

For discussion
on 7 December 2004

Panel on Security of the Legislative Council

**Implementation of Phase II of
the Updated Information Systems Strategy for
the Immigration Department - the Automated Passenger Clearance
System and the Automated Vehicle Clearance System**

INTRODUCTION

This paper updates Members on the progress of the implementation of the Automated Passenger Clearance (APC) System and Automated Vehicle Clearance (AVC) System.

BACKGROUND

2. APC and AVC are two important projects of Phase II of the Updated Information Systems Strategy (ISS-2) of the Immigration Department (ImmD), under which APC and AVC channels will be installed at our control points to provide an option for residents holding smart identity cards (except those under the age of 11 whose smart identity cards do not have any fingerprint templates) to perform self-service immigration clearance. Residents could continue to use the traditional counters if they choose to. With the implementation of the two projects, the overall passenger and vehicle throughput at control points can be improved without the need to employ additional staff.

3. The Finance Committee approved in January 2003 (FCR(2002-03)51) a commitment of \$352,753,000 for implementing the above two projects.

TENDERING

4. The tender for APC and AVC was issued on 30 May 2003. The duration of the tender period proposed in the above Finance Committee paper was 9 months. However, due to the complexity and novelty of the systems, the tendering exercise took ten months to complete. One of the main reasons is that ImmD allowed 12 weeks as the tender opening period as against the norm of 6 weeks to allow sufficient time for tenderers to prepare their proposals and the prototype systems. A total of four proposals were received. After careful evaluation of the proposals, the contract for both systems was awarded to ATAL Technologies Ltd. in March 2004.

SYSTEM DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

5. After the award of the contract, the contractor carried the detailed design and development of both systems in full swing and completed these works in August 2004, enabling ImmD to catch up with the original schedule. All site preparation works are now in good progress.

SYSTEM TESTS

6. Since June 2004, ImmD has, in accordance with schedule, conducted a series of tests including, among other things, function tests, unit tests, integrated tests, load tests, reliability tests and user acceptance tests in order to ensure both systems meet various user requirements. ImmD will continue to fine tune the systems to ensure stability and reliability upon their roll-out.

USER TRIAL

7. APC channels were installed near the end of November 2004 on the ground floor of the Immigration Tower in Wan Chai, at the Hong Kong Smart Identity Card Centre, the East Kowloon Smart Identity Card

Centre and the Tsuen Wan Smart Identity Card Centre to let permanent residents holding smart identity cards try out the channels and provide feedback, if any.

IMPLEMENTATION

8. Depending on the outcome of the user trial, ImmD plans to roll out a small number of APC channels at the Lo Wu Control Point around the end of 2004. Further APC channels will be installed at our control points in phases. Besides, ImmD aims to roll out the AVC System at the Lok Ma Chau Control Point by early 2005 upon successful completion of all necessary tests.

LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENT

9. Initially, permanent residents who are holders of valid smart identity cards (except those under the age of 11 whose identity cards do not have any fingerprint templates) will be able to use the new systems. Legislative amendments to the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115) will be required before non-permanent residents holding smart identity cards and visitors holding travel passes may use the APC channels. We plan to consult Members on the details of the proposed legislative amendments in the first quarter of 2005.

Security Bureau
25 November 2004