

Press Release

A New Building Registration Scheme to Promote the Installation of Optical Fibre-based Broadband Access Network in Buildings

The Office of the Telecommunications Authority (“OFTA”) today (17 November 2010) announced a new initiative to promote the installation of fibre-based broadband access networks (“the Networks”) in residential buildings through the introduction of a voluntary building registration scheme (“the Scheme”).

“Hong Kong has the most advanced communications network infrastructure in the world. A recent study conducted by the University of Oxford reveals that out of the 72 countries and 239 cities under survey, Hong Kong ranks **second** in the global broadband leadership table,” a spokesperson of OFTA said. “In this regard, we are most encouraged to see the continuous growth of our local broadband market. As at March 2010, 86% of our domestic households had at least two choices of customer access networks, while 70% had at least three choices,” the spokesperson added.

“To further promote the broadband market, we have introduced the Scheme to facilitate ready access by members of the public to information about the availability of the Networks installed in individual residential buildings. The information will help raise public awareness of the distribution of the Networks around the territory, in buildings where our citizens currently reside, and where they may one day relocate,” said the spokesperson.

The Scheme will also encourage building management offices (“BMO”)/ Incorporated Owners (“IO”), as well as property developers, to meet the aspirations of our citizens to increase broadband connectivity, by retrofitting existing buildings with and to give due priority in new developments to the provision of the Networks respectively.

“In the information age, comprehensive deployment of high-quality broadband networks is a key to promoting competitiveness of the economy and social inclusion of the society. The availability of the Networks in our buildings will add value to our property and enable the occupants to enjoy wider choices of high-speed and innovative broadband services. In promoting the provision of the Networks in our residential buildings, the Scheme will help further advance Hong Kong as a knowledge economy and maintain our position as a top global leader in broadband service,” the spokesperson continued.

“For a building which is listed in the register, the IO/BMO may display prominently inside the building the appropriate label authorized by OFTA. They may also use the label in printing materials which they may publish in relation to the buildings. The Fibre-to-the-Building (“FTTB”) label indicates that optical fibre is installed within the boundary of a building, whereas the Fibre-to-the-Home (“FTTH”) label indicates that a building is installed with optical fibre and is ready to be connected to serve individual subscriber’s premises,” the spokesperson said.

The register may be accessed through OFTA's web site at:

<http://app1.ofta.gov.hk/apps/fibre/content/disclaimer.asp?lang=english>

Members of the public are welcome to call the hotline of OFTA (8102 4100) during office hours (8:30 – 17:45) if they have any question about the Scheme. Meanwhile, OFTA will launch public education programmes in relation to the rollout of the Networks, and will encourage the fixed network operators to approach proactively the occupants, BMO and/or IO of buildings that are currently outside their service areas on retrofitting their buildings with the Networks.

We intend to extend the Scheme to cover commercial buildings and other fixed networks at the next stage.

Graphics giving details of the labels are as follows:



Background

At the launch of the Scheme today, the register records a total of over 8,000 buildings housing some 1.7 million households, representing about 66% of the total households of Hong Kong. Participating network operators in the Scheme are Hong Kong Broadband Network Limited, Hong Kong Cable Television Limited, Hutchison

Global Communications Limited, New World Telecommunications Limited and Wharf T&T Limited.

Global Broadband Study

The broadband study mentioned in the press release was conducted by Saïd Business School, the University of Oxford. Using the data from 40 million real-life broadband quality tests conducted in May and June of 2010, the researchers evaluated the broadband quality of 72 countries and 239 cities around the globe. More details about the study are available at:

<http://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/newsandevents/news/Pages/globalbroadbandquality.aspx>

According to the study, the top five economies in the global broadband leadership table are South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Iceland and Switzerland. Hong Kong is also one of the 14 economies which are considered to be already prepared for the “Internet applications of tomorrow”, such as high definition Internet TV and high quality video communications services which are expected to become the mainstream applications in a few years’ time.

Office of the Telecommunications Authority

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