

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)379/13-14(04)

Ref: CB4/PL/PS

Panel on Public Service

Meeting on 17 February 2014

Updated 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") in the past four legislative sessions¹.

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 individual 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 paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)395/12-13(03)) for the Panel meeting on 18 February 2013. For the financial year 2013-14, the approved financial provision for CSB for its work on civil service training and development is \$126.8 million². A relevant extract

¹ For summaries of the Panel's discussions on the subject in the previous terms of the Legislative Council, please refer to the previous background briefs on the subject, i.e. LC Paper Nos. CB(1)321/11-12(04) and CB(1)534/11-12(05).

² According to the Controlling Officer's Reply to Initial Written Question (Reply Serial No. CSB018) for the Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2013-14, the provision of \$126.8 million includes salaries, expenditures on training programmes and activities, and operating expenses.

from the Estimates of Expenditure 2013-14 is in **Appendix I**.

Deliberations of the Panel

4. 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 and 18 February 2013. The major views and concerns expressed by Panel members and the Administration's responses are summarized below.

National studies programmes and Basic Law training

5. Some members expressed concern about the contents of the national studies courses, in particular whether courses conducted in the Mainland would cover viewpoints from different perspectives. The Administration advised that the national studies programmes aimed to enhance the participants' understanding of the latest socio-economic and political developments in the Mainland. For those courses conducted in the Mainland, most of the speakers were Mainland scholars who offered insights and viewpoints on Mainland issues. Apart from those visits and exchange programmes which were conducted in the Mainland, the Administration also organized national studies workshops, seminars and e-learning portal for civil servants, which were all conducted in Hong Kong. Moreover, local scholars/experts with different political perspectives had been invited to conduct seminars on national issues and their presentations had been uploaded onto the dedicated e-learning portal on the Cyber Learning Centre Plus ("CLC Plus") website.

6. On members' concern about the adequacy of Basic Law training for civil servants, the Administration advised that training on the Basic Law formed an integral part of the training for civil servants. There were core programmes on the Basic Law for different ranks of civil servants, and thematic seminars on specific topics were organized regularly so as to keep civil servants abreast of the developments relating to the Basic Law. Updated information on the Basic Law was also available at the CLC Plus website for self-learning by civil servants.

Civil Service Exchange Programme with the Mainland

7. Noting that the objective of the exchange programme was to enhance mutual understanding of the systems and developments of the two places, members asked how Hong Kong civil servants could benefit from the exchange programme. There was a suggestion that the programme should cover topics on Hong Kong's legal, auditing, complaint redress systems as well as anti-

corruption practices, so that Mainland officials could learn from Hong Kong's achievements and strengths.

8. The Administration advised that the exchange programme aimed at fostering mutual understanding and networking between Hong Kong and Mainland officials. The topics mentioned in paragraph 7 above were covered in the orientation programme provided to the Mainland participants of the exchange programme. Owing to the differences in political and administrative systems, it might not be appropriate to directly apply the Mainland's experience in Hong Kong and vice versa. However, it would be useful to discuss some common problems faced by the two places, such as aging population and disparity between the rich and the poor.

Enhancement of training programmes for civil servants

9. Some members considered that the Administration should devote more efforts on enhancing the visits and training programmes conducted in overseas countries so as to bring in more good ideas and experiences from overseas countries. Some members suggested that more seminars and workshops on the core values of the civil service should be conducted, and the training for civil servants on skills of communication with the public and the media should be strengthened. The Administration advised that a wide range of training opportunities, including overseas training opportunities, would be provided to civil servants taking into account their operational and career development needs. While the Administration was open to providing overseas visits and training programmes to civil servants, the Administration would also need to consider the cost and effectiveness of such programmes.

10. A member enquired whether the Administration would provide civil servants with the opportunity to attend overseas training of at least one year duration with recognized degree qualification. The Administration advised that the Administrative Officers Grade operated a programme offering sponsorship to one to two civil servants to acquire a master degree in an overseas institution each year. Civil servants who wished to pursue job-related local degree or overseas distance learning programmes could apply for financial sponsorship from the Government. In promoting such kind of training to civil servants, factors such as financial implications and the work commitment of staff needed to be considered.

Evaluation of training programmes

11. Some members enquired about the mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of various training programmes. The Administration advised that feedback from both course providers and participants would be collected

systematically for course evaluation with a view to further improving the training programmes. The Administration would seriously consider the views collected and fine tune the programme contents to meet the training needs of civil servants at different levels.

Training for non-civil service contract staff

12. Some members asked 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.

Recent developments

13. In its briefing for the Panel on the relevant policy initiatives featured in the 2014 Policy Address on 20 January 2014, the Administration advised that CSB through CSTDI would continue to strengthen training programmes to boost the innovation and drive of civil servants and to foster a learning culture in the civil service. CSTDI would also offer national studies and Basic Law training, taking into account the needs of civil servants of different levels and work nature. In addition, CSB would continue to enhance the quality and variety of the e-learning resources at the CLC Plus website to facilitate the pursuit of continuous learning among civil servants.

14. The Administration will update the Panel on the training and development for civil servants at the Panel meeting on 17 February 2014.

Relevant papers

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

Head 143 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU

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Programme (4): Civil Service Training and Development

	2011–12 (Actual)	2012–13 (Original)	2012–13 (Revised)	2013–14 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	108.2	118.5	116.5 (–1.7%)	126.8 (+8.8%)
				(or +7.0% on 2012–13 Original)

Aim

13 The aim is to formulate training policies and to render support to bureaux and 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

	2011 (Actual)	2012 (Actual)	2013 (Estimate)
Classroom Training and Follow-up#			
senior leadership development			
trainees.....	2 600	2 600	2 600
trainee-days.....	4 700	4 700	4 700
national studies			
trainees.....	12 700	12 700	12 700
trainee-days.....	13 800	14 000	14 000
management courses			
trainees.....	24 000	26 000	26 000
trainee-days.....	31 000	34 000	34 000
languages courses			
trainees.....	12 700	12 800	13 000
trainee-days.....	33 000	32 600	32 000
E-learning Programmes			
no. of learning resources.....	2 000	2 200	2 250
no. of page views.....	2 750 000	3 700 000	4 000 000
visits to CLC Plus	330 000	530 000	580 000
Departmental Services			
consultancies conducted	250	250	270
advice rendered to departments	1 400	1 400	1 400
Learning projects and schemes‡	20	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 2013-14

16 In 2013–14, 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 about one month, 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.

An overview 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 Administration's paper Minutes
Panel on Public Service	18 February 2013 (item IV)	Agenda Administration's paper Minutes Administration's follow-up paper
Panel on Public Service	20 January 2014 (item IV on 2014 Policy Address)	Agenda