

PILOT SCHEME FOR
ELECTRIC PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES

Guide to Applications for the Trial

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Currently, there are some 4350 public light buses (PLB) running on the road accounting for 4% vehicle emission in Hong Kong. Electrification of PLBs is one of the Government's measures in striving to achieve zero vehicular emissions and carbon neutrality before 2050. However, hilly terrains, long daily mileage, high air-conditioning demand in different seasons, long charging time, as well as space and power requirements for installation of charging facilities make the application of e-PLBs in Hong Kong a challenge. In this regard, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) launched the "Pilot Scheme for Electric Public Light Buses (e-PLB)" (the Pilot Scheme) to test out the operation and performance of e-PLBs designed for quick charging using pantographs and backup plug-in chargers and the associated charging facilities in local environment and assess their applicability in Hong Kong.

1.2 The Pilot Scheme

The Pilot Scheme will engage the interested operators of PLB (scheduled service) (i.e. green minibus) (GMB) of some selected routes of different operating characteristics to try out different models of e-PLBs in their daily operations. To encourage GMB operators to join the Pilot Scheme, financial incentives in form of subsidy to purchase e-PLBs will be provided, and the subsidy recipients shall arrange to operate on the acquired e-PLBs for 12 months in their daily operation (the Trial). The Pilot Scheme will provide valuable experience and data to assess the operation and performance of e-PLB under local environment for formulating the policy and strategy for their adoption in Hong Kong in the long run.

1.3 Application procedure

Applicant should submit a duly completed Application for Trial Form - Pilot Scheme for Electric Public Light Buses (Application for Trial Form) with the required supporting documents to the EPD on or before the specified deadline. The EPD will assess the application received and may request the applicant to provide clarification or supplementary information if necessary. The EPD will inform the applicant of the application results as soon as practicable.

If an application is approved, the applicant, as the subsidy recipient, will be required to sign an agreement with the Government and shall comply with all the agreement terms

for receiving the subsidy. Nothing in this Guide shall constitute a contract or invitation to contract. There shall be no binding agreement between the Government and a successful applicant until the agreement is duly signed by all parties thereto.

2. General Guideline

2.1 Eligible Applicants

GMB operators providing GMB services (i) with terminal or en-route stop at or (ii) in the vicinity of a designated public transport interchange (PTI) will be invited by the EPD to join the Pilot Scheme of e-PLBs to operate e-PLBs acquired under the Pilot Scheme with quick charging service provided at the designated PTI. The applicant shall be a current GMB operator who –

- (a) has acquired the Passenger Service License (PSL) issued by the Commissioner for Transport for operation of the approved GMB services;
- (b) operates the GMB services at or in the vicinity of the designated PTI;
- (c) is not receiving or has not received funding from other government sources, public bodies or charitable organizations for the concerned e-PLB(s) under the application, except the tax incentive schemes to encourage the use of e-PLBs; and
- (d) is not a supplier or manufacturer of the e-PLB(s) under the application, or its Associates, Associated Persons or Related Companies¹.

¹ “Associate” of any person means (1) a relative or partner of that person; or (2) a company, one or more of whose directors is in common with one or more of the directors of that person.

“Associated Person” in relation to another person means (1) any person who has control, directly or indirectly over the other; or (2) any person who is controlled, directly or indirectly, by another; or (3) any person who is controlled by, or has control over a person at (1) or (2) above.

“Related Company” (if the applicant is a company) of the applicant includes any one of the following:
(a) a shareholder (corporate or individual) which directly or indirectly beneficially owns fifty (50) percent or more of the issued share capital of the applicant (“majority shareholder”); (b) a holding

2.2 Purchase of e-PLB

The subsidy recipient should purchase e-PLB(s) at the prequalified price² from the prequalified suppliers who are not Associates, Associated persons or Related Companies of the subsidy recipient, unless with the written consent of the Government. The list of prequalified suppliers and their contacts are available at the EPD's website below:

https://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/air/guide_ref/pseplb.html

2.3 Subsidy Level

- (a) The Government will subsidise the purchase of e-PLBs for conducting the Trial under the Pilot Scheme. The subsidy level is 80% of the purchase price³ of the e-PLBs acquired by subsidy recipients subject to the approved subsidy set out in the Subsidy Agreements signed between the Government and subsidy recipients.
- (b) The subsidy will be provided on reimbursement basis, i.e. subsidy recipients shall first settle payment for the e-PLBs acquired before seeking reimbursement from the EPD. The release of subsidy shall follow the rules and principles below:
 - i. The subsidy only applies to the purchase price of e-PLBs. Any product or accessory acquired together with the e-PLBs will not be reimbursed.

company or a subsidiary of the applicant; (c) a holding company or a subsidiary of a majority shareholder (being a company) of the applicant; or (d) a company in which a majority shareholder (being an individual) of the applicant directly or indirectly beneficially owns fifty (50) percent or more of its issued share capital or controls the composition of its board of directors.

² Prequalified price means the selling price set by the prequalified supplier stated in an agreement executed by the Government and the prequalified supplier for the Pilot Scheme for selling an e-PLB to a subsidy recipient.

³ Purchase price means the price for the purchase of a unit of trial e-PLB as stated in an agreement which is executed by the subsidy recipient and the prequalified supplier as consented by the Government in writing in advance. It is the prequalified price of the e-PLBs only excluding insurance, Licence fee, Registration fee, Traffic Accident Victims Assistance (TAVA) fee, Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) permit and vehicle examination fee.

- ii. Actual subsidy of each e-PLB shall be based on the amount paid by the subsidy recipient for settling the purchase price of the e-PLB, and shall not exceed the approved subsidy of that e-PLB.
 - iii. Total amount to be reimbursed to a subsidy recipient shall not exceed the total approved subsidy of the application.
 - iv. The subsidy shall be released after the e-PLB has been delivered, confirmed compliance with the relevant statutory requirements applicable and is ready for use in the Trial, and the payment for the e-PLB has been settled by the subsidy recipient.
 - v. Subject to the conditions in (iv) above, when the subsidy recipient has settled the payment of the e-PLB under trial, it may request the EPD to release the invoiced amount up to 80% of the actual cost of the e-PLB.
- (c) Once the EPD has approved the paid invoice together with all the relevant supporting documents submitted by the subsidy recipient, the Government will arrange to release the subsidy. To apply for the subsidy, applicant shall submit to the Government its request for release of subsidy (including reimbursement for interim payments (if any)) together with the required documents for processing the reimbursement application.

2.4 Application Limit

The number of e-PLBs applied for conducting the Trial at each designated PTI by single GMB operator should not exceed 10% of its PLB fleet⁴, or a maximum of 2 vehicles, whichever the higher.

2.5 Vetting of Application

The application will be assessed by the EPD. The EPD may request applicant to provide clarification or supplementary information if necessary. The EPD will inform the applicant of the decision as soon as practicable after the application deadlines for

⁴ Fleet means the number of scheduled vehicle allocation as stipulated on the Schedules of Services of the route(s) applied.

the respective designated PTIs. The EPD will post a summary of the approved applications to the EPD website mentioned in Section 2.2 above.

Each designated PTI will be assigned a maximum number of e-PLBs for the Trial application. The invitation for application may be carried out in one or more rounds depending on the total number of e-PLBs approved in each invitation exercise. The number of e-PLBs approved for the Trial for individual applicants will be based on the following rules;-

(a) First round of application:

Invitation to GMB operator(s) providing GMB services with **terminal or en-route stop at the designated PTI**:

- (i) Approve 1st e-PLB for each eligible applicant, if there are insufficient quota, draw lots to determine the approval to be given to the eligible applicant(s);
- (ii) If there are sufficient remaining quota, approve 2nd e-PLB for each eligible applicant who has applied for more than 1 e-PLB. If there are insufficient remaining quota to meet all the applications for the 2nd e-PLB, draw lots to determine the approval to be given to the eligible applicant(s);
- (iii) In case there are still quota remained after (a)(ii) above, adopt the same principle in (a)(ii) for approving the 3rd e-PLB for each applicant who has applied for more than 2 e-PLBs.

(b) Subsequent rounds of application:

Invitation to GMB operator(s) providing GMB services in the **vicinity of the designated PTI** in addition to those with terminal or en-route stop at the designated PTI:

- (i) The same steps for the first round of application will be adopted for allocating the quota remained after the first round.

2.6 Requirements of all applications and agreements

- (a) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the agreement signed between the applicant and the Government in respect of the Pilot Scheme, the Government reserves the right to disqualify the applicant on the grounds that the applicant has engaged, is engaging, or is reasonably believed to have engaged or be engaging in acts or activities that are likely to cause or constitute the occurrence of offences endangering national security or otherwise the exclusion is necessary in the interest of national security, or is necessary to protect the public interest of Hong Kong, public morals, public order or public safety.
- (b) The Government may immediately terminate the agreement upon the occurrence of any of the following events:
 - (i) the recipient has engaged or is engaging in acts or activities that are likely to constitute or cause the occurrence of offences endangering national security or which would otherwise be contrary to the interest of national security;
 - (ii) the continued engagement of the recipient or the continued implementation of the Trial is contrary to the interest of national security;
or
 - (iii) the Government reasonably believes that any of the events mentioned above is about to occur.

3. NOTES FOR COMPLETING APPLICATION FOR TRIAL FORM

3.1 Submission of Application

An applicant has to fill out the Application for Trial Form which is available from –

Electric Public Light Bus Section
Mobile Source Group
Environmental Protection Department
33/F, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road
Wan Chai, Hong Kong
Tel : 2594 6013
E-mail : eplb@epd.gov.hk

Electronic copy of this Guide and the Application for Trial Form can also be downloaded from the EPD website at:

https://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/air/guide_ref/pseplb.html

The completed Application for Trial Form and supporting documents should be submitted by post or by hand to the above address OR by e-mail to eplb@epd.gov.hk. The EPD will acknowledge receipt of the application in writing within 5 working days.

(Note: For application submitted by email, the total file size of the attachment is limited to 10Mb and the file format must be either .jpg or .pdf)

3.2 General requirements

- (a) All sections of the Application for Trial Form must be completed and supplemented by supporting documents where necessary. Where the information sought is not applicable or not available, please fill in “NA”.
- (b) The information provided in the Application for Trial Form should be typed or printed, and should be clear and legible. Additional pages may be attached to the Application for Trial Form if necessary.
- (c) If an applicant is a limited or unlimited company, it must apply under the name of the company and the Application for Trial Form must be signed by an authorized person of the company with the company chop in the Declaration.
- (d) If an applicant is a sole proprietor, he/she must sign the Declaration by himself/herself.
- (e) If an applicant is a partnership, all partners should provide their names and signatures as Authorized Person in the Declaration.

3.3 Section A - Particulars of Applicant

- (a) A title such as Mr, Mrs, Miss or Ms should be provided if the applicant is a sole proprietor.
- (b) The business registration certificate number should be provided unless the applicant is exempted from making an application for business registration

under the Business Registration Ordinance (Cap. 310). If the applicant is a limited company, Certificate of Incorporation number should also be provided. The applicant should attach a copy of the relevant certificate(s).

- (c) Brief descriptions of the business including route number(s), route(s) and terminal(s) should be provided. The applicant should also provide the number of PLBs for each route and the business commencement date.
- (d) The applicant should list out all other funding or subsidy applications submitted by the applicant and its Associates, Associated Persons or Related Companies for the e-PLB(s) under application for the Pilot Scheme. If an applicant is a partnership, the applicant should provide information on other trial applications submitted to the EPD by each individual partner. The approval already granted to or under application by the individual partners will be taken into account in determining whether the application is accepted.

3.4 Section B – Trial of Electric Public Light Buses

- (a) The applicant should provide information of the e-PLB to be tried out under the Pilot Scheme, including its model, manufacturer, supplier, etc. and attach an implementation schedule and plan showing the stages from procurement to the actual trial. The Trial should be conducted at the designated PTI and approved route(s).
- (b) The applicant is allowed to apply for more than one e-PLB subject to the application limit specified in section 2.4 above. Applicant who applies for more than one vehicle should select more than one model of e-PLB for conducting the Trial.
- (c) The applicant should state the prequalified price(s) of the selected e-PLB model(s) in the application.
- (d) The applicant shall bear solely all risks, and all costs and expenses of acquiring any e-PLB and comply with all legal requirements for the Trial.
- (e) The applicant should commence the Trial within 6 months from the approval date of the application. Otherwise, the applicant should provide justifications in Section B together with supporting document where necessary.

3.5 Section C – Route Information Table

The applicant should provide the route(s) number and terminals of the route(s) for each e-PLB applied.

3.6 Section D – Undertaking and Declaration

The applicant should read with care all items in Section D. By submitting the application, applicant shall undertake, warrant, declare and agree with continuing effect all the items in Section D.

3.7 Section E – Government Disclaimers

The applicant should read with care the Government Disclaimers in Section E. Any submission by the applicant shall be taken to be an acceptance of the terms of the Government Disclaimers in Section E.

3.8 Section F – Handling of Information

Personal data provided in an application will be kept in confidence. Information provided for the application shall be handled by clauses 1- 4 in Section F.