

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

Update on National Studies and Basic Law Training for Civil Servants

Purpose

This paper updates Members on the national studies and Basic Law programmes and related training activities provided to civil servants.

National Studies Training

2. In keeping with the development of closer ties between Hong Kong and the Mainland, the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) continues to devote great efforts to enhance civil servants' understanding of and exposure to the systems and developments in the Mainland. These efforts include training courses, seminars, theme-based visits to the Mainland, civil service exchange programme and a dedicated website on Mainland-related information and developments. In addition, we also provide training on the Basic Law for civil servants and organise a variety of promotional activities to enhance awareness of the Basic Law amongst civil servants.

3. Following the Chief Executive's pledge in the 2010-11 Policy Address to further enhance national studies training for civil servants, the Civil Service Training and Development Institute (CSTDI) under CSB has launched an enhanced training plan since April 2011 to ensure that national studies training forms an integral part of training undertaken by civil servants at various ranks. Under the enhanced training plan, we have launched a new programme run by the Chinese Academy of Governance (CAG) for senior directorate officers, and incorporated a new module on national studies in the induction programme for new recruits of degree or professional grades. We have also increased the capacity of national studies programmes and thematic visits to the Mainland for civil servants at different levels. In addition, we have organised more in-depth seminars on various aspects of the latest developments in the Mainland. By the end of 2011, we expect that around 6 000 officers will have attended our national studies training programmes, representing a 100% increase over the average attendance figures in previous years.

4. A brief description of the training programmes and activities related to national studies is given below.

(i) *One-week National Studies Programme at the CAG for Senior Directorate Officers*

5. This is a new intensive study-cum-visit programme introduced in 2011 for senior directorate officers (i.e. those at Directorate Pay Scale Point 3 (D3) and above). The programme aims to provide participants with the latest update on the Central People's Government's policies, enhance their understanding of the latest political, economic and social developments in the Mainland, and provide opportunities for sharing and exchanges with senior Mainland officials. Topics covered in the programme include "China's Constitution, legal system, and the Basic Law", "The 12th Five-Year Plan", "China's foreign policy", etc. The programme also includes visits to community facilities in Beijing or in a neighbouring city. We expect that about 50 directorate officers at D3 or above will have attended this programme by the end of 2011.

(ii) *Advanced National Studies Course at the CAG*

6. This is a two-week programme introduced since 1999 for civil servants at D1-D2 level. Through lectures and talks delivered by distinguished Mainland scholars and senior Central People's Government officials, the programme aims to deepen participants' understanding of the current policies and topical issues in the Mainland, and enhance networking between participants and Mainland officials. By the end of 2011, we expect about 510 directorate civil servants will have attended this programme. Participants' feedback on the programme has been highly positive.

(iii) *Tsinghua/Peking University Programmes*

7. We have been organising the Tsinghua University Programme and the Peking University Programme since 1993 and 2004 respectively for senior civil servants (i.e. those at point 45 of the Master Pay Scale (MPS) or above). Both programmes last for 17 days and include classroom lectures and visits to state agencies in Beijing, as well as a 3-day visit to selected Mainland cities. The programmes provide participants with a comprehensive introduction of the political, social, economic, cultural and legal developments in the Mainland. They also aim to enhance communication between participants and Mainland officials. By the end of 2011, we expect about 2 500 civil servants will have attended the two programmes. Participants generally considered the programmes highly effective in improving their understanding of the Mainland and its latest development.

(iv) Foreign Affairs Studies Programme

8. Since 2004, we have commissioned the China Foreign Affairs University to organise a one-week Foreign Affairs Studies Programme for directorate and other civil servants involved in external affairs. The programme covers China's foreign affairs, protocol and other related topics. By the end of 2011, we expect about 150 civil servants will have attended this programme, including heads of our Economic & Trade Offices overseas.

(v) Thematic Study Programmes

9. Since 1991, thematic study programmes have been organised for middle level to senior level civil servants (MPS 34-49) through the coordination of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office (HKMAO). These programmes mainly take the form of familiarisation visits to selected Mainland provinces and cities. They aim to enhance participants' general understanding of the systems and developments in the Mainland in selected policy areas or themes. By the end of 2011, we expect more than 1 200 civil servants will have attended these programmes. The themes of the more recent programmes included "Urban Planning and Development of Wuhan" and "Social and Economic Development of Harbin".

(vi) National Studies Programme for Middle Managers

10. To enable middle-ranking civil servants (i.e. those at MPS 34 to 44) to acquire a better understanding of the Mainland's systems and deepen their knowledge on the developments in the Pearl River Delta region, we have commissioned the Sun Yat-sen University and the Shenzhen Graduate School of Peking University to organise a one-week national studies programme since 2006 and 2007 respectively. The programme covers the latest socio-economic and political developments in the Mainland, with special focus on the Pearl River Delta region. By the end of 2011, we expect around 1 300 civil servants will have attended the programme. The feedback received has been very positive.

(vii) Civil Service Exchange Programme with the Mainland

11. The civil service exchange programme with the Mainland commenced in 2002. Under the programme, we have partnered with the municipal governments of Beijing and Shanghai, the city government of Hangzhou and the provincial government of Guangdong. For each exchange under the programme, civil servants of one side are attached to government departments of the other side for about four to eight weeks with a view to

broadening exposure, sharing experience and expertise, and fostering networking and communication. While on attachment, the participants will study the relevant legislation, rules and regulations, and codes of conduct of the host organisations. They will also observe the host organisations' work practices through attendance at briefings, participation in training, meetings, discussion forums, experience sharing sessions and site visits, etc.

12. Civil servants taking part in the exchange programme will not take up any specific posts or duties in the host organisations, and they will only have access to information which is not of a confidential and sensitive nature. Participants have to observe the law, rules and regulations, as well as the general working rules and codes of conduct of the host organisations.

13. So far, over 50 Hong Kong government departments/ public organisations and about 130 Mainland departments/agencies have participated in the exchange programme. HKSARG has sent about 100 civil servants at senior professional level to the Mainland, while about 190 Mainland officials, mostly at division director (處長級) or deputy division director (副處長級) level, have been sent to Hong Kong. The scope of exchange covers a wide range of disciplines, including infrastructure development, city planning, traffic management, environmental protection, public housing, health and food safety, trade and commerce, information technology, social security, education, civil service management, culture and arts, etc.

14. Prior to the commencement of each exchange, we will provide Mainland participants with a briefing on the structure and system of the HKSAR Government, and an overview of the political and social environment of Hong Kong. At the end of the exchange, an evaluation will be conducted to collect feedback. Participants from both sides have found the programme very useful and effective, especially in enabling them to understand the structure and operation of the host organisations. They also valued the opportunity to experience the work culture of their counterparts, and strengthen their network and relationship with the respective authorities.

(viii) Local Programmes on National Studies

15. To further strengthen national studies training for civil servants, a new module on national studies has been incorporated in the induction programmes for new recruits of degree or professional grades. It aims to enhance participants' understanding of the Mainland, including its political system, economic challenges and latest developments. In 2011, we expect 2 000 civil servants will have attended the programmes.

16. We work closely with local and Mainland institutions in conducting seminars for civil servants on latest developments in the Mainland. These seminars cover a wide variety of topics such as the Mainland's political and government reforms, legal system, economic and social changes, administrative and civil service systems, foreign affairs, etc. Seminars on topical issues, e.g. "The Role of China in the New Financial and Political Order of the World" and "The 12th Five-Year Plan", etc, have also been organised. Apart from local scholars and academics from renowned universities in the Mainland, we have also invited officials from relevant Mainland institutions, such as the National Development and Reform Commission, to speak on their expert areas. Since 2000, 33 600 civil servants have attended these national studies seminars.

(ix) National Studies E-Learning Portal

17. Established since 2002 and further enhanced in 2005, the learning portal on national studies in our "Cyber Learning Centre Plus" website provides comprehensive information about the Mainland, covering such areas as the political and civil service systems, the economy, the legal framework and geographical data. In-depth analyses of current issues, such as "Challenges of the Foreign Affairs of China" and "The 12th Five-year Plan" are also available. To help keep civil servants abreast of the latest developments, the portal also houses up-to-date policy documents of the Central People's Government, relevant speeches on key policies and developments, and useful linkages. The e-learning portal provides a convenient platform for civil servants to pursue national studies at their own pace and in their own time. Continued enhancement has been made to increase the user-friendliness and enrich the content of the portal. The portal has been well received, recording a hit rate of over 570 000 since July 2005.

Basic Law

18. Since the promulgation of the Basic Law in the early 1990's, CSTDI has been providing training on the Basic Law for civil servants. Since 1997, over 39 000 participants have attended dedicated training programmes on the Basic Law and over 7 000 have participated in our promotional activities. Many civil servants have also learned the Basic Law through our e-learning portal on national studies. In addition, 2 900 senior civil servants, who took part in the national studies programmes at the Tsinghua University, Peking University and CAG, attended lectures on the Basic Law delivered by Mainland experts.

19. Since 2008, we have further enhanced training in the Basic Law to ensure that it forms an integral part of training for civil servants, and is provided in a systematic and well planned manner which takes into account the needs of

civil servants of different levels and work nature. We have adopted a multi-pronged approach which includes classroom training, e-learning, publications and diversified promotional activities to achieve this objective. The progress of the enhanced training on the Basic Law is set out below.

(i) Core Programmes on the Basic Law

20. Three core programmes on the Basic Law were introduced in 2008-09 to enable civil servants, at various stages of their careers, to have the opportunity to learn and refresh themselves on knowledge about the Basic Law. By the end of 2011, we expect over 22 000 civil servants will have attended the Introductory Course for New Civil Service Appointees; the Intermediate Course for Middle Level Civil Servants (MPS 34 - 44); and the Advanced Course for Senior Level Civil Servants (MPS 45 and above). These programmes aim to enhance civil servants' understanding of the key concepts and provisions of the Basic Law. In the Intermediate and Advanced Courses, more in-depth analysis is provided and court cases related to the Basic Law are discussed. Academics, legal practitioners and officials from both Hong Kong and the Mainland are invited to conduct the programmes. Feedback from the participants has been very positive. They found the training useful in enhancing their understanding of the Basic Law, and the speakers professional and knowledgeable in the subject.

(ii) E-learning Resources on the Basic Law

21. At present, a section of our national studies e-learning portal contains online resources on the Basic Law for self-learning by civil servants. These resources include reference materials as well as latest information updates related to the Basic Law. They also include presentation materials of Basic Law course speakers, judgments of major court cases relating to the Basic Law, and relevant articles and speeches by government officials. To tie in with the enhanced training on the Basic Law in the civil service, we have enriched the resources on the portal and developed a new modular web course on the Basic Law. We will continue to strengthen our e-learning resources and web programmes to supplement classroom training and to help civil servants refresh their knowledge on the Basic Law.

(iii) Thematic Seminars, Publications and Promotional Activities

22. We have organised seminars on specific topics relating to the Basic Law such as "An Analysis of the Continental Law, Common Law and Basic Law", "Implementation of the 'One Country Two Systems' Principle" and "The Basic Law and Developments of the Political System of the HKSARG" for different levels of civil servants. We have also assisted departments to organise

seminars to address their departmental training needs. We will continue to organise these seminars and provide services to departments.

23. To enhance the awareness of and sustain interest in the Basic Law amongst all civil servants, especially frontline staff, we organise various promotional activities on a regular basis. Such activities take the forms of quiz, competition and exhibition which help disseminate the fundamental concepts of the Basic Law as well as the relevance of the Basic Law to civil servants' work and daily life. In addition, we regularly publish a "Basic Law Bulletin" jointly with the Department of Justice and the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, and provide a "Basic Law Corner" in the Civil Service Newsletter which is circulated to all civil servants.

Way Forward

24. We are committed to enhancing civil servants' knowledge and understanding of the Mainland and their knowledge on the Basic Law on an on-going basis. We will continue to monitor closely the feedback on our programmes and activities, and make improvements where appropriate.

Civil Service Bureau
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