

ITEM FOR FINANCE COMMITTEE

HEAD 55 - GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT : COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY BUREAU (INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND BROADCASTING BRANCH)

Members are invited to approve the change of -

- (a) the title of Head 55 from Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau (Information Technology and Broadcasting Branch) to Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau (Communications and Technology Branch) in the 2003-04 Estimates of Expenditure with effect from 1 July 2003; and
- (b) the title of the Controlling Officer for Head 55 from the Permanent Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology (Information Technology and Broadcasting) to the Permanent Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology (Communications and Technology) in the 2003-04 Estimates of Expenditure with effect from 1 July 2003.

PROBLEM

The titles of the Expenditure Head 55 - Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau (Information Technology and Broadcasting Branch) (ITBB) and the Controlling Officer of the Head do not adequately reflect the current functions and responsibilities undertaken by the Branch and the post holder.

/PROPOSAL

PROPOSAL

2. We propose to change the title of Head 55 from ITBB to Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau (Communications and Technology Branch) (CTB) and the title of the Controlling Officer for Head 55 from Permanent Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology (Information Technology and Broadcasting) (PSITB) to the Permanent Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology (Communications and Technology) (PSCT) in the 2003-04 Estimates of Expenditure with effect from 1 July 2003.

JUSTIFICATION

3. Technological advancement has increasingly encouraged the convergence of the media of information, image, voice and data transmission through telecommunications, broadcasting and the Internet. The term “communications” is commonly adopted in overseas jurisdictions to reflect this development. On the other hand, since the establishment of the Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau on 1 July 2002, ITBB has assumed policy responsibility for the innovation and technology programme with the Commissioner for Innovation and Technology and his Commission reporting to PSITB directly. Thus ITBB has a wider portfolio of technology areas under its responsibility than just information technology (IT). We consider it appropriate to re-title ITBB as CTB to reflect the current functions and responsibilities accurately. After the re-titling, there will not be any reduction of the Government’s commitment to, and leadership in, promoting the development of our IT industry, spearheading the deployment and application of IT in our economy and the community and building up Hong Kong as a leading digital city in the world. The title of PSITB should also be revised to PSCT accordingly.

4. The 2003-04 Estimates of Expenditure in respect of Head 55 was approved by the Legislative Council in the context of the enactment of the Appropriation Ordinance 2003 in April 2003. With the development above, the titles of Head 55 and its Controlling Officer (PSITB) used at the time the Estimates were prepared no longer adequately reflect the current functions and responsibilities undertaken by the Branch and the post holder. We propose to change the titles of ITBB and its Controlling Officer accordingly with effect from 1 July 2003.

5. We have separately proposed to reorganise the Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau (CITB) with effect from 1 July 2003 vide EC(2003-04)2. The Establishment Subcommittee (ESC) of the Finance Committee endorsed our proposal on 21 May 2003. The retitling and reorganisation proposals are integral parts of change for enhancing the efficient and effective delivery of services by the Bureau.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6. The proposal has no financial implications.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

7. We consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Commerce and Industry and Legislative Council Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting at a joint panel meeting on 14 April 2003 on the reorganisation of CITB with effect from 1 July 2003. The proposals included establishment matters and the re-titling of ITBB to Technology and Broadcasting Branch. Members in general supported the proposals. The ESC subsequently endorsed the establishment-related proposals on 21 May 2003. We have also given further thought to the new title for ITBB and propose to re-title it as CTB for the reasons set out in paragraph 3 above.

Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau
June 2003