

For discussion
on 21 July 2009

Legislative Council
Panel on Commerce and Industry

Promoting an Innovation and Technology Culture in Hong Kong

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the work of the Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC) in promoting an innovation and technology culture in Hong Kong.

Our Strategy

2. Innovation and technology are essential elements to enhance an economy's productivity and competitiveness, and sustain its long-term economic growth. With the concerted efforts of the Government, industry and academia, Hong Kong has been making steady progress in the development of innovation and technology in recent years. To ensure this development continues, we need to cultivate a strong innovation and technology culture in society. It is important that our young talent have the opportunity to develop their potential and flourish in this field.

3. The Government adopts a two-pronged approach to foster an innovation and technology culture in Hong Kong. For the general public, we hope to reinforce their understanding of and support for innovation and technology. For youngsters, we aim to inspire their interest in and commitment to innovation and technology, so as to nurture a new generation of innovators for the future economic and social development of Hong Kong.

4. Various government bureaux and departments, e.g. Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, Education Bureau, Office of Government Chief Information Officer, CreateHK and ITC, are actively involved in the promotion of an innovation and technology culture in Hong Kong through their respective programmes. To achieve synergy, ITC has

enlisted support from a wide range of partners, such as universities and schools, youth groups, social service organisations, and professional and trade bodies to participate in various major promotional initiatives.

Programmes for the General Public

5. Our aim is to educate the community about the important role played by innovation and technology in fostering Hong Kong's economic and social development, so that they would cherish and support innovation and technology. ITC has been publicising this message to a large audience through roadshows and exhibitions in popular places as well as infotainment programmes broadcast on the commercial TV channels.

Innovation Festival

6. Since 2005, ITC organised the annual Innovation Festival. This flagship event brings together over 40 programme partners including universities, professional bodies, technology companies, as well as youth organisations involved in innovation and robotic activities. Run in conjunction with the Education Bureau, this event is now established as a prime showcase for young and upcoming talent.

7. The theme of last year's Innovation Festival was: InnoVision, Innovation, InnoFuture. It featured a three-day InnoCarnival at the Hong Kong Science Park from 16 to 18 October 2008, as well as four roadshows in Causeway Bay, Kwun Tong, Tuen Mun and Tin Shui Wai. Apart from showcasing the latest innovation and technology achievements of our universities and research institutes, the Festival also comprised technology workshops and competitions, interactive games and stimulating seminars which provided members of the public, in particular youngsters, an opportunity to experience for themselves the fun and excitement of innovation and technology. The Festival was very well received, with a record high of over 96,000 participants taking part in various programmes.

8. This year, the Festival will be held from October to November 2009. We are now working with our partners on the programmes and events to be held during the Festival.

‘TechnoFrontier’ TV Series and Science Lectures

9. A TV popular science series ‘TechnoFrontier’, jointly produced by ITC and the Radio Television Hong Kong, was launched in October 2008 and broadcast for a consecutive 10 weeks period. This TV series is a new attempt to highlight the importance of innovation and technology in our daily lives and to show its potential contribution to the future development of Hong Kong in a relaxing and entertaining manner. English and High Definition versions will be shown from mid-July to mid-September this year. We have also uploaded the series to the Internet for viewing online, and will distribute DVDs of the series to schools to share with students.

10. Through this series, we encourage the community, in particular the younger generation, to support innovation and technology, build up their knowledge and pursue their interest in these areas. The series has been well received by the community with an average viewership of about 1 million people per episode. Riding on its popularity, we conducted eight TechnoFrontier Science Lectures from March to June 2009 with experts from the related fields sharing with students their knowledge and views on the development and trend of various technologies. The eight lectures were attended by over 1,300 students.

Hong Kong Radio Frequency Identification Centre

11. To enhance public awareness of the Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology and its significance to economic and social development, since October 2008 ITC has co-hosted a Hong Kong RFID Centre with the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation and GS1 Hong Kong, an industry support organisation on supply chain standards. Located in the Hong Kong Science Park, the Centre has three thematic zones, namely Consumer Zone, Manufacturing Zone and Logistics Zone. The displays and demonstrations in each zone showcase the applications and versatility of RFID technology in that particular area, allowing visitors to experience for themselves on how RFID enhances the business environment and improves the quality of people’s life.

Programmes for Young People

12. In addition to interactive workshops and competitions specifically designed for youngsters, we also provide opportunities to the talented students to further develop their potential in science and technology, and to encourage them consider pursuing a career in the area. The following programmes are relevant.

Hong Kong Student Science Project Competition

13. ITC has been co-organising the Hong Kong Student Science Project Competition with Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (HKFYG), the Education Bureau and the Hong Kong Science Museum. First launched in 1998, the Competition has become one of the most popular scientific competitions in the education sector. Themed ‘Exploring our Science, Innovating your World’, the 2009 Competition attracted 120 teams from 61 schools with 456 participants.

14. With the support of the participating schools and their teachers, the Competition has enhanced students’ knowledge in science and technology, developed their creativity through innovative applications, as well as inspired their intellectual and career interest in science and technology. Indeed, some winning projects from the Competition have gone on to win awards in international youth science events.

Hong Kong Youth 3D Animation Competition

15. The Hong Kong Youth 3D Animation Competition is a new programme jointly organised by ITC, Cyberport and the Hong Kong New Generation Cultural Association Science Innovation Centre. It aims to provide opportunities for the youngsters to develop their potential in technology and design through the promotion of 3D animation technology, and to enhance awareness in the community of the importance of creative education and creative industries.

16. The Competition was first conducted in 2008 and attracted 530 participants from 81 schools. We are now inviting students to register for this year’s competition with its theme

of 'Save Planet Earth'. All participants will be provided with free training on creating 3D animation by our sponsors.

Centre for Creative Science and Technology

17. To promote youngsters' curiosity in science and technology through thought-provoking, fun and exciting experiences, we have provided funding support to the HKFYG to set up a new Centre for Creative Science and Technology (CCST) in the Hong Kong Science Park. Through participation in CCST's activities, the youngsters can familiarise themselves with the Science Park environment, receive leadership training, foster an association with various scientists and technology bodies, and thereby help building up a strong interest in innovation and technology at an early age. The CCST will commence operation by the end of this year.

Innovation and Technology Student Club

18. To nurture young innovative talents into future technology leaders, ITC has established the Innovation and Technology Student Club jointly with the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Members of the Club are students who have won awards in major science and technology competitions or who are nominated by their schools. The Club organises interactive activities, such as technology seminar series, research mentorship, technology reporting, summer camps and technology ambassadorship, for its members to develop their interest and potential in science, engineering and technology.

Advice Sought

19. Members are invited to note the work of ITC in promoting an innovation and technology culture in Hong Kong.

Innovation and Technology Commission

July 2009