

Reply to the LegCo Panel on Commerce and Industry

Support provided by HKPC to the SMEs in the use of computer software and in response to the new intellectual property legislation

The Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC) provides focused and value-added support to SMEs. Set up in 1999, the "Institute of Information and Media Industries" and "DigiHall 21" provide integrated support to meet the increasing needs of SMEs for IT related services. Such services cover the areas of e-Commerce, Business Intelligence, Enterprise Resource Planning, E-Community, Software Industry Information and New Media. Separately, the Asian Solution Centre (ASC) was established in January 2000 to cluster application vendors, system integrators and industry specialists to form a "solutions community".

To promote and facilitate the use of software by SMEs, HKPC provides support in computer systems development, training and technical services, IT exhibitions and surveys, as well as high-quality and low-cost business solutions in the form of Application Service Provider (ASP).

• Systems Development

HKPC has worked with various local organisations to develop computer systems to help local SMEs circumvent the financial and human resources barriers in the application of IT. For example, financed by the ITF, HKPC and the Hong Kong Chinese Exporters' and Importers' Association successfully developed [Trade@Anywhere](#), a secure, user-friendly and affordable web-based information management system. In collaboration with the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, HKPC developed a "Working Model for Intranet Commerce in Fabric Sourcing and Trading" (HKFAB). Targeting fabric suppliers and garment manufacturers, the model helps the soft goods industry shorten the production lead-time and reduce the handling cost for fabric procurement.

• Software application training and technical support

HKPC regularly organises training courses, seminars and exhibitions to introduce various software to SMEs and help them build up their capabilities in IT application.

In 2000/01, HKPC conducted 322 IT-related training programmes that were attended by more than 3,650 people. Separately, more than 100 seminars on e-Commerce were organised for local SMEs during the same period. These training courses and seminars were complemented by HKPC's technical backup and advisory services, such as system development and maintenance, software support, network management etc., to help SMEs tackle the problems encountered in software application.

In addition, HKPC's Asian Solutions Centre (ASC) displays locally developed software products and business solutions to enable SMEs to make comparison and select the most suitable software. In collaboration with local and overseas partners, the ASC has successfully completed more than 50 business solution development projects in 2000/01.

- **IT exhibitions and surveys**

To further promote IT awareness and application for Hong Kong's business community, HKPC has been organising the annual Software Exhibition since 1986. In 2000, the Software Exhibition attracted more than 54,000 visitors. Separately, in collaboration with the local IT industry, HKPC launched a quarterly survey on e-Business adoption in 2000/01. The survey aims at studying and monitoring the development and adoption of e-Business in Hong Kong, and providing the SMEs with a useful reference to formulate business strategies accordingly.

- **Quality industry-specific application software at affordable price**

HKPC provides affordable software solutions to SMEs of various industries in the form of application service provider (ASP). A good example is the "ERP-Highway" service provided through the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Centre. The "ERP Highway" is an affordable subscription service that enables SMEs to connect to one of the world's most robust ERP solutions through a sophisticated digital network, thereby acquiring linkage to a whole range of professional services, including ERP training, system customisation, workflow procedures and performance measurement. This service helps SMEs effectively manage their enterprise resources and explore business opportunities without high upfront investment cost.

The implementation of the Intellectual Property (Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 2000 will mean new concerns for SMEs in terms of compliance, in particular the sourcing and selection of appropriate computer software, and low-cost alternative application software products.

HKPC has responded promptly to these needs. Work already completed or underway includes organising meetings with SME trade associations, the Customs and Excise Department, the Commerce and Industry Bureau, LegCo members and software vendors, conducting related training programmes and seminars, as well as providing information on legitimate software and alternative products to local SMEs.

- **Meetings with relevant organisations and institutions**

Many SMEs still lack proper understanding of the new ordinance. In this connection, HKPC arranged several meetings in March this year for representatives of trade associations to air their opinions on the Ordinance to LegCo members and officials from the Customs and Excise Department and Commerce and Industry Bureau.

HKPC also takes an active role in liasing with software vendors and suppliers, Internet service providers and application service providers to deliver reasonably priced software programmes to SMEs. In 2001, HKPC supported 57 trade associations in their negotiation with software distributors to lower software prices. Microsoft, Symantec, Adobe and Network Associate finally agreed to provide different discounts to the associations

- **Seminars on software asset management**

HKPC organised two seminars on Software Asset Management in March and April this year. The speakers included representatives from the Customs and Excise Department, the Business Software Alliance and software vendors. The seminars aimed at providing the SMEs with the needed tools to manage their software use, thus ensuring compliance with the Ordinance and the benefits of using legitimate software.

The seminars have received encouraging response from the local SMEs. More than 700 people attended the activities.

- **Information on legitimate software and alternative products**

In the past, the office application software market was practically dominated by Microsoft Windows and Linux-based application software was largely ignored. The launching of the new intellectual property ordinance has stimulated more interest from SMEs on Linux products due to their relatively low costs.

HKPC is actively searching for alternative software programmes compatible with major software products available in the market. For example, HKPC is in the process of trying out the functions of “Chinese 2000” developed by Culturecom and Open Office by openoffice.org to examine their compatibility with the major software products and their suitability for SMEs.

Apart from the commercial Linux products being promoted by the software vendors, a series of Linux training programmes have been launched by HKPC for local software developers. In May 2001, HKPC signed a memorandum of understanding with Asia Pacific Training and Support Centre Limited to provide authorized one-stop Linux education and training for local Linux software developers. This will facilitate SMEs in utilising Linux packages that has a full set of office application functions compatible with the major software at a lower cost. So far 11 training programmes on Linux software development for over 100 software developers have been conducted by HKPC.

- **Future activities**

The market share of Linux and other open source products was low in the past and thus the availability of open source application software was limited. To explore this new market, long-term collaboration among the software industry, the tertiary education institutes and the trade associations is needed. At this stage, it is important to enhance the awareness of various business sectors on Linux and other open source products, promote a wider use of these products in various industries, and to further improve their compatibility.

HKPC will continue to support local SMEs in the search of alternatives for major software products, conducting Linux-based training programmes, and providing updated information on relevant subjects. In addition, HKPC will line up with the local software industry to explore the feasibility of developing open source application software and to provide related technical support to the SMEs.

香港生產力促進局一貫致力為本港中小企業提供增值支援。因應中小企業對資訊科技應用日益增長的需求，促進局在一九九九年成立了「資訊及新媒體開發院」及「數碼廿一廣場」，為中小企業提供綜合支援服務，並於二〇〇〇年一月成立「亞洲方案中心」。「數碼廿一廣場」提供的服務，涵蓋電子商貿、商業智能、企業資源規劃、電子社群、軟件業資訊及新媒體等多個範疇。「亞洲方案中心」的目標，是匯集本港的應用方案供應商、系統整合人員及資訊科技專家，成為一個「方案供應社群」。

在鼓勵及協助中小企業應用資訊科技方面，促進局提供的服務包括電腦系統開發、技術支援與培訓、資訊科技展覽及調查，以及透過應用服務供應商(ASP)模式提供質優價廉的應用軟件服務等。

- **電腦系統開發**

促進局過去曾與多個商會及團體合作發展各種電腦系統，如在創新及科技基金資助下，與香港中華出入口商會合作建立「中出商貿通」系統，為中小企業提供網上貿易管理支援；以及聯同香港科技大學及香港中文大學，為布料供應商及買家開發一套名為「網絡採購新模式」的布料採購系統等。

- **軟件應用培訓及技術支援**

為協助中小企業應用日新月異的電腦軟件，促進局經常舉辦不同類型的培訓課程、研討會和展覽會，提高中小企業對各種軟件的認識，促進它們對資訊科技應用。在二〇〇〇/〇一年度期間，促進局共舉辦了三百二十二個有關資訊科技的培訓課程，學員超過三千六百五十人。此外，同期內促進局還舉辦了一百多個以中小企業為主要對象的電子商貿研討會，參加人數達六千七百人。

促進局亦提供各種技術上的支援及顧問諮詢服務，例如系統發展及保養、軟件支援及網絡管理等，協助中小企業解決在應用軟件時所遇到的各種問題。

此外，促進局的「亞洲方案中心」亦有展示由本地軟件業專為中小企業開發的各種商業方案，讓他們可以透過比較選擇合適的軟

件。在二〇〇〇/〇一年度，該中心與三十多個本地及海外伙伴合作，成功完成了五十多個商業方案開發項目。

- **舉辦資訊科技展覽及調查**

促進局自一九八六年起，每年舉辦電腦軟件展，普及和推動香港工商業的資訊科技應用。二〇〇〇年的電腦軟件展共吸引了五萬四千多人參觀。此外，從二〇〇〇/〇一年度開始，促進局與資訊科技業界合作，就電子商貿在香港的應用進行季度調查，了解本港中小企業在電子商貿上的應用程度和進展，促進業界在這一領域的應用發展。

- **提供以行業為本、質優價廉的應用軟件服務**

促進局亦有透過應用服務供應商(ASP)的模式，為不同行業的中小企業提供價格相宜的優質應用軟件服務。其中一個例子，是由本局企業資源規劃中心提供的「企業快線」服務。「企業快線」的中小企業客戶，可以較低的費用，透過先進的數碼網絡，接駁到全球最先進的企業資源規劃軟件系統，應用一系列專業功能，包括企業資源規劃培訓、個別系統設計、工作流程步驟，以及表現評估等，從而更有效管理公司資源及拓展業務。

隨着「2000年知識產權(雜項修訂)條例」實施，中小企業在資訊科技應用方面須面對不少新問題，包括如何購買和使用軟件才符合法例、怎樣選購合用的合法軟件、怎樣才能以較優惠價格購買合法軟件、以及如何尋找較廉價的應用軟件代替品等。

促進局對此作出了迅速回應。已經開展或正在進行的相關支援工作，包括與中小企業商會、立法會、香港海關和工商局，以及軟件供應商等有關機構及單位進行溝通、協商，舉辦相關的培訓課程及研討會，以及向中小企業提供合法軟件和代替品的最新資訊等。

- **與有關機構及單位進行溝通、協商**

2000年知識產權(雜項修訂)條例實施，不少中小企業對法例的具體條文及執行程序仍缺乏深入了解，一時之間無所適從。

此外，中小企業須投資購買正版電腦軟件，而在日後軟件升級或新添置電腦時，又須投入更多資金，這多少會增加中小企業的財務負擔。有見及此，促進局先後在今年三月安排了多次會議，讓商會代表深入了解新法例的精神和執行程序，並把他們對法例的意見傳達給立法會、香港海關及工商局等有關機構和部門。

另一方面，促進局積極與電腦軟件製造商及供應商、互聯網服務供應商及應用服務供應商，包括 Adobe、微軟(Microsoft)及商業軟件聯盟(BSA)等聯絡，為中小企業提供價格合理的軟件及方案。結果，在促進局的努力下，主要軟件供應商答應降低軟件價格，微軟、Symantec、Adobe 及 Network Associates 均願意提供不同程度的折扣方案給五十七個商會。

- **舉辦相關的研討會**

為了使中小企業知法守法，促進局在今年三、四月間舉辦了兩次有關軟件資產管理的研討會，講者包括香港海關、商業軟件聯盟及軟件供應商的代表。

舉辦這些活動的目的，是協助中小企業加深對新法例的了解，並取得必需的資源，妥善管理軟件資產，務求令香港全體市民切實遵守有關法例，和享受到使用合法軟件所帶來的好處。

中小企業界對此反應熱烈，超過七百人出席了上述研討會。

- **向中小企業提供合法軟件和代替品的資訊**

過去，辦公室應用軟件市場基本上由微軟的視窗系統主導，Linux 應用軟件一直被忽畱。在新知識產權法實施後，由於價格因素，中小企業開始對 Linux 軟件產生較大的興趣。

因應中小企業的需求，促進局積極開拓與市場主流軟件兼容的其他選擇，例如試用由文化傳訊開發的「中文 2000」，以及由 openoffice.org 開發的 OpenOffice 的辦公室應用軟件，以了解其兼容性及對中小型企業的適用程度。

為了幫助中小企業加強應用代替軟件產品的能力，除軟件商提供的 Linux 應用軟件外，促進局在二〇〇一年五月與亞太支援培訓中心有限公司簽署備忘錄，共同為本地軟件開發人員提供一站式的 Linux 培訓課程，以期為中小企業開發廉價和功能齊備的 Linux 辦公室應用軟件系統。到目前為止，促進局已開辦了十一個 Linux 相關課程，參加的軟件開發人員超過一百人。

• 未來工作

由於過往 Linux 及開放源碼(open source)產品的市場佔有率較低，以此為平台的兼容性軟件頗為缺乏。要充分開發這一市場，需要軟件業、大專院校以及商會等各方面的互相配合和長期共同努力。而當務之急，是提升各行各業對 Linux 及其他開放源碼軟件的認識，培養各行業對此等產品的使用習慣，並加強其兼容性。

因應中小企業的實際需要，促進局除繼續致力發掘及推廣主流軟件代替品、舉辦 Linux 相關培訓課程，以及提供有關的最新信息外，還會推動本地軟件業開發開放源碼應用軟件及提供有關服務，例如與業界探討開發以 Linux 為平台的應用軟件的可行性，以及就相關軟件的應用為中小企業提供技術支援等。