

**立法會**  
***Legislative Council***

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**Panel on Public Service**

**Meeting on 21 December 2015**

**Updated background brief on training and development for civil servants**

**Purpose**

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

**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. Whilst individual bureaux/departments ("B/Ds") provide vocational training to meet job-specific needs, CSB, through the Civil Service Training and Development Institute ("CSTDI"), formulates training policies and provides support to B/Ds in training and development matters. The four core functions of CSTDI are senior executive development; national studies programmes; consultancy services for B/Ds on human resource management initiatives; and promotion of a continuous learning culture in the civil service.

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)488/14-15(03)) for the Panel meeting on 16 February 2015. For the financial year 2015-2016, the approved financial provision for CSB for its work on civil service training and development is \$138.7 million.

## **Deliberations of the Panel**

4. The Panel discussed issues relating to the training and development for civil servants at its meetings held on 17 January, 21 November and 19 December 2011, 18 February 2013, 17 February 2014 and 16 February 2015. Major views and concerns expressed by Panel members and the Administration's responses are summarized below.

### National studies and Basic Law training

5. In view of the different political and legal systems between Hong Kong and the Mainland, concern was raised by some members that civil servants attending the national studies courses conducted in the Mainland might be exposed to one-sided views only.

6. The Administration advised that many B/Ds had direct work contacts with the Mainland. There was a genuine operational need for civil servants to understand the systems and other aspects of the Mainland. In attending the national studies programmes conducted in the Mainland, civil servants would meet with different organizations and people so that they could understand the political, social and economic developments in the Mainland from different angles. Open discussions were held in which programme participants could freely express their ideas.

7. Concern was also raised by some members that civil servants were being brainwashed into a "One country, One system" mindset through attending national studies and Basic Law training organized by CSTDI. The confrontational approach adopted by the Police in the handling of the "Occupy Central" movement was a testament that civil servants were no longer politically neutral in discharging their duties.

8. The Administration responded that political neutrality was one of the core values of the civil service. All civil servants were well aware of their responsibility, as set out in the Civil Service Code, to implement the policies and decisions of the Government of the day in a professional and impartial manner.

9. Some members queried that those civil servants who had attended the Basic Law training would enjoy favourable consideration in promotion and advancement. The Administration advised that there was no direct relationship between attendance in Basic Law training and promotion.

10. Responding to the enquiry as to whether the national studies or Basic Law programmes organized by CSTDI covered the White Paper on

"The Practice of 'One Country, Two Systems' Policy in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" issued by the Central Government on 10 June 2014 ("the White Paper") and the book entitled "Xi Jinping: The Governance of China", the Administration responded that the White Paper was covered in some of the national studies and the Basic Law training programmes whereas the book entitled "Xi Jinping: The Governance of China" was not covered.

11. Some members urged CSB to enhance the content and delivery of Basic Law training for civil servants, such as placing more emphasis on the theory and principles of "One Country, Two Systems" and inviting Basic Law experts from the Mainland as guest lecturers.

12. The Administration responded that CSB had been devoting resources to deepen civil servants' understanding and knowledge of the Basic Law. CSTDI would invite Basic Law experts from the Mainland to provide Basic Law training for civil servants where practicable.

#### Civil Service Exchange Programme with the Mainland

13. 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.

14. The Administration advised that the exchange programme aimed at fostering mutual understanding and networking between Hong Kong and Mainland officials. The topics suggested by members in paragraph 13 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.

#### Leadership and management development

15. Members noted that CSTDI organized regular short seminars delivered by prominent speakers and experts on topical subjects for senior civil servants. Some members questioned the effectiveness of these seminars in enhancing the capability of senior civil servants in discharging their duties.

16. The Administration advised that seminars on topical subjects organized by the CSTDI aimed at providing senior civil servants with background information of such subjects. If a B/D considered it necessary to equip its staff with the necessary skills and knowledge for, say, the formulation of a certain policy area, the B/D would organize its own in-depth training programmes for such purpose.

17. On the suggestion of providing training to senior civil servants to enhance their skills in communicating with Legislative Council ("LegCo") Members, the Administration responded that one of the major functions of the CSTDI was to provide training to enhance the skills of civil servants in communicating with different stakeholders such as LegCo Members, District Council members, public and media. To enhance the skills of senior civil servants in communicating with LegCo Members, CSTDI had invited the President of LegCo to share his valuable insights and experience on the subject at a leadership programme for senior civil servants held in 2014.

#### Overseas training for civil servants

18. Noting that the Administration would arrange civil servants to attend training programmes at overseas universities, a member enquired whether the Administration would sponsor civil servants to attend overseas courses of at least one year duration with recognized degree qualification or courses at renowned overseas business schools.

19. The Administration advised that a few civil servants were sponsored to acquire a master degree in overseas institutions each year. In considering whether to offer one-year overseas training to civil servants, factors such as financial implications, work relevance, and work commitment of the staff concerned would need to be considered.

20. On the question of whether civil servants who were granted full-pay study leave of one year or more by the Government to attend training courses were required to sign an undertaking to serve in the civil service for at least three years after the study, the Administration advised that if the civil servants failed to complete the post-training service as agreed in the undertaking, they would be required to repay the Government the training cost.

#### Continuous training

21. Members noted that the Administration offered financial sponsorship, i.e. the Training Sponsorship Scheme, to encourage civil servants to pursue learning through external courses. Under the Scheme, civil servants remunerated on or below Master Pay Scale Point 16 or equivalent, including

Model Scale 1 staff, might apply for reimbursement of course fees for self-arranged studies. Noting that only about \$13.8 million had been granted to B/Ds for over 5 000 frontline civil servants to participate in the Scheme since 2005, members asked whether, and if so, what action(s) would be taken by CSB to encourage more frontline civil servants to participate in the Training Sponsorship Scheme.

22. The Administration responded that the Training Sponsorship Scheme aimed at encouraging frontline civil servants to pursue continuous learning outside office hours. The sponsorship ceiling was \$6,000 per applicant per year. The number of courses i.e. three courses per applicant per year was sufficient to meet the needs of frontline staff to undertake work-related external courses for continuous learning. Apart from sponsoring frontline civil servants to pursue continuous learning outside office hours, B/Ds had all along been providing vocational training to meet job-specific needs of their frontline staff.

#### Training for non-civil service contract staff

23. 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.

#### Evaluation of training programmes

24. 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.

#### Organization of networking activities after training

25. Question was raised if the training courses provided by CSTDI would involve participants from non-government organizations ("NGOs") so that civil servants could build up a network with people from different sectors, and to learn about the good practices or latest developments in different industries.

26. The Administration advised that individual B/Ds would provide professional training to their staff through which they would have the opportunities to network with fellow practitioners in their fields and learn the latest developments in different industries. Some of the senior leadership development programmes organized by CSTDI accepted enrollment of senior executives from NGOs so as to promote the sharing of ideas and experience. Civil servants also participated in some executive development programmes at local and overseas institutions with participants from different sectors and countries. The Administration further advised that some civil servants also organized networking activities after attending training courses. The organization and participation of such activities was however voluntary in nature.

### **Latest position**

27. The Administration will update the Panel on the training and development for civil servants at the Panel meeting on 21 December 2015.

### **Relevant papers**

28. A list of relevant papers is in the **Appendix**.

**List of relevant papers**

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Public Service	17 January 2011 (item V)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	21 November 2011 (item III)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a> <a href="#">Administration's responses to the issues raised at the meeting held on 21 November 2011</a>
	19 December 2011 (item IV)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	21 January 2013 (item IV on 2013 Policy Address)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Administration's paper</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	18 February 2013 (item IV)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Administration's paper</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a> <a href="#">Administration's follow-up paper</a>
	20 January 2014 (item IV on 2014 Policy Address)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Administration's paper</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper
	17 February 2014 (item IV)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Administration's paper</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	16 February 2015 (item III)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Administration's paper</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a> <a href="#">Administration's follow-up response to issues raised at the Panel meeting</a>

Council Business Division 4  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
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