

## Revamped Tan Chin Tuan Foundation seeks clarity in charity

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IT WAS his money, and in the past, the late Dr Tan Chin Tuan alone would decide who his foundation would give it to, and how much.

But with the OCBC Bank founder's passing last November, the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation saw a need, moving forward, to institutionalise its decision-making process and professionalise the philanthropy organisation's workings.

With this in mind, the foundation – one of Singapore's oldest charitable foundations established in 1976 – recently completed a review of its appeal and work processes in an internal audit, with the aim of allowing it to be more effective in its giving.

Now, applicants who apply to the Tan

Chin Tuan Foundation will need to set out clear and measurable targets to secure funding. Projects, especially larger ones, will be monitored to ensure that the social outcome targeted is achieved. After a project is completed, beneficiaries will have to submit final reports, which will be assessed on whether objectives are met. This assessment will affect future funding.

The foundation has also employed specialised staff to help voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs) administer applications for grants. There are also plans to increase the number of full-time staff running the secretariat from three to at least five staff.

Helping the foundation in its review process was management consultants Price WaterhouseCoopers.

Mr Eric Teng, the foundation's chief

executive officer, told TODAY that the review process was "timely" given the changes in the landscape of philanthropy and an emphasis on transparency placed on VWOs and charitable organisations.

The foundation's move is "a step forward in professionalising the practice of grantmaking", said Mrs Tan Chee Koon, CEO of the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre.

"It suggests that the foundation is looking at its grants as strategic investments in the community for desired outcomes," she said. "As with all investments, the process requires thought, planning, evaluation and monitoring processes, for which the necessary investment in human capital within the foundation is required."

Apart from the expected improvement in

the quality of giving, Mrs Tan expects "a knock-on effect" on the quality of grant-seeking projects and on accountability. "All in all, the progressive step taken by the Tan Foundation augurs well for the development of family philanthropy in Singapore," she said.

Since 1976, the foundation has helped more than 2,300 organisations, groups and individuals. Last year, it extended its helping hand to 180 organisations and individuals, with the National University of Singapore receiving \$29 million, its largest donation to date.

Mr Teng, who served on the National Council of Social Service board for eight years, said that the foundation hopes to impress upon VWOs the need to be clear of their objectives when asking for money.

"We want to continue to give money – but we also want to give it well," he said.