

For information
on 13 November 2009

Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs

Measures to Improve the Provision of Public Museum Services

Purpose

This paper sets out the improvement measures to enhance services of the 14 public museums (**Annex**) under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD).

Implementation of improvement measures

2. The Government is well aware of the need to put more resources into the development of cultural software, including audience building for museums, promotion of contemporary art and visual art, strengthening of cultural exchange and nurturing of curators and museum administrators. Indeed, LCSD has, over the past few years, introduced fundamental improvements to the services and operation of its museums to enhance community involvement and introduce more flexibilities in operation. Details are set out in paragraphs 3-10 below.

Developing the performance assessment framework for museums

3. In order to enhance public accountability and transparency, LCSD is in the process of reviewing the existing performance measurement system which includes both quantitative and qualitative indicators with a benchmarking study of overseas museums. Meanwhile, LCSD has conducted a large-scale visitor survey in 2008 to gauge public views on the museum services. The Department is studying the findings of the survey report to identify areas for improvement.

Presenting more blockbuster exhibitions with collaboration with overseas and Mainland counterparts

4. A number of high quality blockbuster exhibitions have been organised with LCSD's overseas and Mainland counterparts (e.g. Musée d'Orsay, Centre Pompidou, British Museum, National Museum of China, Palace Museum) in the recent years to promote patronage. To name a few, they include "Artists and Their Models – Masterpieces from the Centre of Pompidou", "The Pride of China: Masterpieces of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy of the Jin, Tang and Yuan Dynasties", "Treasures of the World Cultures from the British Museum", "The Ancient Olympic Games" and "Louis Vuitton: Passion of Creation", etc. These exhibitions met with encouraging response from the public. The total attendance of all LCSD museums in 2008 has reached 4 753 000 visitors.

Engaging guest curators and other stakeholders in organising exhibitions

5. A successful attempt has been made in the recent years to introduce the guest-curatorship scheme in LCSD's exhibition programme to strengthen community involvement. The Museum of Art launched the "Hong Kong Art: Open Dialogue" exhibition project in 2006 and invited 45 local independent curators and 6 overseas curators to submit exhibition proposals. Subsequently, four thematic exhibitions by four guest curators were staged from 2007 to 2009. The exhibitions received very warm welcome from the public and the art community with an attendance of over 140 000 visitors. A large-scale international exhibition of contemporary ink art will be curated by a guest curator from Mainland in 2011. LCSD will continue the scheme with the launching of a new exhibition series and adopt the idea to other museum programmes to further involve participation by the art community. Indeed, by enhancing collaborations with the arts and cultural field, there will be more opportunities for the players in the field to participate in the operation of the public museums through which community involvement will be strengthened.

Collaborating with the wider community

6. LCSD museums have strived to establish wider community involvement networks and closer partnership with individuals and organisations (e.g. District Councils, non-government organisations, consulates, real estate developers and education institutions) in organising thematic exhibitions and community education activities. A number of programmes in collaboration with the community have been organised in the past three years. To cite a few examples, they include a series of exhibitions on Chinese art and antiques with the support of Min Chiu Society, the third “Hong Kong International Poster Triennial” with the support from the Hong Kong Designers Association, the exhibition on Dr Sun Yat-sen cum “Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum Promotion Day” in collaboration with the Central & Western District Council, “Fun Day at the Fireboat Alexander Grantham Exhibition Gallery” with the Eastern District Council, the “Artist in the neighbourhood” scheme with different art groups and real estate developers, the annual “Le French May Festival” with the Consulate General of France in Hong Kong, “Summer Art Cadets” for the under-privileged children in Tin Shui Wai in collaboration with St. James Settlement, etc.

Encouraging more sponsorship and donations of collections

7. LCSD has endeavoured to encourage donations from the community as well as from the Mainland and local artists. In the past three years, LCSD has received the following major donation of artefacts from the public –

- (a) the collection of the late Roman Tam with more than 3 000 items;
- (b) 1 500 Cantonese opera items from the Tai Ping Theatre;
- (c) the collection of the late Lydia Shum with 347 items;
- (d) 213 film titles and 12 000 film related materials of the Cathay’s productions;
- (e) 756 film titles and 2 000 film related materials of the Shaw Studio films;
- (f) 234 works of the artist Huang Boye from his family;
- (g) 14 works of the artist Ding Yanyong.

Recently, LCSD has just received a major donation of 33 works of Wu Guanzhong at an estimated value of \$149 million. Besides, Museum of Art in the past three years was successful in securing cash sponsorship of about \$22.7 million to sponsor 6 blockbuster exhibitions.

Adopting a more dynamic approach in marketing and promoting museum exhibitions

8. In addition to printed publicity materials, LCSD's museums have widely used commercial advertisement and electronic media to promote their major exhibitions in recent years. They have also engaged marketing specialists to devise a more dynamic approach to attract the public's attention to blockbuster exhibitions with more innovative marketing skills and techniques. Moreover, the museums have produced and deposited information brochures in tourist outlets in Beijing to publicise museum programmes to Mainland tourists who plan to visit Hong Kong.

Establishing closer links and cooperation with educational institutes and academic sector

9. LCSD has enhanced its role in education with more exchanges and co-operations with educational institutes and academic sector. It has cooperated with the Education Bureau to promote art to school teachers through programmes like "In Touch with Visual Arts – Exhibitions and Educational Activities" and "Hong Kong Visual Arts Appreciation and Web-based Course for Primary and Secondary School Teachers". LCSD museums have also published booklets and teaching packages on the appreciation of Chinese culture through art to coincide with the new art education curriculum launched in 2007. On the other hand, the museums have also collaborated with local universities of Hong Kong to hold seminars and conferences to complement the thematic exhibitions.

Proactively exploring opportunities for collaboration with overseas and Mainland museums for exhibiting LCSD museums' collections

10. LCSD's museums have been proactively exploring opportunities of displaying their collections in overseas and Mainland museums. For example, an art exhibition entitled "Made in Hong Kong" was displayed at the Beijing World Art Museum as a highlight cultural event for "Meet in Beijing 2008", which reflected the creativity of Hong Kong artists. As a programme under Greater Pearl River Delta Cultural Cooperation, the "Strolling in the Fragrant Garden: Paintings of Ju Chao and Ju Lian" exhibition was staged in Guangzhou Art Museum, where many important artworks held by the Hong Kong Museum of Art (MA) were displayed. Early this year, Shanghai Art Museum presented an exhibition on "Retrospective of Wu Guanzhong" with the display of some MA's collections. In November 2009, LCSD will present an exhibition on its tea ware collections in Brussels to complement the "Europalia.China 2009". MA's painting collections will be displayed in an art exhibition "Guangdong Paintings through History" in Guangdong Provincial Museum next year. To tie in with Shanghai World Expo in 2010, MA will stage two major exhibitions in Shanghai to showcase the works of Hong Kong artists, in particular the younger generation, namely the "Legacy and Creations – Transformation of Ink Art" at Shanghai Art Museum and the "Legacy and Creations – Transformation of the East and West" at Shanghai Museum of Contemporary Art. These two exhibitions will reveal the unique identity of Hong Kong art to the international and Mainland audience during this world event.

Proposed measures/projects to further improve museum services

Fostering closer partnerships and community participation

11. We will further enhance the operation of the museums by deepening and broadening the extent of public engagement and community involvement through closer dialogue and collaboration with various stakeholders including guest curators, collectors, District Councils, non-government organisations, the business sector and education institutions. The following specific measures/projects will be taken forward –

- (a) We will strengthen partnership with the community in

organising thematic exhibitions. To enhance the co-operation with local collectors, the MA will launch the “Hong Kong Collectors” exhibition series to showcase their valuable collections, which include calligraphy and paintings, ceramics, antiquities and furniture. The MA also plans to launch the invitation for proposal exercise for the second “Hong Kong Art: Open Dialogue” to deepen partnership with guest curators;

- (b) The Hong Kong Museum of History will launch the “Public History” thematic exhibition series and join hands with community organisations, such as the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, in staging exhibitions on the histories of the organisations. In addition, the museum will also organise exhibitions with themes related to Hong Kong people’s life, such as the “Hong Kong in the Sixties and Seventies” and “Children’s Life in Hong Kong” exhibitions; and
- (c) We will enhance the co-operation with the business sector, developers and District Councils in jointly organising exhibitions with different themes to be held in various districts and venues, including shopping arcades and government facilities, for the promotion of culture, art and history in the wider community.

Instilling greater flexibility and creativity in museum work

12. In addition, we will engage personnel specialised in the marketing field to inject fresh ideas in promoting LCSD museums’ programmes and activities. We will also examine, in conjunction with the relevant bureaux and departments, relevant rules and procedures so as to enable the museums to operate with greater flexibility and creativity. These include, among others, the retention of cash sponsorship and donations for use by museums, the operation of museum shops and catering services, the production of merchandise, etc. On publicity strategies, clear image/branding for each museum will be established. Publicity work will be done in a more aggressive manner so as to widen the existing audience base. We will draw up creative marketing and

publicity strategies in order to attract young and new audiences and widen the existing audience base. Marketing talents and ideas will be absorbed and the brand image of each museum will be re-built. We will also strengthen the co-operation with the tourism sector.

Supporting development of cultural software in Hong Kong

13. LCSD museums will also implement the following measures to support the development of Hong Kong's cultural software –

- (a) To implement a museum internship programme to nurture talents on museum collection management, exhibition curatorship and organisation of educational activities;
- (b) To co-operate with other cultural institutions to carry out studies and surveys on museum audienceship and organise activities according to their interests and backgrounds in order to attract more new audiences;
- (c) To organise more activities to provide a platform to support the creative activities of young artists. The Art Promotion Office will launch a “Young Artists” series in the coming year;
- (d) To organise more cultural exchange activities to promote the works of creation of local artists to visitors of the Mainland and overseas in particular;
- (e) To strengthen the cooperation with schools to include museum education in the New Secondary Curriculum; and
- (f) To consider loaning certain collection items to other museums or cultural institutions for research and display purposes.

Public museums under LCSD^{Note}
(As of November 2009)

Art

1. Flagstaff House Museum of Teaware (1984)
2. Hong Kong Museum of Art (1991)

History

3. Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum (1957)
4. Sheung Yiu Folk Museum (1984)
5. Hong Kong Railway Museum (1985)
6. Sam Tung Uk Museum (1987)
7. Law Uk Folk Museum (1990)
8. Hong Kong Museum of History (1998)
9. Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence (2000)
10. Hong Kong Heritage Museum (2000)
11. Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum (2006)
12. Fireboat Alexander Grantham Exhibition Gallery (2007)

Science

13. Hong Kong Space Museum (1980)
14. Hong Kong Science Museum (1991)

^{Note} In addition to the 14 public museums listed above, the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre, the Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery cum Heritage Trail Visitors Centre and the Hong Kong Film Archive are also gazetted as museums under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132). However, the two Centres are actually exhibition centres concerned with heritage preservation and under the management of the Antiquities and Monuments Office while the Film Archive is to conserve Hong Kong films and related materials and facilitate research on such films.