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Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

Meeting on 10 December 2018

Background brief on open data policy

Purpose

This paper provides background information on open data policy and summarizes the views and concerns expressed by Members relevant to the subject.

Background

2. Opening up government data can provide interested individuals or organizations in the community the needed ingredients for conducting technology research. In the 2017 Policy Address, the Chief Executive ("CE") announced that the Administration would step up efforts to develop innovation and technology in Hong Kong. One of the areas in achieving this objective concerns opening up of government data.

3. The Administration's strategy in opening up government data is further elucidated in the Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong ("the Blueprint") released in December 2017. The Blueprint sets out measures for building Hong Kong into a world class smart city. In the area of Smart Government under the Blueprint, the Administration indicates that it would open up more public and private sector data in digital forms to facilitate research and innovation via the government one-stop Public Sector Information Portal ("data.gov.hk"), and to promote using open data for smart city innovations.

4. To support the implementation of Smart Government, the Administration plans to build a new big data analytics platform by 2020 which would enable real-time data transmission and sharing among government departments. The Administration's goal is to enable more innovative applications and services to be built using open data. The Administration also mentions in the Blueprint that it will continue to explore and formulate initiatives to encourage open data in public and private sectors.

The Administration's efforts in opening up government data

The Public Sector Information Portal

5. At present, the Administration makes available over 3 200 datasets in digital or machine-readable formats and over 1 200 application programming interfaces for free use by the public under the "data.gov.hk" portal. These datasets cover meteorology, environment, transport, finance, population, etc., of which historical public data are also provided to enable various sectors of the community to conduct research and develop innovative applications and services.

6. In end-2017, the Administration enhanced the "data.gov.hk" portal by adopting "design thinking", re-organizing the user interface to facilitate searching within datasets, and providing new functions for the public to search open data with geographical locations on the map. These portal enhancements not only offer better user experience, but they also make it easier for the public to use the datasets.

Open data policy

7. To encourage government departments, public and private organizations to open up more data on the portal, the Administration introduced a new open data policy and implemented related measures in September 2018. Under the new policy, government departments are required to publish annual open data plans for the coming year, and, by making references to public feedback and suggestions, open up more data for public access. All government departments are required to publish their first annual open data plans by end-2018.

Provision of real-time data through Multi-functional Smart Lampposts

8. In March 2018, the Administration briefed the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting ("the Panel") regarding its plan

to implement a pilot scheme of replacing some existing lampposts with "Multi-functional Smart Lampposts" in four districts, to enhance the capability in city data collection and to disseminate more real-time information to the public. The three-year pilot scheme is expected to replace and install about 400 new lampposts with smart devices in the selected districts to collect various city data for relevant departments, including real time traffic data, meteorological and related data, air quality data as well as data for monitoring of illegal dumping at district level. The Administration plans to provide the city data collected from the lampposts to the public free of charge through the "data.gov.hk" portal for developing more innovative applications.

Previous discussions

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9. At the Panel meeting held on 8 January 2018, the Administration briefed members on the major components of the Blueprint, which include opening up of data under Smart Government. On 12 March 2018, members were briefed about the key infrastructure projects for smart city development. On 9 July 2018, the Administration updated the Panel on the developments and future direction of e-Government. Following the promulgation of CE's 2018 Policy Address, the Administration briefed the Panel on 23 October 2018 on the new initiatives on, among other matters, opening up of government data. The major concerns and comments made by Panel members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Smart government

10. Some members have expressed concerns that in the development of smart city for Hong Kong, the Administration would gather a lot of personal data from the public for building up the big data analytics platform. However, the platform would only be accessible to government departments. Panel members expressed concerns about the protection of personal data and privacy issues and asked whether the Administration would allow public access to the platform. The Administration informed the Panel that it would have to specify the purposes of gathering personal data and how they were to be used before such data were to be collected; the Administration had the responsibility of protecting personal data and complying with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, Cap. 486 in the custody and use of the personal data. The Administration might share aggregated data with the public; such information would be useful for

evaluating the effectiveness of public policies without revealing personal information of individuals.

Smart mobility

11. As regards the sharing of real-time information, some members asked if the Administration would encourage private car park operators and relevant organizations to make available real-time parking vacancy information in the public domain. They suggested that the Administration should collaborate with the private sector, including private car park operators, to integrate their data into Hong Kong eRouting application which provides driving route, real-time traffic condition and parking information for pre-trip planning. The Administration responded that as those operation data were commercial assets, the Administration could only encourage private companies to share their data with the Government.

Common Spatial Data Infrastructure

12. Some members requested the Administration to expedite the implementation of various e-Government initiatives. In particular, members recognized the value of spatial data which include geographical information and presence of public facilities, traffic information, demographics data, etc. with respect to a location. Members suggested that the Administration should develop and launch the Common Spatial Data Infrastructure ("CSDI") and share the spatial data with the public through the CSDI platform. They suggested that the Administration should make available data regarding the status of each piece of vacant land over the territory, including the ownership, planned use and permissible use. The Administration said that it would engage a consultant in the second half of 2018 to work out the appropriate data sharing model.

Multi-functional Smart Lampposts

13. On the Administration's plan to introduce Multi-functional Smart Lampposts, some members pointed out that the Administration should ensure that a wide variety of information would be provided for users through the smart lampposts, including information relevant to tourism and other services. The Administration responded that in line with the open data policy, real-time information such as local air quality data and traffic flow conditions would be collected and disseminated through the open data portal.

Latest position

14. The Administration will brief the Panel on 10 December 2018 on the latest work progress of open data policy.

Relevant papers

15. A list of the relevant papers is set out in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
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Appendix

List of relevant papers

Issued by	Meeting date/ Issue date	Paper
The Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address	---	Paragraph 98(vi) of 2018 Policy Address
Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting	8 January 2018	Administration's paper on the Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong (LC Paper No. CB(4)429/17-18(03)) Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(4)699/17-18)
	12 March 2018	Administration's paper on Key Infrastructure Projects for Smart City Development (LC Paper No. CB(4)701/17-18(03)) Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(4)1197/17-18)
	9 July 2018	Administration's paper on e-Government (LC Paper No. CB(4)1337/17-18(03)) Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(4)1596/17-18)
	23 October 2018	Administration's paper on policy initiatives of Innovation and Technology Bureau in the Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address (LC Paper No. CB(4)24/18-19(01))