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Miss Erin TSANG
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Panel on
Information Technology and Broadcasting
3rd floor, Citibank Tower,
3 Garden Road, Hong Kong

Dear Miss TSANG,

Provision of Wi-Fi Facilities at Government Premises

With regard to the written questions raised by Hon. Sin Chung Kai on 13 April 2007 on the Programme of “Provision of Wi-Fi Facilities at Government Premises”, please find our reply as follows:

Funding Proposal

1. According to the requirements collected from government departments, we will install Wi-Fi facilities in about 350 Government premises of 24 departments, which is about 40% of all the departments. As we do not maintain information on the total number of the Government premises, the “Percentage coverage of Government premises” cannot be provided.

2. The expenditure of “Installation and Implementation Services” is estimated to be at \$125.6 million. The actual expenditure will however depend on the outcome of the tendering exercise. The breakdown of expenditure estimate is as follows:

➤ Hardware and software	\$53.3 million
➤ System and network installation and implementation services	\$32.4 million
➤ Initial support and maintenance services during the implementation period	\$39.9 million

The expenditure of hardware and software can be divided into \$29.5 million, \$21.5 million and \$2.3 million for Wi-Fi access points and communication network equipment; Internet gateway; and content filtering software respectively.

The expenditure of system and network installation and implementation services can be divided into \$8.3 million, \$22 million and \$2.1 million for the installation of Wi-Fi access points and communication network equipment; setup of Internet gateway and content filtering system; and conducting security audit and risk assessment for the whole Wi-Fi service.

The expenditure of initial support and maintenance services during the implementation period will be used for data communication connection and Internet broadband services; support and maintenance for the network equipment; and operation and helpdesk services for the year 2007-08 to 2009-10. The expenditures for the three-year period are \$0.6 million, \$15.7 million and \$23.6 million respectively.

To enable the ease and convenient use of the Government Wi-Fi facilities by the public including businessmen and travellers, we do not plan to have user registration. User authentication system is therefore not included in the above estimated expenditure.

3. It is estimated that there will be about 9 access points and 9 smart antennae for each indoor and outdoor site respectively. The whole project will thus require the installation of about 3,000 access points approximately. The actual number of access points for each site will however depend on the

environment and the types of equipment and installation design deployed by the service providers.

4. The purpose of the funding application for the Wi-Fi Programme is to provide free wireless Internet access to the public by installing Wi-Fi facilities in Government premises. The funding application does not include the provision of application systems and services running on these facilities. We will separately handle the provision of Internet application systems and services through other established channels.
5. The work of site preparation includes the setting up of network equipment rooms, installation of power and signal conduits/cables, fitting out of power sockets and mountings for equipment. We estimate that the site preparation cost for each indoor and outdoor is about \$150,000 and \$500,000 respectively.

Service Details

1. The service hours of the Wi-Fi facilities at Government premises, both indoor and outdoor, will be aligned with those of the corresponding sites. The service hours of individual sites are different to cater for different target users and demand. For the service hours of Wi-Fi facilities, one can make reference to the published opening hours of individual sites.
2. For the ease and convenient use of the Wi-Fi services, we have no plan at this stage to demand for user registration. To ensure that every user has an equal opportunity in using the services, we will include in the system design a mechanism to limit the duration of use of the Wi-Fi facilities.

Websites Filtering Mechanism

1. Apart from obscene sites, we do not plan to filter other types of sites.
2. We will procure from the market the related services and solutions which will use the blacklisting mechanism to filter improper sites. We will review and update the related services and mechanism regularly. The non-recurrent and recurrent costs estimated are \$2.3 million and \$1.6 million respectively.

3. We will make reference to the market standards and consider the needs and responses from the public in updating the filtering service requirements and the list of improper websites.

Radiation from Wi-Fi Hotspots

1. OFTA has adopted the International Commission of Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection Guidelines (the “ICNIRP guidelines”) to limit the exposure to non-ionizing radiation in the frequency range within 300GHz for the protection of workers and the public. Wi-Fi or wireless LAN belongs to non-ionizing radiation and the equipment used and sold in HKSAR should be compliant to the guideline. In addition, over the past few decades, numerous independent and authoritative panels have conducted studies on the effects of non-ionizing radiation on health. At the moment, there is no scientific evidence or concrete conclusion that the radiation from Wi-Fi facilities has impact to the health of human being. According to some researches, the radiation from Wi-Fi, which is about less than 1% of the radiation of typical cell phone, has no or very low impact on human tissue. In installing our Wi-Fi Network, we will follow the “Code of Practice for the Protection of Workers and Members of Public Against Non-Ionizing Radiation Hazards from Radio Transmitting Equipment” from OFTA, use devices of appropriate power, and operate at suitable distance.

To allay unnecessary concerns of the public, we will use various channels to raise their awareness and knowledge that Wi-Fi signals will not have impact to the health of human being.

Information Security

1. We are discussing with the law enforcement agencies to work out the most feasible solution, and one of the solutions being considered is to record the MAC (Media Access Control) addresses of the users. The law enforcement agencies can make use of the records kept, when necessary, to assist investigation and prevent future abuse of the Wi-Fi service. We will also implement network monitoring system to monitor and stop improper use of the service, such as spamming, immediately. Other security measures such as user isolation and data encryption will also be deployed to protect the users. In addition, we will educate the public on the proper

use of the Internet and to raise their awareness on the rights and responsibilities of using the Internet through publicity and education campaigns.

2. We will introduce a series of publicity and promotion campaigns during the various implementation stages of the Programme, including dissemination of guidelines, distribution of leaflets and conducting road shows, to educate the public on the security knowledge of using the Wi-Fi service.

Yours sincerely,

(Alfred NG)
for Government Chief Information Officer