**Panel on Security of the Legislative Council**

**Computer Systems for the Immigration Department at the
New Control Point for the Lok Ma Chau Terminus of the
Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line**

**INTRODUCTION**

This paper informs Members of our plan to install computer systems for the operation of the Immigration Department (ImmD) at the new control point for the Lok Ma Chau (LMC) Terminus of the Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line (the Spur Line) scheduled for completion by mid-2007.

**BACKGROUND**

2.      On 21 February 2003, the Finance Committee (FC) approved a capital commitment of $656.5 million in money-of-the-day prices for the essential public infrastructure works (EPIW) for the Spur Line.  The scope of the project, *inter alia*, includes the fitting-out, fixtures, furniture and equipment for cross-boundary facilities for the government portion of the LMC Terminus, including immigration counters.

3.      As mentioned in the funding application for the EPIW for the Spur Line, we need to seek separate funds under **Head 710 – Computerisation** for ImmD's administrative computer systems (Systems) for the new control point at the LMC Terminus.

**SYSTEMS FOR OPERATION OF IMMD AT THE NEW CONTROL POINT**

4.      A total of ten Systems are required to support ImmD's operation at the new control point, including two Systems supporting the operation of immigration counters/e-channels, and eight Systems supporting the operation of back offices, as detailed below.

**Systems Supporting the Operation of Counters/e-Channels**

5.      The two Systems required to support the operation of 136 immigration counters/e-channels at the new control point are the Entry/Exit Processing and Records System (EXPRESS) and the Automated Passenger Clearance (APC) System.

6.      EXPRESS supports the process of immigration clearance at all control points, including the implementation of the Easy Travel Scheme under which Hong Kong permanent residents can travel in and out of Hong Kong producing only their Hong Kong identity cards.   The optical character recognition (OCR) readers together with the document imaging optical character recognition (DIOCR) readers of the system do away with the need to manually input personal data of holders of Hong Kong identity cards or other machine-readable travel documents by an immigration control officer (ICO) during immigration clearance.

7.      The APC system, often referred to as e-channels, supports immigration clearance through automated means by employing smart card and fingerprint recognition technologies.   The e-channels enable passengers to perform self-service immigration clearance by biometric verification instead of visual inspection by ICO.   One ICO can supervise several e-channels.

**Systems Supporting the Operation of Back Offices at the New Control Point**

8.      Another eight Systems to support ImmD's back offices at the new control point will be required.   Of these, six are required to facilitate the verification of the authenticity of various types of travel documents and further examination of passengers, viz. (a) the Electronic Documentation of Information System on Network (EDISON) for verifying foreign travel documents, (b) iPermit System (IPS) for verifying iPermits issued to Taiwan visitors, (c) Smart Identity Card System (SMARTICS) for verifying Hong Kong identity cards, (d) Travel Document Information System (TDIS) for verifying HKSAR passports,

Documents of Identity for Visa Purposes, Re-entry Permits and Seaman's Identity Books, (e) the Application and Investigation Easy System (APPLIES) for handling investigation cases and checking the application status of visas, permits and travel passes for the passengers concerned on a real-time basis, and (f) System Investigation Information System (SIIS) for accessing up-to-date intelligence relating to syndicate crime, human smuggling and forgery cases.   The remaining two are required to support administrative work, viz. the Government Office Automation (GOA) System for providing an effective and efficient means for communication in electronic form between the new control point and other offices, and the Electronic Administrative Records Keeping System (EARKS) for facilitating the processing, maintenance and storage of administrative records such as personnel records.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.      Our indicative estimate is that the installation of the Systems required by ImmD for the new control point, viz. EXPRESS, APC, EDISON, IPS, SMARTICS, TDIS, APPLIES, SIIS, GOA and EARKS systems will require a total non-recurrent expenditure of $93.3 million over a three-year period from 2005-06 to 2007-08, broken down as follows –

|  |  | **$ million** |
|---|---|---:|
| (a) | Hardware, software and communication network | 70.1 |
| (b) | Implementation services (including engagement of contract staff) | 13.5 |
| (c) | Site preparation | 1.1 |
| (d) | Consumables | 0.3 |
| (e) | Contingency | 8.3 |
|  | **Total** | **93.3** |

10.　　Our indicative estimate is that the implementation of EXPRESS and APC systems will entail an additional non-recurrent staff cost of $3.6 million for both system development and implementation.　The cost breakdown is as follows –

|  |  | $ million |
|---|---|---|
| | Staff cost | |
| (a) | Departmental Grade | 2.1 |
| (b) | IT Professional Grade | 1.5 |
| | **Total** | **3.6** |

11.　　The additional recurrent expenditure arising from the project is estimated to be in the region of $12.3 million per annum.

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

12.　　Subject to funding approval by the FC, we plan to adopt the following implementation programme –

| Activity | Timing |
|---|---|
| Procurement | December 2005 to November 2006 |
| System development | May 2006 to December 2006 |
| System acceptance test | January 2007 to March 2007 |
| Cabling, installation and commissioning | October 2006 to February 2007 |
| Systems roll-out | To be ready before the commissioning of the Spur Line by mid-2007 |

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