

Legislative Council Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

2001 Digital 21 Strategy

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the 2001 Digital 21 Strategy.

Background

2. In the 1997 and 1998 policy addresses, the Chief Executive set out his vision to make Hong Kong a leader in the information world and to use information technology (IT) to retain our competitive edge and to drive our overall economic expansion. To take forward these aspirations, the Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau (ITBB) was set up in April 1998 and we launched the first IT strategy for Hong Kong, entitled “Digital 21”, in November 1998. The primary focus of the strategy was to enhance and promote our information infrastructure and services so as to make Hong Kong a leading digital city in the globally connected world of the 21st century.

3. After over two years of implementation, we have put in place the essential information infrastructure and elements for Hong Kong to develop as a leading digital city. Major milestones achieved include liberalisation of the telecommunications market, development of a legislative framework for e-business, establishment of a local public key infrastructure for the conduct of secure electronic transactions, development of the Cyberport and launching of the Electronic Service Delivery (ESD) Scheme to provide Government services online, etc. A local IT industry has been established and an e-culture has emerged in the community. These achievements have led to extensive technology deployment, adoption and application, especially in terms of mobile communications, smart-card technology and computer usage.

4. However, technological advancement taken place in the past two years has led to significant changes in the information world and brought along new opportunities as well as challenges. Both the Government and the private sector have to review and develop new policies and initiatives. Otherwise we will not be able to maintain our competitiveness in the Information Age. Against this background, the Government has reviewed the Digital 21 Strategy with a view to stocktaking progress, identifying new areas to focus on, as well as recommending new policies and initiatives critical to our future success.

5. When reviewing the Digital 21 Strategy, we have taken into account the implementation of the 1998 strategy, the strengths of Hong Kong as compared with our regional and international counterparts and the trends of the global IT development. We have also consulted the Information Infrastructure Advisory Committee (which comprises representatives of the IT industry, academia, professional bodies and the relevant Government bureaux/departments) in drawing up the strategy.

Focus of the 2001 Digital 21 Strategy

6. On 4 May 2001, we promulgated the 2001 Digital 21 Strategy: Connecting the World. A copy of the document has already been circulated to Members. The key policy objective is “Building on Hong Kong’s early success in establishing a solid foundation for the use of IT, Digital 21 will now strive to position Hong Kong as a leading e-business community and digital city in the globally connected world”.

7. The 2001 Digital 21 Strategy has identified five key result areas (KRAs) that we need to focus on in order to drive Hong Kong’s development as a leading digital city. The five KRAs are -

- to enhance the world class e-business environment in Hong Kong by developing our telecommunications, IT, broadcasting and multi-media content production capabilities, actively pursuing the flagship Cyberport project, etc;

- to ensure that the Government leads by example by driving E-government, putting more public services online, actively pursuing electronic procurement and outsourcing Government IT projects;
- to develop our workforce for the information economy by improving the quality and quantity of local IT manpower, nurturing our young generation and leveraging the supply of IT professionals from the Mainland and overseas;
- to strengthen the community for digital exploitation by improving accessibility, especially for those who have less opportunities to use IT in their daily lives, and cultivating a community that takes advantage of the information economy; and
- to leverage Hong Kong's strengths in exploitation of enabling technologies in areas of next generation wireless communication, smart-card technology, digital broadcasting and Internet2, etc.

8. We have developed a series of initiatives and defined targets under each of the KRAs for implementation. ITBB will continue to work with the industry, academia, professional organisations, Government bureaux and departments, and other community groups to implement the initiatives under the 2001 Digital 21 Strategy. With these concerted efforts, Hong Kong can be a premier digital city connecting the world.

**Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau
May 2001**