

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)866/09-10

Ref: CB1/PL/PS

**Panel on Public Service
Meeting on 18 January 2010**

**Background brief on
national studies and Basic Law training for civil servants**

Purpose

This paper provides background information on national studies and Basic Law training for civil servants, and summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by the Panel on Public Service (the Panel) on the subject in past discussions.

Background

2. In keeping with the development of closer ties between Hong Kong and the Mainland, the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) provides training courses and theme-based visits to the Mainland, local seminars, civil service exchange programmes and a dedicated website on Mainland-related information and developments to enhance civil servants' understanding of the systems and developments on the Mainland. In addition, the Administration provides training on the Basic Law for civil servants and organizes a variety of promotional activities to enhance the awareness of the Basic Law amongst civil servants.

National studies programmes

3. CSB and the Civil Service Training and Development Institute (CSTDI) (formerly known as Civil Service Training Centre) have since the transition taken proactive steps to enhance the national studies programmes for civil servants. New training courses and activities have been added since 2000. In particular, an e-learning portal on national studies was introduced in 2002. Since May 2003, CSB has also regularly updated the Panel on enhancements to the programmes. A brief description of the training programmes and activities related to national studies is given in **Appendix I**.

Basic Law training

4. Since the promulgation of the Basic Law in the early 1990's, CSTDI has been providing training on the Basic Law for civil servants centrally. With "Understand One Country, Realise Two Systems" (認識一國、實踐兩制) as the central theme, CSTDI has organized a range of training programmes and promotional activities. They cover the core concepts and provisions of the Basic Law, including the status of the Basic Law in the legal system of the Mainland, relationship between the Central People's Government and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), interpretation of the Basic Law, etc. CSTDI has also issued various publications related to the Basic Law.

5. In line with the Chief Executive's 2007-2008 Policy Address, the Administration has further enhanced Basic Law training for civil servants to ensure that the training can form an integral part of training for civil servants, and that the training is provided in a systematic manner which takes into account the needs of civil servants of different levels and work nature. The Administration indicated that it would adopt a multi-pronged approach which included classroom training, e-learning, publications and diversified promotional activities to achieve this objective. A brief description of the then planned programmes and activities is in **Appendix II**.

Major concerns expressed by the Panel in its past discussions

6. The Administration has regularly provided updates to the Panel on progress of its provision of national studies programmes and Basic Law training for civil servants. Members in general were supportive of the implementation of these training programmes. Members have expressed concerns about the following –

- (a) Whether there was an open and fair system in selecting civil servants to attend the programmes, so that the training programmes would not cater for the same group(s) of officers only;
- (b) Whether the officers had to take leave to attend the training programmes;
- (c) The impact of relevant exchange programmes conducted with Mainland officials on Hong Kong civil servants;
- (d) How the Administration evaluated the effectiveness of different programmes to facilitate better planning of such programmes;
- (e) Whether directorate officers of the professional grades and non-directorate officers of the middle ranks were offered the same opportunities to receive training on national studies, in particular, whether training opportunities were offered to frontline civil servants of the lower and middle ranks; and

- (f) How the qualification requirements for course instructors were ensured, and how CSTDI monitored the performance of these instructors.

7. In response to members' concerns above, the Administration subsequently provided information on the content and course outline as well as the trainers/speakers of training programmes. The Administration also responded to the above concerns as follows –

- (a) A monitoring system would be put in place to ensure that all civil servants in the targeted grades/ranks had the opportunity to attend the training programmes;
- (b) Civil servants were released from their duties during office hours to attend the training programmes, most of which only lasted for a couple of hours or half a day;
- (c) Participants in the training programmes were required to give their feedbacks in the form of questionnaires to CSB with a view to further improving the arrangements of the programmes. The feedback contained in the evaluation summaries would form part of the reference materials which the Administration would take into account when deciding on how similar programmes should be structured and conducted in future;
- (d) Directorate or higher rank officers would normally have stronger operational needs to keep abreast of the latest developments and current issues in the Mainland in the discharge of their duties. Nevertheless, the training needs of officers of middle and lower ranks were also catered for through a variety of national studies programmes open to officers of different ranks. These included seminars on national studies and a national studies portal; and
- (e) On course instructors' qualifications, instead of setting general requirements, suitable instructors were identified through two major sources. For the courses commissioned by CSTDI in collaboration with local universities, the course instructors were normally recommended by the universities concerned. On the other hand, CSTDI also identified suitable instructors among reputable academics with expert knowledge about developments and systems in the Mainland to conduct seminars or talks on specific topics. As to instructors' performance, CSTDI would evaluate it with reference to the observations made by its staff in attendance of the courses and the course attendees' feedback.

Latest developments

8. The Administration has proposed to update the Panel on its provision of national studies programme and Basic Law training for civil servants at the Panel meeting on 18 January 2010.

Relevant papers

9. A list of relevant papers is in **Appendix III**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
14 January 2010

Training programmes and activities related to national studies

(i) Tsinghua/Peking University Programmes

1. The Administration has been organizing the Tsinghua University Programme and the Peking University Programme since 1993 and 2004 respectively for senior civil servants whose salary is at point 45 of the Master Pay Scale (MPS) or equivalent or above. Both programmes last for 17 days and include classroom lectures and visits to state agencies in Beijing, as well as a 3-day visit to selected Mainland cities. The programmes provide participants with a comprehensive introduction of the political, social, economic, cultural and legal developments in the Mainland. They also aim to enhance communication between participants and Mainland officials.

(ii) National School of Administration (NSA) Programme

2. This is a two-week programme introduced since 1999 for civil servants at the directorate level. Through lectures and talks delivered by distinguished Mainland scholars and senior Central People's Government officials, the programme aims to deepen participants' understanding of the current policies and topical issues in the Mainland, and to enhance networking between participants and Mainland officials.

3. To enhance the training of directorate Administrative Officers in Mainland affairs, the Administration commissioned NSA to organize a customized one-week national studies programme in 2005 and 2006.

(iii) Foreign Affairs Studies Programme

4. Since 2004, the Administration has commissioned the China Foreign Affairs University to organize a one-week Foreign Affairs Studies Programme for directorate and other civil servants involved in external affairs. The programme covers China's foreign affairs, protocol and other related topics.

(iv) Thematic Study Programmes

5. Since 1991, thematic study programmes have been organized through the coordination of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office (HKMAO). These programmes mainly take the form of familiarization visits to selected Mainland provinces and cities, and they aim to enhance participants' general understanding of the systems and developments in the Mainland in selected policy areas or themes.

(v) National Studies Programme for Middle Managers

6. To enable middle-ranking civil servants whose salary is at MPS 34 to 44 or equivalent to acquire a better understanding of the Mainland's systems, and to deepen their knowledge on the developments in the Pearl River Delta region, the Administration has commissioned the Sun Yat-sen University and the Shenzhen Graduate School of Peking University since 2006 and 2007 respectively to organize a one-week national studies programme for these civil servants. The programme covers the latest socio-economic and political developments in the Mainland, with special focus on the Pearl River Delta region.

(vi) Civil Service Exchange Programme with the Mainland

7. The civil service exchange programme with the Mainland commenced in 2002. So far, the Administration has entered into exchange agreements with the municipal governments of Beijing and Shanghai, the city government of Hangzhou and the provincial government of Guangdong. Under the programme, civil servants of one side are attached to the government of the other side for about four to eight weeks with a view to widening exposure, sharing experience and expertise, and fostering partnership and communication. While on attachment, the participants would study the relevant legislation, rules and regulations, and codes of conduct, if any, of the host departments. They would also observe the practices of the host departments through attendance at briefings and demonstrations, participation in training, meetings, discussion forums, experience sharing sessions and site visits, etc. Civil servants taking part in such exchange programme would not take up any specific posts or duties in the host departments.

8. The scope of exchange covers a wide range of disciplines, including infrastructure development, city planning, traffic management, environmental protection, landscape architecture, public housing, health and food safety, economic and financial management, trade and commerce, census and statistics, science promotion and information technology, social security, community development, human resource management, culture and arts, telecommunications, quality examination, auditing, intellectual property, public security, immigration control and tourism, etc. To prepare participants on both sides for the programme, prior to the commencement of the attachment, the host governments would provide participants with an orientation and briefing. At the end of the programme, an evaluation would be conducted to collect feedback from participants.

(vii) Local Seminars on Subjects Related to National Studies

9. The Administration works closely with local and Mainland institutions on seminars on the latest developments in the Mainland. These seminars target a wide range of civil servants from frontline staff to directorate staff of different grades. They cover a wide variety of topics such as the Mainland's political and government reforms, legal system, economic and social changes, administrative and civil service systems, foreign affairs, etc. Seminars on topical issues, e.g. macro economic measures, regional developments, further opening of the financial market, development of a harmonious society in the Mainland, etc, have also been organized.

10. Apart from local scholars, the Administration has also invited scholars and experts from the Mainland to speak in the above-mentioned seminars. In the past, professors from the Peking University, Tsinghua University, Renmin University, Zhongshan University, Jinan University and Beijing Normal University have accepted invitation to talk on subjects related to anti-corruption, political and economic developments, civil service reforms, regional developments, environmental protection, China's foreign policy, etc. Officials from the Development Centre of the State Council, the National Development and Reform Commission, the People's Bank of China, the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the HKSAR, the Ministry of Education, etc. have also accepted invitation to talk on subjects such as banking reforms, monetary policy, developments in the national economy, the Eleventh Five Year Plan, etc.

(viii) National Studies E-Learning Portal

11. Established since 2002, the learning portal on national studies in the Government's "Cyber Learning Centre Plus" website provides comprehensive information about the Mainland, covering such areas as the political and civil service systems, the economy, the legal framework and geographical data. In-depth analyses of current issues are also available. To help keep civil servants abreast of the latest developments, the portal also houses up-to-date policy documents of the Central People's Government, relevant speeches on key policies and developments, and useful linkages. The e-learning portal provides a convenient platform for civil servants to pursue national studies at their own pace and in their own time.

Planned programmes and activities on the Basic Law in 2008-2009

(i) Core Programmes on the Basic Law

1. Three core programmes on the Basic Law would be introduced with effect from 2008-2009 to enable civil servants, at various stages of their careers, to have the opportunity to learn and refresh themselves on knowledge about the Basic Law. These programmes would be the Introductory Course for New Civil Service Appointees; Intermediate Course for Middle Level Civil Servants (MPS 34 - 44); and Advanced Course for Senior Level Civil Servants (MPS 45 – 49 and directorate staff). These programmes generally aim to enhance civil servants' understanding of the key concepts and provisions of the Basic Law. In the Intermediate and Advanced Courses, more in-depth analysis would be provided and court cases related to the Basic Law would be discussed. A diversity of speakers including academics, legal practitioners and officials from both Hong Kong and the Mainland would be invited to conduct the programmes.

(ii) E-learning Resources on the Basic Law

2. At present, a section of the Government's national studies e-learning portal contains online resources on the Basic Law for self-learning by civil servants. These resources include reference materials as well as the latest information updates related to the Basic Law. They also include the presentation materials of the Basic Law course speakers, the background to and judgments of major court cases relating to the Basic Law, and relevant articles and speeches by government officials, etc. To tie in with the enhanced training on Basic Law in the civil service, the Administration would continue to enrich the resources on the portal, and develop web courses on the Basic Law by phases to enhance self-learning by civil servants, to supplement classroom training and to help civil servants refresh their knowledge on the Basic Law.

(iii) Thematic Seminars, Publications and Promotional Activities

3. In the past, the Administration has centrally organized seminars on specific topics of the Basic Law for different levels of civil servants, and helped departments organize seminars on specific Basic Law topics relevant to their needs. The themes of the centrally organized seminars covered a wide variety of subjects such as "Human Rights and the Basic Law", "China's Constitution and the Basic Law" and "Implementation of the 'One Country Two Systems' Principle". The themes of the seminars for departments covered such areas as "Human Rights" and "Right of Abode", etc. The Administration would continue to provide centrally organized and

departmental Basic Law seminars in the coming years.

(iv) Other activities

4. To enhance the general awareness of and sustain interest in the Basic Law amongst all civil servants, especially frontline staff, the Administration regularly organizes promotional activities. Such activities take the forms of quiz, desktop tips and exhibition related to the Basic Law, etc, which would help disseminate the fundamental concepts of the Basic Law as well as the relevance of the Basic Law to civil servants' work and daily life. In addition, the Administration regularly publishes a "Basic Law Bulletin" jointly with the Department of Justice and the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, and provides a "Basic Law Corner" in the Civil Service Newsletter which is circulated to all civil servants.

National studies and Basic Law training for civil servants

List of relevant papers

Date of meeting of Panel on Public Service	Minutes / Paper	LC Paper No.
19.5.2003	<p>Administration's paper on "National Studies Programmes for Civil Servants "</p> <p>Supplementary information provided by the Administration</p> <p>Minutes of meeting</p>	<p>CB(1)1650/02-03(04) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0519cb1-1650-4e.pdf</p> <p>CB(1)1937/02-03(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0519cb1-1937-1e.pdf</p> <p>CB(1)1910/02-03 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/ps/minutes/ps030519.pdf</p>
19.12.2005	<p>Administration's paper on "National studies programmes and related training activities for civil servants"</p> <p>Minutes of meeting</p>	<p>CB(1)507/05-06(04) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/ps/papers/ps1219cb1-507-4e.pdf</p> <p>CB(1)965/05-06 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/ps/minutes/ps051219.pdf</p>
15.1.2007	<p>Administration's paper on "Update on national studies programmes for civil servants "</p> <p>Supplementary information provided by the Administration</p> <p>Minutes of meeting</p>	<p>CB(1)623/06-07(04) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0115cb1-623-4-e.pdf</p> <p>CB(1)879/06-07(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0218cb1-989-2-e.pdf</p> <p>CB(1)876/06-07 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/ps/minutes/ps070115.pdf</p>

Date of meeting of Panel on Public Service	Minutes / Paper	LC Paper No.
18.2.2008	Administration's paper on "Update on national studies and Basic Law training for civil servants" Supplementary information provided by the Administration Minutes of meeting	CB(1)764/07-08(04) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0218cb1-764-4-e.pdf CB(1)989/07-08(02) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0218cb1-989-2-e.pdf CB(1)966/07-08 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ps/minutes/ps080218.pdf

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
14 January 2010