

Submission on R&D Development in Hong Kong (LC Paper No. CB(1)624/11-12(05))

As a local concerning the R&D development in Hong Kong, I am writing to express my views after reading captioned paper posted in LegCo's website.

First and foremost, I support the direction of HK in moving towards a world-class, knowledge-based economy via R&D as one of the means. At the same time, I am concerned about the adequacy of Government's effort in fostering an innovation and technology culture/investment in the community. The observations are summarized as follows:

- (1) I am not able to tell the long term vision/strategic focus of Government in supporting R&D development in HK.
- (2) The so-called "Comprehensive Review" appears to be quite tactical and superficial in nature:
 - (a) R&D is a LONG TERM investment of which the success should be measured and assessed from different angles. Government oversimplified it by using "level of industry contribution" as the PREDOMINANT performance indicator of the R&D Centre AND it is based on a five-year horizon only.
 - (b) Has Government obtained any in-depth feedback/comment from the industries. What are the key factors attributing to the low side of industry contribution? Is it purely the performance of R&D Centres or is it the policy/onerous procedures of Government hindering industries' involvement?
 - (c) When commenting on the performance of the R&D Centres, Government kept a distance from the Centres as if they have no responsibility at all on the outcome. Should Government highlight the support/effort that they have put into these Centres in the past years? Has there been any independent review on Government efforts thus far? Has Government conducted any root cause analysis on the performance of the R&D Centres?
- (3) The recommendations on way forward are weak:
 - (a) ASTRI
Leave it as it is simply because of improving performance. What is the planned actions for the upcoming years to make it even better? What is the development roadmap of this largest R&D Centre in HK?

(b) HKRITA and LSCM

According to Government review, they are below mark. However, Government's recommendation is to observe for another two years and see how. What are the solid Government planned actions to bring them up to the mark? How to ensure taxpayers' money is utilized in the right way?

(c) NAMI

As a top performer, Government will consider extending their operation beyond Mar 2014. Similar to point 3(a), any planned actions to take?

(d) APAS

APAS showed marked improvements but Government suggested to merge it with HKPC based on some hollow buzzwords like "one-stop shop service", "cost effectiveness". The mandate and market position of the two organizations are fundamentally different, such "merge" will set up APAS for failure and losing focus. HKPC was established in 1967, if HKPC has achieved Government's expectation of R&D in auto industry, why set up a dedicated R&D Centre, APAS, in 2006?

(e) There is a lack of solid proposal in improving quality of R&D results, commercialization, nurturing talents, enhancing cost-effectiveness and etc.

If I may, would like to suggest LegCo Members to urge Government to conduct a more thorough study/analysis and present a plan that will truly help HK to scale new height in the R&D arena.

Many thanks for your attention.

* Kindly forward this message to other LegCo Members in the Panel.

A member of the public
17 December 2011