

**For discussion on
6 November 2006**

**Legislative Council
Panel on Financial Affairs**

**Proposal on Hosting of the 59th Session of
the International Statistical Institute in 2013**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members about the Administration's intention to host the 59th Session of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) in Hong Kong in 2013.

Background and Justifications

2. Over the years, the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) has been participating actively in the work of the international statistical community. In particular, Hong Kong took the chair of the Committee on Statistics of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific during 1994 to 1998. Currently, several senior officers of C&SD are sitting on various international statistical committees, making solid contributions to the setting of international statistical standards and development of statistical methods. Also, professionals of C&SD have been participating extensively in international statistical conferences and seminars.

3. ISI is one of the oldest international scientific associations¹ which actively strives to meet the increasing needs for professional statistical information in a complex and dynamic society, and leads the development of statistical methods and their applications. It is a non-governmental organisation with membership open to both governmental and non-governmental entities or individuals and representing more than 130 countries worldwide.

¹ Founded in London in 1885, the ISI is a prestigious professional body with over 120 years of history.

4. ISI has been holding biennial Sessions since 1887. Recently, C&SD has been invited by ISI to indicate whether Hong Kong is interested in hosting the 59th ISI Session in 2013. For the 56th and 57th ISI Sessions to be held in 2007 and 2009, Lisboa and Durban will be the hosting cities respectively. And for the 58th ISI Session to be held in 2011, ISI has already shortlisted the potential hosting cities. We understand that ISI prefers the hosting of the event to be well spread over different regions in a balanced manner. For Asia, Tokyo held the 46th ISI Session in the 1980's, Beijing held the 50th ISI Session in the 1990's and Seoul held the 53rd ISI Session in the 2000's. To follow the past practice, ISI wishes to have a Session held in a renowned Asian city in the 2010's and therefore it extends an invitation to Hong Kong.

5. The ISI Session is regarded as the Olympiad of the international statistical community. It is a great honour for cities to be chosen as the host of this event. Statistically advanced economies such as Australia, Canada, the UK, the US and the Netherlands all have had the experience of hosting ISI Sessions. For Asian economies, this event has been held in China, India, Japan, the Philippines and South Korea. This is the first time for Hong Kong to receive such an invitation. We consider that the hosting of this prominent event of the 59th ISI Session will further strengthen Hong Kong's status in the international arena of statistics and demonstrate our statistical achievements.

6. An ISI Session usually lasts about ten days, including a Scientific Program with over 200 professional meetings and a Social Program comprising a number of hospitality functions and tours. In addition, satellite meetings are usually held before or after the main Session². If Hong Kong hosts the 59th ISI Session, we may organise satellite meetings in local academic institutions and nearby cities such as those in the mainland of China and neighbouring countries. Thus, there will be valuable opportunities for enhancing collaboration with official statistical agencies, professional statistical bodies and statistics departments of universities in the Asian region through organising the event.

7. Recent ISI Sessions have attracted a turnout of over 2 000 participants each time. We broadly estimate that hosting the event in

² For the 54th ISI Session held in Berlin, a total of seven satellite meetings were arranged before or after the main Session. Four of them were held in nearby countries including Estonia, Greece, Poland and Spain, while the remaining three were held in other German cities. As for the 55th ISI Session held in Sydney, three satellite meetings were held in New Zealand, one was held in New Caledonia and two were held in other cities in Australia.

Hong Kong will bring about 2 200 incoming visitors³, contributing approximately \$28 million⁴ to the tourist receipts of Hong Kong. In addition to the tangible economic benefits, we anticipate that the hosting of the 59th ISI Session will benefit Hong Kong in general by raising our city's international profile. It will provide an excellent opportunity to showcase our infrastructural achievements in communications, hospitality and transportation as well as to uphold our position as Asia's world city and the capital for exhibitions and conventions, thus helping to attract future internationally renowned events and other business opportunities to Hong Kong.

8. As ISI is a non-intergovernmental organisation and participation in its activities is not limited to states, Hong Kong may make a bid to host the event on its own. The bid will be submitted in the name of C&SD, which will assume the role as the main organiser of the event⁵.

Financial Implications

9. The hosting city is responsible for planning and mounting the Session under the auspices of ISI. The commitments include funding the event and securing commercial sponsorship, providing efficient logistics support to ensure the smooth conduct of event activities, providing professional inputs to the organisation of the Scientific Program, as well as arranging promotion and publicity activities of the event.

10. To make the event a successful one, a Secretariat will be established for about two years (2011-13) to work on the project. The Secretariat will be headed by an Assistant Commissioner who will be assisted by a deputy at the Senior Statistician rank (both to be redeployed within C&SD), and supported by a small dedicated team of six professional and administrative staff. It is envisaged that around 70 temporary clerical staff will also be employed around the ten-day conference period to support the event.

11. At this preliminary stage and in the absence of any discussions

³ The 55th ISI Session held in Sydney in 2005 attracted about 2 200 participants. We expect that if an ISI Session is held in Hong Kong, it will attract at least a similar number of participants.

⁴ The estimation is based on the amount of per night spending of overnight visitors in 2005 (which was \$1,274) compiled by the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

⁵ For the 55th ISI Session held in Sydney in 2005, the bid was submitted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and the Head of the Bureau chaired the main Organising Committee of the event.

with the ISI on the budget obligations, we broadly estimate, based on the experience of the previous ISI Sessions, that the expenditure for hosting the 59th ISI Session in Hong Kong will be around HK\$25 million (at the 2005 price level), to be incurred from 2011-12 to 2013-14. After netting off the revenue expected from registration fees and sponsorship, the net expenditure for hosting the event is estimated to be around HK\$17 million, inclusive of staff costs arising from the additional manpower requirements mentioned in paragraph 10 above. The resource requirement will be funded from the Secretary for the Financial Services and the Treasury's operating expenditure envelope. A tentative breakdown of expenditure and income by main components is at Annex.

Consideration by Finance Committee

12. In line with the agenda of ISI, we will make a formal bid for hosting the 59th Session to ISI by February 2007. Before submitting the bid, we intend to seek the Finance Committee's approval in principle of the rough order of costs set out at Annex. We expect to receive an indication of initial support and the formal approval to host the event from the ISI Council in mid-2007 and 2009 respectively. If our bid is successful, we will further hold discussions with the ISI on the host obligations and work out a more detailed budget. We will make a separate submission to the Finance Committee for approval of the actual financial commitment when the details are finalised, probably in 2009-10.

13. The 59th ISI Session will involve local and overseas statistical practitioners holding a series of meetings to exchange expertise on statistical issues of mutual concern. We will in particular publicise the event to official statistical agencies, professional statistical bodies and statistics departments of universities in the Asian region to solicit their support, and will secure their active involvement in this meaningful event.

**Census and Statistics Department/
Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau
November 2006**

**Indicative Financial Implications of Hosting the 59th ISI Session in
2013**

Estimated Expenditure	HK\$	
1. Venue hire and set up, technology services and general organising costs	8.0 million	
2. Advertising, publicity and promotion	4.5 million	
3. Social receptions	4.0 million	
4. Support rendered to ISI	1.0 million	
5. Staff costs	4.5 million	
	Sub-total	22.0 million
Contingency	3.0 million	
	Total Expenditure	25.0 million

Estimated Income	HK\$	
1. Registration fees ¹	7.0 million	
2. Sponsorship ²	1.0 million	
	Total Income	8.0 million

Estimated Net Expenditure **17.0 million**

¹ This refers to registration fees received from some 2 200 participants. The estimation is made with reference to the experience of the 55th ISI Session held in Sydney.

² This item refers to sponsorship provided by local commercial firms. The estimation is made with reference to the experience of the past ISI Sessions.