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Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

Meeting on 12 January 2004

Information note on the Electronic Service Delivery Scheme

Purpose

This paper provides some background facts on the Electronic Service Delivery (ESD) Scheme to facilitate members' consideration of the Scheme as a flagship e-government project under the E-Government Programme.

Background

2. The ESD Scheme is one of the key initiatives under the "Digital 21" Strategy to provide public services to the community electronically, through an information infrastructure with an open and common interface which is accessible throughout the territory. The stated objectives of the ESD Scheme include improving the quality and efficiency in the delivery of public services and pump-priming the development of e-commerce in Hong Kong. At present, the ESD website (www.esd.gov.hk) is the one-stop portal providing online public and commercial services to citizens and businesses.

The Scheme arrangements

The business model

3. The ESD Scheme is a public-private partnership project operating in the following business model :

- (a) The private-sector operator is responsible for developing, financing, maintaining and operating the ESD information infrastructure with its own investment;
- (b) the Government is responsible for setting up at its own cost an appropriate interface between the ESD infrastructure and the government departments/agencies which will use the ESD system for providing various public services;

- (c) the operator derives its revenue by charging the Government a fixed subscription fee and a per transaction fee based on the actual volume of transactions; and
- (d) the operator can also make use of the ESD infrastructure to provide e-commerce services and electronic transactions in the private sector and generate income as a result.

Funding and award of tender

4. On 18 December 1998, the Finance Committee approved the creation of a non-recurrent commitment of \$123.2 million to enable the Administration to set up the interface between the ESD infrastructure and the government systems.

5. In November 1999, the Government awarded the tender of "Supply and Implementation of ESD Scheme" to ESD Services Limited (ESDSL) which is a joint venture of Hutchison Whampoa Limited and Hewlett-Packard HK SAR Limited. The contract period is five years commencing from 19 January 2001 and can be extended for two more years at the Government's option.

Charging mechanism

6. In its funding request to the Finance Committee, the Administration informed members that it would negotiate with the ESD operator on the charges payable. The Administration also considered that by meeting the transaction fees payable to the ESD operator, the public will not have to pay more for using ESD services. This would encourage the public to obtain public services by using the ESD Scheme. The Administration has undertaken to review the arrangement three years after scheme implementation.

7. Pursuant to the agreement with ESDSL, the Government will pay ESDSL a monthly subscription fee of \$400,000 and a \$5.5 per transaction fee one year after the accumulated number of chargeable transactions has reached 2.3 million.

The way forward

8. In its latest progress report on the E-Government Programme, the Administration informs members that as the ESD Scheme will enter a new phase of providing more value-added, joined-up, business-oriented services, the Administration will take the opportunity to review the Scheme's performance and will report the results of the review to the Panel in due course.