financial assistance from the government? In terms of amount, procedure, eligibility?

- 3) Except for financial aspects, what other support did you receive? For example, mental, physiotherapy?
- 4) What do you think your NSAs can do or should do to improve athletes' performance?
- 5) What do you think about the Elite sportsmanship programme, and could you benefit from it?

*For C:*

- 1) What are the difficulties in promoting sports to kids and adults to keep them healthy?
- 2) What types of sports attract them the most and why? Is it because of the venue/facilities? Time involved? Team / Personal sports ...etc
- 3) How do you see the future of non-popular sports in HK (e.g., winter sports, e-sports)? Do you want to learn some non-popular sports and why?
- 4) What factors keep you doing more sports?
- 5) What do you think about the government policy in terms of promoting community sports?
- 6) What do you think hk can do better to keep everyone active? What can we learn from "move active countries"?
- 7) Do elite sportsmen / mega events affect you in choosing what sports you want to do?
- 8) Do you have frequent indirect participation? For example, sport volunteers and attendees?

*For E:*

- 1) Can you tell us how different parties give you support in your sports career? sports associations? Coaches? Government? Medical and mental? ...etc
- 2) Who are your mentors and how do they support you?

- 3) Can you tell us about the elite sportsmen who went through your similar path in the future after retiring from their professional career? What do they do for a living and how does the government or other parties support them?
- 4) Compared to overseas professional sportsmen, what do you think the government can do better and learn from other countries?
- 5) How do you think HK can cooperate with mainland China on training?

*For M:*

- 1) What do you think about the government's funding scheme on Mega Events? What should be improved?
- 2) How do you think the mega events can help in the overall objective to promote HK sports? In what ways can it help the HK sports industry?
- 3) Can you tell us what is the good / bad side of the funding procedure?
- 4) Can you tell us regarding the mega events held, which sports you think can take advantage of most of the government policies?
- 5) Regarding the non-popular sports, how do you see them fitting into mega events (if they can)?
- 6) Can the mega events sustain in the future without government funding?

**民主思路 PATH OF DEMOCRACY**  
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