

20 July 2026

Message from the Chairman

The Proposed Guidelines on Election-related Activities in respect of the Rural Representative Election for Public Consultation

The 2027 Rural Ordinary Election will be held in early 2027. The Electoral Affairs Commission (“EAC”) is empowered under section 6(1)(a) of the Electoral Affairs Commission Ordinance (“EACO”) (Cap. 541) to issue guidelines to facilitate the conduct and supervision of an election. These guidelines aim to explain in simple language the provisions under current electoral legislation with a view to reminding candidates and other relevant persons of the regulations and requirements of the electoral legislation; and to promulgate a code of conduct based on the fair and equal treatment principles in respect of election-related activities which are not covered by the legislation.

The EAC has at all times made its best endeavours to refine and improve the electoral arrangements for public elections. To this end, the EAC has drawn up a new set of the proposed guidelines for the 2027 Rural Ordinary Election and all subsequent rural by-elections to be held afterwards. Based on the existing guidelines for the Rural Representative (“RR”) election (October 2022 edition), the proposed guidelines were prepared by incorporating appropriate amendments with reference to the supplementary information issued by the EAC for the Rural By-election (May 2026) and the guidelines issued for the 2025 Legislative Council General Election. The amendments mainly include:

- (a) amendments to the subsidiary legislation under the EACO and other legislation in relation to electoral matters, including:
 - (i) in accordance with the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance which came into effect on 23 March 2024, updating the circumstances in which a person shall be disqualified from being nominated as a candidate and from being elected as an RR

for a Rural Area. It is specified that any person who has been convicted of any offence endangering national security, shall be disqualified from being nominated as a candidate at an RR election, and from being elected as an RR for a Rural Area (para. 3.5(c)); and

- (ii) in accordance with the amendments made to the Ninth Schedule of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132), updating the penalty for unlawfully displaying an election advertisement (“EA”) without the necessary written permission or authorisation from \$10,000 to \$25,000, and the daily penalty for a continuing offence from \$300 to \$450 (para. 7.21).
- (b) new or enhanced election-related arrangements, including:
- (i) candidates can submit information for the Introduction to Candidates by electronic means and use the electronic version of the grid paper (para. 3.21(c));
 - (ii) polling staff who are arranged to briefly leave their posts to cast their votes may present their polling staff identification to the staff at their allocated polling station to request priority queuing for collecting ballot papers and casting their votes, so that they can return to work promptly (para. 4.22);
 - (iii) revising the deadline for candidates to upload or submit the relevant documents and information for public inspection after the publication of EAs (paras. 7.2, 7.40 and Appendix 4);
 - (iv) revising the deadline for Returning Officers to allocate the designated spots for EAs (para. 7.26);
 - (v) revising the deadline for candidates to post or submit the amended information, where there is any mistake in the information of the EAs submitted by them (para. 7.42 and Appendix 4);

- (vi) to protect the personal data privacy of the electors, candidates must sign the “Undertaking on Proper Use of Electors’ Information”, undertaking that the relevant personal data will be used solely for the relevant electioneering activities of the election, and all relevant personal data will be properly safeguarded and duly destroyed after the election (para. 8.16); and
 - (vii) to handle complaints more effectively, adding a recommendation to complainants on using the designated complaint form on the EAC website (para. 19.7).
- (c) further elaborating the contents of the guidelines to enable candidates and relevant persons to more easily grasp the areas which they should pay attention to, including:
- (i) stating that, although the law does not stipulate a minimum age for individuals signing the Consent of Support, if a supporter is under the age of 18, the candidate may, for prudence’s sake, arrange the parent or guardian of the supporter to co-sign the Consent of Support (para. 17.15);
 - (ii) adding “Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for Completing the Return and Declaration of Election Expenses and Election Donations (“election return”)” to facilitate candidates to understand the requirements for completing election returns (Appendix 14).
- (d) reorganising where appropriate the structure and content of all chapters and appendices by removing obsolete or repetitive content, explaining the relevant electoral arrangements in the form of lists and flowcharts, consolidating the content of the chapters, etc., with a view to making the content more concise and easier to comprehend and thereby enhancing the public’s reading experience.

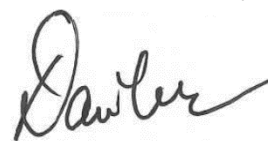
Before finalising and publishing the guidelines, we shall, in accordance with section 6(2) of the EACO, consult the public on the proposed guidelines from **20 July to 18 August 2026** (both dates inclusive). At this stage, the EAC has not made any decision with respect to the issues addressed in the proposed guidelines (except for those under the requirements of the relevant legislation). The EAC will make a final decision in the light of the responses received in this public consultation.

During the consultation period, members of the public may submit written representations on the proposed guidelines. Written representations could be sent to the EAC Secretariat at 8/F, Treasury Building, 3 Tonkin Street West, Cheung Sha Wan, Kowloon by post, by facsimile transmission (fax no.: 2511 1682) or email (eacenq@eac.hk). For written representations submitted by post, **the postmark date will be taken as the submission date. Late submissions will not be considered.** For enquiries, please call 2891 1001.

The EAC has always made its best endeavours to ensure that all public elections are held in an open, honest and fair manner. Formulating electoral guidelines plays an important role in the conduct of the 2027 Rural Ordinary Election. The EAC wishes members of the public could actively participate.

All written representations will be treated as open information for public perusal unless otherwise specified. If you wish to keep your name or views confidential, please indicate so clearly in your representations.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Lok', with a stylized, flowing script.

(David Lok)

Chairman

Electoral Affairs Commission