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Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

Meeting on 13 June 2011

Updated background brief on E-Government programmes

Purpose

This paper gives an account of the development of the E-Government programmes and also a summary of views and concerns expressed by Members in previous discussions.

Development of the E-Government programmes

2. Following the publication of the 2008 Digital 21 Strategy, the Government has further developed, in consultation with the Digital 21 Strategy Advisory Committee, the following statement of desired outcomes for developing the next generation of public services –

"The Government provides people with the services they need, in an efficient, convenient manner, which is as pleasurable and straightforward as dealing with the most customer-friendly organizations in the commercial and voluntary sectors. Government policy priorities such as healthcare reform are enabled by appropriate and world-leading use of information and communications technology (ICT). The internal efficiency of Government approaches that of the most efficient commercial organizations. Transparency and public engagement are enhanced through leveraging ICT."

3. In order to determine whether the service delivery objective is being met, the Government has begun to measure user satisfaction with the channels used to deliver government services and is benchmarking this with

the satisfaction level achieved by leading commercial organizations. The Administration will adopt this as the Key Performance Indicator for this objective.

Progress of the implementation of E-Government programmes

4. According to the Administration¹, good progress has been made in the year 2009-2010 on the implementation of E-Government programmes as highlighted below:

- (a) revamp of the GovHK website and launch of its mobile/accessible version;
- (b) launch of a pilot scheme on paper-less meeting;
- (c) roll out of more E-procurement initiatives to pilot departments and suppliers;
- (d) set up of the Electronic Health Record (eHR) Office to take forward the development of eHR;
- (e) launch of the Road Cargo System to start a trial run to facilitate seamless customs clearance at the land boundary;
- (f) considering further extension of the pilot scheme on Express e-Channel at the Lo Wu Immigration Control Point;
- (g) implementation of the Client Information System to facilitate effective social welfare services;
- (h) full production use of the Government Financial Management Information System;
- (i) development of online applications for incorporation of companies and filing of company documents; and
- (j) implementation of the One-Stop Shop IT system to provide one-stop services to job-seekers.

¹ Paper provided by the Administration for the Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 13 May 2010 (LC Paper No. CB(1)1843/09-10(07)).

Pan-Government IT Strategy

5. The Administration is formulating a Pan-Government IT Strategy to provide overarching IT direction and strategy to bureaux and departments, and to determine those IT initiatives should be taken centrally, and those by bureaux and departments. This strategy will address five main areas, namely governance on IT investments, IT-enabled business transformation, information and data management, technology architecture and infrastructure, and human resources. Many aspects of the strategy are already in place, and the Administration will progressively enhance the strategy to reflect the key drivers of change with a view to completing the first phase of strategy enhancement in time for relevant projects to be considered in 2010-2011.

Previous discussions

6. Members generally supported the development of E-Government in Hong Kong when they discussed the implementation of the E-Government programmes at the meetings of the Council and the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting (the Panel).

Council meetings

7. At the Council meeting on 30 June 2010, Dr Hon Samson TAM raised a question on the development and application of cloud computing², and the effectiveness of cloud computing services in promoting E-Government services in Hong Kong and enhancing the efficiency of the Government. He urged the Administration to formulate concrete measures to assist enterprises, educational institutions and relevant organizations in conducting researches on and developing cloud computing technologies. The Administration should also consider conducting exchanges and cooperation in cloud computing with the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the Chinese Academy of Sciences as well as various provinces and cities in the Mainland.

8. At the Council meeting on 6 April 2011, Dr Hon Samson TAM raised a question on IT units in some Government departments/organizations, namely the Office of the Telecommunications Authority, the Companies Registry, Hongkong Post and the Land Registry. He urged the Administration to reserve funds for promoting computerized civic participation and access to public information in 2011-2012 in the departments/organizations concerned. The Administration should also

² Cloud computing is a computing model where IT resources, services and technologies are shared and delivered as a service over the Internet to the users on demand.

consider conducting comprehensive reviews of the effectiveness of the IT units in such departments/organizations.

Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

9. At the meeting of the Panel held on 13 May 2010, some members expressed disappointment that after implementation of the Digital 21 Strategy and the E-Government initiatives for some years, Hong Kong still lagged behind the Mainland in respect of the electronic patient record system, and that it was only recently that the public was able to submit returns to the Inland Revenue and the Rating and Valuation Department via the online service. Panel members called on the Government to expedite the implementation of E-Government initiatives and to set a target date for all payments to the Government and applications for licences to be made available online.

10. Some Panel members noted that according to the survey on user satisfaction with different channels of government service delivery, a larger proportion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) had used the in-person channel (61%) and postal channel (47%) while a lower proportion had used Internet channel (50%) and phone (19%). Panel members were concerned whether the relatively low usage of the Internet by SMEs was due to insufficient publicity to promote the awareness of the service, and the lack of technical know-how on the part of the SMEs. They urged the Administration to identify the barriers and address the problems accordingly. The Administration assured members that action would be taken to review and discuss the survey findings with the relevant bureaux and departments to further enhance the E-Government services and make the services more user-friendly.

11. At the Panel meeting held on 8 November 2010, members opined that the Administration should formulate a long-term plan to make all Government forms available on the relevant website and for electronic submission of forms. They also urged the Administration to step up efforts in drawing up comprehensive and integrated strategies to encourage and assist those bureaux and departments that were relatively slow in automation and computerization to catch up on E-Government initiatives. The Administration advised that continued efforts would be made to promote the adoption of E-business solutions by departments, and develop technical applications to facilitate electronic submission of forms. A cross-departmental E-Government working group had been set up to provide guidance and draw up long-term development strategies to achieve greater synergy. The Administration believed that given time, departments would progressively adopt E-business solutions to improve their service delivery.

12. At the Panel meeting held on 10 January 2011, the Administration briefed members on the proposal to develop a new hosting infrastructure to meet the anticipated growing demand for hosting services from bureaux and departments to support the further development of E-Government services. It was estimated that the new hosting infrastructure, when fully developed, would be able to host 100 additional E-Government services on top of the current 118 services being hosted by the E-Government Infrastructure Services platform. The Panel supported in principle the proposal and a non-recurrent provision of \$135 million over a four-year period from 2011-12 to 2014-15 for the development of a new hosting infrastructure for E-Government services.

13. Some Panel members agreed with the view that instead of developing or maintaining individual hosting services, it would be more cost-effective to centrally maintain a shared hosting infrastructure for bureaux and departments. Some other members expressed concern about data privacy and security of the new hosting infrastructure and enquired about measures to safeguard leakage of personal data. The Administration assured members that bureaux and departments were required to conduct feasibility study and assess data security and privacy issues before and after launching any new information technology system and new E-Government services that might involve data privacy and security.

14. The funding proposal was approved by the Finance Committee (FC) on 15 April 2011.

Recent developments

15. At the special meeting of the FC on 21 March 2011, Dr Samson TAM urged the Administration to promote the application of cloud computing technology in E-Government and expedite its implementation plan for consolidation of data centres to tie in with the development of cloud computing. The Administration advised that the Government had already set a target for transition to the cloud computing over the next five years. During this period, the Government would progressively adopt the cloud computing model for reprovisioning of Government's central IT infrastructure and services, including its data centres, to enhance operational efficiency and the overall agility of the Government's IT capabilities and services. The Pan-Government strategy set out the major programmes to facilitate transition to cloud computing. The Administration was also working on a concrete plan regarding data centre consolidation.

Latest position

16. The Administration will update the Panel on 13 June 2011 on the latest progress on E-Government development.

Relevant papers

Paper provided by the Administration for the Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 13 May 2008

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/itb/papers/itb0513cb1-1456-3-e.pdf>

Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 13 May 2008

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/itb/papers/itb0513cb1-1456-4-e.pdf>

Minutes of Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 13 May 2008

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/itb/minutes/itb080513.pdf>

Paper provided by the Administration for the Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 11 May 2009

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/itb/papers/itb0511cb1-1492-5-e.pdf>

Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 11 May 2009

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/itb/papers/itb0511cb1-1492-6-e.pdf>

Minutes of Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 11 May 2009

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/itb/minutes/itb20090511.pdf>

Paper provided by the Administration for the Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 13 May 2010

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/itb/papers/itb0513cb1-1843-7-e.pdf>

Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 13 May 2010

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/itb/papers/itb0513cb1-1843-8-e.pdf>

Minutes of Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 13 May 2010

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/itb/minutes/itb20100513.pdf>

Question No. 15 at the Council meeting on 30 June 2010 on "application of cloud computing"

<http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201006/30/P201006300207.htm>

Paper provided by the Administration for the Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 8 November 2010

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/itb/papers/itb1108cb1-297-3-e.pdf>

Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 8 November 2010

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/itb/papers/itb1108cb1-297-4-e.pdf>

Minutes of Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 8 November 2010

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/itb/minutes/itb20101108.pdf>

Paper provided by the Administration for the Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 10 January 2011

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/itb/papers/itb0110cb1-932-7-e.pdf>

Minutes of Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 10 January 2011

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/itb/minutes/itb20110110.pdf>

Question No. 1 at the Council meeting on 6 April 2011 on "information technology units in some Government departments/organizations"

<http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201104/06/P201104060216.htm>

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
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