

SMEs Investing in Sustainable Value Chains: An Imperative Effort to Respond to Rapid Changes on a Global Scale

BEC Fully Supports “Partnership for Sustainability Leadership in Business”

Hong Kong, 19 November 2020 --- In response to rapid changes on a global scale including climate change and COVID-19, as well as the United Nations’ call for actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (“SDGs”), many businesses have risen to the challenge and taken actions to contribute to sustainable development. Being at the forefront of advocating for sustainable strategies in the business sector, enabling environmental protection and contributing to the transition to a low carbon economy, Business Environment Council (“BEC”) fully supports “Partnership for Sustainability Leadership in Business (“PSLB”)” – a four-year action research project initiated by The Centre for Civil Society and Governance (“CCSG”) of The University of Hong Kong. The PSLB is a first-of-its-kind collaborative endeavor leveraging the strengths of academic institutions, businesses, regulators and the community to support the business sector, particularly the small and medium-sized enterprises (“SMEs”) in Hong Kong to build Sustainable Value Chains (“SVC”) and to promote the SDGs.

In the PSLB launch video, BEC’s Mr Simon Ng, Director – Policy & Research, highlighted the importance of business leadership: “Business sector’s effort to decarbonise in recent years is evident; business leaders should be forward-thinking and resilient in order to lead their company towards business sustainability.”

As SMEs account for 98% of Hong Kong’s corporations and 45% of the territory’s total workforce, they are a major player in the economy. Many SMEs, however, lack the knowledge and experience in integrating and implementing sustainability measures in their operations. Faced with numerous sustainability challenges, ranging from global climate change and resource scarcity, to stringent regulation and unexpected disruptions in their global supply chains, SMEs often find themselves incapable of effectively tackling these challenges. Compared with big corporations, SMEs in general are less able to absorb risk due to thin resources and funds.

“Partnership for Sustainability Leadership in Business” strives to foster collaboration between large corporations and SMEs, and to improve SMEs’ preparedness in taking on sustainability challenges, with a view to supporting the business sector of Hong Kong to create SVC. The PSLB consists of two key components — “Knowledge Inventory” and “Collaborative Leadership Scheme”. The former is an online resource hub in which a whole array of resources and tools will be made available to businesses who are keen to integrate sustainability measures into their operations. The latter consists of knowledge-based

collaborative events through which sustainability leaders in big corporations work closely with SME executives to build a talent pool of sustainability leaders for the business sector. The PSLB is currently calling on large corporations and SMEs in Hong Kong to express their interest. More information about the PSLB can be found on: <https://ccsg.hku.hk/pslb/>

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About Business Environment Council Limited

Business Environment Council Limited (“BEC”) is an independent, charitable membership organisation, established by the business sector in Hong Kong. Since its establishment in 1992, BEC has been at the forefront of promoting environmental excellence by advocating the uptake of clean technologies and practices which reduce waste, conserve resources, prevent pollution and improve corporate environmental and social responsibility. BEC offers sustainable solutions and professional services covering advisory, research, assessment, training and award programmes for government, business and the community, thus enabling environmental protection and contributing to the transition to a low carbon economy.