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Panel on Public Service Meeting on 18 February 2013

Background brief on training and development for civil servants

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the provision of training and development for civil servants by the Civil Service Bureau ("CSB"), and summarizes the major views expressed by members when the subject was discussed at meetings of the Panel on Public Service ("the Panel") during the fourth term of the Legislative Council ("LegCo")¹.

Background

2. The Government provides civil servants at various ranks with training and development opportunities, so that they will be equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge and mindset to serve the public. While bureaux/departments ("B/Ds") provide vocational training to meet job-specific needs, CSB, through the Civil Service Training and Development Institute ("CSTDI"), provides training programmes which are best provided by a central training agency such as leadership and management, language and communication, national studies and the Basic Law.

3. Brief descriptions of the various training programmes and activities organized by CSTDI are set out in the Administration's papers LC Papers No. CB(1)321/11-12(03) and CB(1)534/11-12(04) for the Panel meetings on 21 November 2011 and 19 December 2011 respectively. For the financial year 2012-2013, the approved financial provision for CSB for its work on civil service training and development is \$118.5 million. A relevant extract from the Estimates of Expenditure 2012-2013 is in **Appendix I**.

¹ For summaries of the Panel's discussions on the subject in the previous terms of LegCo, please refer to the previous background briefs on the subject, i.e. LC Papers No. CB(1)321/11-12(04) and CB(1)534/11-12(05).

Deliberations of the Panel

4. During the fourth term of LegCo, the Panel discussed the issues relating to the training and development for civil servants at its meetings on 18 January 2010, 17 January, 21 November and 19 December 2011. The major views and concerns expressed by Panel members and the Administration's responses are summarized below.

Evaluation of training programmes

5. The Panel noted that around 6 000 civil servants were expected to have attended different national studies training programmes by the end of 2011, representing a 100% increase over the average attendance figures in previous years. Some members expressed concern on whether any mechanism was in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the various training programmes in enhancing civil servants' understanding of the latest political, economic and social developments in the Mainland, and to assess the impact of the training programmes on middle to senior level civil servants in the formulation of government policies.

6. The Administration advised that it had adopted a range of on-going methods to evaluate the effectiveness of the national studies programmes. These included review sessions built into the programmes, post-programme evaluation questionnaires, focus group meetings with participants, class observation, debriefing and discussions with the service providers upon completion of programmes, etc. The objective was to ensure that the programmes were effective, useful and relevant to the work of the participants. The Administration stressed that the national studies programmes had all along received high ratings from participants. The Administration would continue to uphold the quality and effectiveness of the programmes.

Training for non-civil service contract staff

7. Some members were concerned about the provision of training for non-civil service contract ("NCSC") staff. The Administration advised that relevant training programmes, including orientation programmes and job-related training, were provided to NCSC staff to better equip them to discharge their duties. Local training activities held in Hong Kong were generally open to NCSC staff. However, leadership and management training would generally be provided only to civil servants, who would have a life-long career in the civil service and who might be required to shoulder heavier responsibilities upon promotion in due course.

Training for frontline civil servants

8. Referring to incidents of violence acts in public assemblies and processions, a member called on the Administration to strengthen the training for frontline civil servants to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge in handling such situations. The Administration advised that individual B/Ds had been providing work-related training courses for their staff to meet work requirements and job-specific needs. CSB, through CSTDI, would continue to work closely with B/Ds to provide consultancy services and targeted support such as conducting training needs analysis, developing departmental training plans, as well as designing and organizing tailor-made classes to meet specific departmental training needs.

Leave arrangements for attending training programmes

9. A member expressed concern about the leave arrangement for attending training programmes outside office hours, and urged the Administration to ensure that civil servants would be compensated by time-off if they were required to receive mandatory work-related training outside office hours. The Administration explained that the time-off arrangement was very complicated because different civil service regulations were involved. The Administration had adopted a flexible approach in this regard and many training seminars were held during office hours. Civil servants would normally be released from duties during office hours to participate in programmes organized by CSTDI. For voluntary local training programmes that spanned over a period of time, civil servants could attend them without using their own leave. Where justified, special approval might be granted for the payment of overtime allowance for attending training courses outside working hours.

10. A member was concerned whether civil servants had to take leave to attend courses or activities co-organized by civil service staff unions and institutions on the Mainland. The Administration advised that office bearers or representatives of a civil service staff union invited by their counterparts on the Mainland could apply for authorized absence not counting as leave to attend the visit activities, if such activities were of labour education nature or related to the work of the departments in which the staff concerned worked. For training courses conducted on the Mainland by a staff union, authorized absence for members of the staff union to attend the course would be considered, subject to exigencies of service and the condition that the course programme was of a labour education nature or related to the work of their respective departments.

Civil Service Exchange Programme with the Mainland

11. Noting that the emphasis of the exchange programme was on enhancing Hong Kong civil servants' understanding of the systems and the latest developments in the Mainland, a member opined that it was equally important for Mainland officials to learn from Hong Kong's achievements and strengths. The member suggested that the exchange programme should cover topics on Hong Kong's legal, auditing, and complaint redress systems as well as anti-corruption practices.

12. The Administration advised that the aim of the exchange programme was to foster mutual exchange and networking between Hong Kong and Mainland officials. The topics as suggested by the member were covered in the orientation programme provided to the Mainland participants of the exchange programme. The programme had included, among others, visits and briefings delivered by the Legislative Council Secretariat and The Ombudsman, talks on public administration and governance as well as anti-corruption practices in Hong Kong. The Administration had received positive feedback from the Mainland participants and would continue to improve the programme where appropriate.

Recent developments

13. One of the policy initiatives of CSB featured in the 2013 Policy Address is to strengthen civil service training. In order to enhance civil servants' competence in serving the public, CSTDI will strengthen training in areas of public engagement and innovative leadership/thinking, as well as communication with the public and the media. CSB will also continue to enhance the quality and variety of the e-learning resources available at the Cyber Learning Centre Plus website to facilitate the pursuit of continuous learning among civil servants. As regards national studies training for civil servants, CSB will enrich the content of the national studies programme for senior directorates and organize seminars on topical issues featuring distinguished scholars from Mainland institutions. Furthermore, CSB will extend the Civil Service Exchange Programme to cover more Mainland provinces/cities apart from Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou and Guangdong.

14. The Administration will update the Panel on the training and development for civil servants at the Panel meeting on 18 February 2013.

Relevant papers

15. A list of relevant papers is in **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
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Head 143 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU

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Programme (4): Civil Service Training and Development

	2010–11 (Actual)	2011–12 (Original)	2011–12 (Revised)	2012–13 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	97.2	107.9	109.3 (+1.3%)	118.5 (+8.4%)
				(or +9.8% on 2011–12 Original)

Aim

13 The aim is to formulate training policies and to render support to bureaux/departments in training matters so that civil servants will be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to serve the community.

Brief Description

14 The main responsibilities of the Bureau under this programme are to:

- formulate and implement training policies which support central policy and human resource management initiatives;
- formulate training regulations which facilitate both management of and participation in training activities;
- provide training programmes to civil servants which are best provided by a central training agency such as national studies and senior management development;
- provide consultancy and advisory services to departments on human resource development; and
- promote a culture of continuous learning in the civil service.

15 The key performance measures in respect of civil service training and development are:

Indicators

	2010 (Actual)	2011 (Actual)	2012 (Estimate)
Classroom Training and Follow-up#			
senior leadership development			
trainees.....	2 600	2 600	2 600
trainee-days.....	4 300	4 700	4 700
national studies			
trainees.....	9 500	12 700	12 700
trainee-days.....	10 000	13 800	13 800
management courses			
trainees.....	24 000	24 000	24 000
trainee-days.....	30 000	31 000	31 000
languages courses			
trainees.....	12 500	12 700	12 700
trainee-days.....	35 000	33 000	33 000
E-learning Programmes			
no. of learning resources.....	1 900	2 000	2 100
no. of page views.....	2 200 000	2 750 000	3 300 000
visits to CLC Plus	260 000	330 000	420 000
Departmental Services			
consultancies conducted	250	250	250
advice rendered to departments	1 400	1 400	1 400
Learning projects and schemes‡	19	20	20

Include training for general grades staff by the General Grades Office, the financial provision for which is included under Programme (2).

‡ Include projects and schemes to promote human resource management, understanding of the Basic Law, and continuous learning, as well as publications issued.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2012–13

16 In 2012–13, the Bureau will continue to:

- provide civil servants at different ranks with a variety of training opportunities to ensure that the civil service keeps pace with the demands of the community;
- provide national studies training programmes to civil servants at different levels and make national studies part and parcel of the development plans for senior civil servants;
- enrich the contents of the training resources on our e-learning portal, enhance the functionalities of the portal and promote the use of e-learning mode in the civil service;
- run a staff exchange programme with major Mainland cities. Under this programme, civil servants may be sent to the Governments of these cities for attachment and training for up to two months, in exchange for inbound attachment of civil servants from these cities; and
- work closely with bureaux/departments to provide consultancy services and support on human resource management and development.

Appendix II

The provision of training and development for civil servants

List of relevant papers

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Public Service	18 January 2010 (item V)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Public Service	17 January 2011 (item V)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Public Service	21 November 2011 (item III)	Agenda Minutes Administration's responses to the issues raised at the meeting held on 21 November 2011
Panel on Public Service	19 December 2011 (item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Public Service	21 January 2013 (item IV on 2013 Policy Address)	Agenda