

AEFI Fund Application Overview

According to terms and conditions of the AEFI Fund set out in the paper submitted by the Government to the Legislative Council Finance Committee in February 2021, if an SAE is certified by a Registered Medical Practitioner while the Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19 Immunisation (Expert Committee) has concluded its causal relationship with the vaccination administered under the Government's COVID-19 Vaccination Programme as “consistent with casual association with immunization” or “indeterminate”, the Administrator will conduct the severity assessment and propose an appropriate level of payout based on the medical information provided by the relevant medical institutions and the severity assessment scheme (Note 1 and 2). The proposal will then be submitted to the Health Bureau (HHB) for review and approval.

As stated in the terms and conditions of the AEFI Fund, the principles of severity assessment include fairness to applicant, prudent use of public funding, transparency to public, and based on medical science. Severity of individual cases is subject to case-by-case assessment according to their circumstances and taking into account considerations including whether long term bodily harm has been made by the SAE. Decision and payout of the AEFI Fund are made by the HHB. The Administrator is responsible for administrative services for the AEFI Fund (such as processing applications, providing professional advice on case assessment and handling related enquires and complaint, etc.) in accordance with the service contract. The Administrator only receives a fixed amount of administrative fee. It is not involved in the compensation payout funding, and it is not providing any insurance service to the Government. The Administrator will not directly manage or issue payout of the AEFI Fund.

Receiving payment from the AEFI Fund will not affect the right of the affected person in seeking legal recourse for damages or loss against the vaccine manufacturer. A claimant can still undertake civil action against any person responsible for bodily injury. However, a claimant cannot receive double indemnity. If a claimant receives compensation as adjudged in court, the amount he or she has previously received from the AEFI Fund will be offset from the court's award.

As at April 14, 2024, about 21.06 million doses of vaccines have been administered under the Government's COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. 1405 applications for the AEFI Fund were received, including 18 applications received after the last update (January 31, 2024). The Expert Committee has completed the causality assessment for 985 cases. Of which, 530 cases were concluded as “consistent with casual association with immunization” or “indeterminate” and 455 cases were concluded as “inconsistent with causal association with immunization” or “unclassifiable”.

1384 AEFI Fund cases have been processed. The 21 cases being processed include cases pending documents / information from applicants, assessment outcome of Expert Committee, and cases concluded by Expert Committee as “consistent with causal association with immunization” or “indeterminate” pending information from relevant medical institutions or those with severity assessment being conducted.

Overview and examination progress of the applications are set out below. Information will be updated on a quarterly basis.

	Death (No. of cases)	Injury (No. of cases)
No. of Application received	124	1 281
Application being processed (including cases pending documents / information from applicants or assessment outcome of Expert Committee, and cases concluded by Expert Committee as “consistent with causal association with immunization” or “indeterminate” pending information from relevant medical institutions or those with severity assessment being conducted, etc.)	4	17
Incomplete application rejected (including cases that have not been reported by medical professional to the Department of Health as serious or unexpected adverse events following immunization, reported cases were outside the events listed under the “AEFI List” or “AESI List” as endorsed by Expert Committee, or cases failing to provide relevant supporting document(s), etc.)	15	387
Cases not associated with vaccination or unclassifiable (adequate information not available) based on the assessment outcome of the Expert Committee	103	352

	Death (No. of cases)	Injury (No. of cases)
Cases concluded by Expert Committee as “consistent with causal association with immunization” or “indeterminate”, and those with severity assessment completed by the Administrator		
Cases with no payout based on outcome of the severity assessment	NA	4
Cases with AEFI Fund approved	2 (Note 3)	521 (Involving Anaphylaxis, Hospitalization, Bell’s Palsy, Myocarditis / Pericarditis, Erythema Multiforme, etc. cases)
Total amount of payout under AEFI Fund	HK\$4,000,000	HK\$ 140,120,000

Note 1: Severity assessment scheme is outlined in Part 8 of Terms and Conditions for the AEFI Fund (https://hk-axa-web-2020.cdn.axa-contento-118412.eu/hk-axa-web-2020/1d15cea6-f0a8-49e8-ade8-8056f8f30368_20220628+AEFI+Fund+terms+and+conditions+_Eng_Final.pdf) .

Note 2: If the case has not been reported by medical professional to the Department of Health, reported case was outside the events listed under the “List of Serious or Unexpected Adverse Events Following Immunization of COVID-19 Vaccines (AEFI List)” or “List of Adverse Events of Special Interest of COVID-19 Vaccines (AESI List)” as endorsed by Expert Committee (the two lists are available at https://www.drugoffice.gov.hk/eps/do/en/healthcare_providers/adr_reporting/index.html), does not meet the threshold of the severity assessment scheme, the applicant fails to provide relevant supporting document(s), or the SAE is confirmed to be unrelated to the vaccination in the assessment outcome by the Expert Committee, the application will be rejected.

Note 3: Involving an AESI death case with vaccination history of more than 14 days and an AEFI death case passing away on the same day after vaccination. The causal relationship of both cases with vaccination were concluded by the Expert Committee to be indeterminate. Relevant press releases please refer to <https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202112/08/P2021120800577.htm?fontSize=1> and <https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202206/07/P2022060700613.htm?fontSize=1> respectively. In accordance with the terms and conditions of the AEFI Fund set out in the paper submitted by the Government to the Legislative Council Finance Committee in February 2021, death payout is still granted to both cases although they were assessed by the Expert Committee as causality indeterminate.