

MEDIA RELEASE

HELPING SMALLER CHARITIES THROUGH SHARED SERVICES

Commissioner of Charities works with organisations in setting up shared services to strengthen charities' regulatory compliance and effectiveness.

24 May 2018, Singapore – Four organisations in Singapore have pledged to provide shared services for charities. The organisations are Chartered Secretaries Institute of Singapore (CSIS), Singapore Buddhist Federation (SBF), iShine Cloud Limited (iShine) and National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC).

2. Charities play an important role in inspiring a culture of care and consideration in Singapore – in line with our aim to professionalise the sector, it is essential that they are enabled to be effective, efficient and accountable. The Commissioner of Charities (COC) has thus implemented various initiatives ranging from learning programmes such as the annual Charity Governance Conference as well as sector-specific training sessions on the Code of Governance to development of toolkits for use by the charities. In addition, under the VWOs-Charities Capability Fund (VCF), charities can obtain funding support of up to 80% to attend training courses and engage external consultants to improve key governance and management areas. Charities are also able to utilise the VCF for Info-Communication Technology needs, and outsourcing of payroll, finance and accounting functions to third-party service providers

3. Nonetheless, the COC is mindful that smaller charities, which account for more than 50% of the sector, face difficulties at times in their compliance and governance efforts given their limited resources and manpower. The COC, Dr Ang Hak Seng said “While many small charities endeavour to do good, and to do their jobs well, some struggle due to the lack of know-how, proper expertise or economies of scale. Hence, shared services can empower them to be more effective.” The COC has reached out to various partners to support charities with multiple avenues of shared services, in aid of their regulatory compliance and administration.

4. The first phase of these shared services include assistance in electronic regulatory submissions in line with the new amendment to the Charities Act, governance-related matters, talent management and technology solutions. Through this initiative, the COC aims to ease the charities' resource constraints, and ensure basic compliance with regulatory and governance requirements.

5. CSIS, who has a good understanding of regulatory requirements, has committed to provide shared services in the form of annual submissions technical know-how, and equip charities with a better understanding of regulatory and governance matters. Charities may seek assistance from CSIS through their 'walk-in clinics' and training sessions.

6. The SBF has also come forward to offer similar services to the sector. They will be offering these services not only to Chinese temples but to charities of other faiths

and sectors. This will be achieved via hands-on guidance at SBF's service centre and face-to-face consultancy service. President of SBF, Venerable Seck Kwang Phing said "Serving the community is one of our core values. In this regard, we are very glad to work hand-in-hand with the COC in raising their governance and compliance level of local charities." The COC is heartened that SBF is passionate about helping fellow charities, and is also exploring with other umbrella religious bodies to come on board.

7. iShine Cloud Limited, a non-profit IT cloud service company, has committed to provide information technology shared services to charities. This involves providing an integrated suite of business productivity solutions commonly needed by charities, hence freeing up their time to focus more on their beneficiaries. The COC is also working with NVPC's Centre for Non-Profit Leadership to identify partners who could address charities' talent acquisition needs.

8. Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Grace Fu said, "The partnership between the COC and providers of shared services is an important one in improving the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the Charities sector. I am heartened by the commitment of these various organisations to partner with the COC as many helping hands. Many charities, especially the smaller ones, will benefit from their expertise and experience. We will continue in our efforts to empower and enable charities to cultivate a well-governed and thriving charity sector."

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