

For information on
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Legislative Council
Panel on Home Affairs and Panel on Development
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the
West Kowloon Cultural District Project

Development of Cultural Software in Preparation for
the Commissioning of the First Batch of Facilities in the
West Kowloon Cultural District

PURPOSE

This paper informs Members of the development of cultural software – audience development, artistic and professional development, and governance and organizational development - in preparation for the first batch of facilities to be commissioned in 2015/2016 in the WKCD.

BACKGROUND OF THIS PAPER

2. At the Joint Subcommittee meeting held on 11 July 2011, Members agreed to discuss in future meeting the strategic development of cultural software in the WKCD focusing on the issues of (a) cultural contents of the WKCD and integration of its hardware and software development; (b) artistic positioning of the performing arts (PA) facilities in the WKCD and programme direction; (c) feasibility of implementing the artistic accountability system; (d) the plan and strategy of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA) in nurturing artistic talents in different areas; (e) how schools and arts groups contribute to the development of the WKCD; and (f) the WKCDA's plan and strategy to nurture local audiences, attract people from different walks of life to the WKCD, and enhance the cultural and artistic atmosphere of the whole community. This paper serves to update Members on the

progress of these matters with the focus on the first batch of the PA facilities to be commissioned in 2015/2016.

3. Members also agreed at the aforesaid meeting to monitor the progress of the development of M+ in April 2012. In this relation, the WKCD reported the planning and development of M+ to Members at the last Joint Subcommittee meeting on 23 April 2012. For details of development on the M+ side, please refer to the relevant paper at **Annex**.

COMPLETION SCHEDULE OF THE FIRST BATCH OF PERFORMING ARTS FACILITIES

4. In accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress, the WKCD project will be developed in two phases namely Phase 1 and Phase 2 to promote organic growth and foster synergies among the PA facilities. Mega Performance Venue and Musical Theatre^{Note} aside, the following six PA facilities in Phase 1, with their respective unique artistic positioning, will be completed by the following two proposed batches from 2015 to 2020 –

a) The first batch (2015 to 2016)

(i) Xiqu Centre

Located at the eastern entrance of the WKCD, the Xiqu Centre will be dedicated to facilitating the continuation of Xiqu's cultural legacy, encouraging its reinvention and nurturing new artists and audiences in the 21st century. To become a regional hub for the art form, it will innovatively showcase different kinds of Xiqu, and promote the development of Cantonese Opera in a contemporary context. The Centre will house a Main Theatre and a Tea House with two tea rooms featuring traditional

^{Note} These two venues are to be built by way of public-private-participation or other arrangements.

Chinese performances, plus a Small Theatre which will be built in Phase 2.

(ii) Freespace

Freespace is targeted at becoming an approachable music icon in Hong Kong. Situated inside the Great Park, Freespace is a park facility as well as a performance venue for contemporary music and cross-boundary performances. It will have an evolving character, and will serve as a base for seasonal music and street arts events around the park. Freespace will house a Freespace Theatre, Music Box and an Outdoor Stage.

b) The second batch (2017 to 2020)

(iii) Lyric Theatre

Eclectic, diverse and international in character, this versatile 1,200-seat theatre is aimed at catering for the needs of drama, ballet, opera, dance, musicals and other theatrical performances.

(iv) Centre for Contemporary Performance

This facility will include three differently designed and equipped blackboxes with 400, 250 and 150 seats respectively to suit various scales of performances including theatre, dance and multimedia arts.

(v) Medium Theatre I

This 600-seat proscenium theatre will be the home for medium-scale theatre and dance. It will enhance artistic exchange in the local scene and stimulate the growth of local arts

groups in terms of their audience size and artistic standard.

(vi) Music Centre

The Music Centre will comprise a 1,800-seat signature Concert Hall and a 300-seat Recital Hall. The Concert Hall will feature state-of-the-art acoustics for world-class orchestral performances while the Recital Hall will be well suited to chamber music events.

5. The success of the WKCD and its development sustainability will depend on the coordinated investment in both hardware and software. In view of the hardware development as scheduled above, cultural software is being developed in parallel to prepare for the commissioning of all facilities of Phase 1 in the WKCD. The strategic development of cultural software in preparation for the first batch of PA facilities in Phase 1, i.e. Xiqu Centre and Freespace to be completed in 2015/2016, is elaborated below.

STRATEGIES AND PLANS OF CULTURAL SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

6. The strategy of software development for the PA facilities in the WKCD focuses on the following three areas –

- a) Audience development;
- b) Artistic and professional development; and
- c) Governance and organizational development.

A) Audience development

7. Audience development can be achieved through conducting activities which bring arts to the existing audiences as well as people from all walks of life. The activities, in the

form of learning and knowledge sharing, aim to enhance the public's experience and appreciation in performing arts. These include outdoor programmes at the WKCD site, school and community partnership programmes and collaboration with PA groups.

8. At the Joint Subcommittee meeting held on 13 February 2012, the WKCDA reported that it had obtained Short Term Tenancies from the Lands Department to accommodate temporary structures at the WKCD site for organising a range of arts and cultural activities to build audiences. There will be a balanced mix of events, including performances, music festivals, carnivals and exhibitions, to suit different needs of the community. The WKCDA endeavours to raise the public's awareness of the WKCD, bring people to the site and gradually make it a habit for them to go there to enjoy different activities.

9. On audience development, the WKCDA has conducted and supported the following programmes/initiatives to bring arts to the community –

a) **West Kowloon Bamboo Theatre** (January 2012)

In collaboration with Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong (Barwo), this seven-day Cantonese Opera bamboo theatre project was held at the site of the future Xiqu Centre to offer performances, education activities, an exhibition and film shows that aimed to raise public's awareness of the site of future Xiqu Centre, arouse interest in and enhance understanding of Cantonese Opera and bamboo theatre, and establish strategic partnership with local Xiqu arts groups and communities.

b) **Make a Difference (MaD) @ West Kowloon**
(December 2011 to January 2012)

Co-organized with Hong Kong Institute of Contemporary Culture, this one-month project held at the West Kowloon Waterfront Promenade targeted

at young adults and students. It provided space and opportunities for budding artists, technical professionals and arts administrators to collaborate with the public and co-create authentic content for the WKCD, as well as cultivated cultural and artistic talents through education and public engagement. In gist, it encouraged people from all walks of life to embrace the WKCD as a cultural hub.

c) Hong Kong International Jazz Festival 2011: WKCD concerts (October 2011)

In cooperation with Hong Kong Jazz Association, this Jazz Festival provided both charged and free performances at the West Kowloon Waterfront Promenade featuring world-renowned musicians and local performers.

d) Yau Ma Tei Cultural Celebration Project (July 2011 to February 2012)

Organised jointly with Hulu Culture, this eight-month project was held to encourage community participation in arts and culture, and foster a receptive environment for WKCD by nurturing a creative ecology which supports community arts, culture and creativity.

B) Artistic and professional development

10. The WKCD strives to enhance Hong Kong's artistic capacity through initiatives including workshops, master classes, scholarship schemes, conferences and other collaborative projects. These events will advance the artistic and professional development of artists and arts groups, extend their professional network and facilitate knowledge and cultural exchange.

11. In this regard, the WKCDA has conducted and supported the programmes/initiatives below, with plans to step up efforts on this front:

a) **Overseas Training/Research Programme for Leaders from Local Arts Groups on Future Arts Development in Hong Kong** (2012 to 2015)

With Hong Kong Arts Development Council as a partner, this three-year project aims to nurture the artistic and administrative leaders of local arts groups by expanding their vision and extending their networks globally. They will hopefully bring back useful strategies and ideas that contribute to the future arts development in Hong Kong and the WKCD development.

b) **Advanced Cultural Leadership Programme** (2011 and 2012)

Co-organized with the University of Hong Kong in association with the Clore Leadership programme, U.K., it was launched as the first cultural leadership programme in Asia. It provided cultural leaders with the practical skills, intellectual perspectives and global networks needed to seize new opportunities, strengthen their organizations and develop a world-class vision.

c) **Cultural Leadership Summit** (June 2011 and May 2012)

Cooperated with the Hong Kong Arts Administrators Association, this three-day summit of international and local cultural leaders was an excellent occasion for the sharing of insights in creating and running arts space, making the space alive, and exploring alternative arts spaces.

d) **Forum of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Performing Arts) of Asia** (November to December 2011)

In collaboration with Zuni Icosahedron, it was a forum for distinguished PA practitioners and scholars from Europe, America and other Asian cities to discuss the research findings of Kun and Noh case studies and long-term programmes on creativity, research, education and service relating to intangible cultural heritage.

C) Governance and organizational development

12. The WKCD governance and organizational development is premised on the work that steers hardware development to deliver the best and most suitable facilities for the WKCD, as well as strategies and structures that provide the best platforms for PA companies and audiences. The WKCDA's efforts in this respect fall into the following broad categories –

a) Mode of governance

The WKCDA will review and benchmark strategic management and performance evaluation mechanisms, and recommend a suitable mode of governance and business model for each PA facility such that art expression could be advanced with due respect for individual venue characteristics. These tasks will be worked out prior to or in parallel with the design development phases for each facility in consultation with the community and relevant stakeholders.

Research is being conducted to benchmark each PA facility against similar facilities outside Hong Kong to develop their respective artistic positioning, mode of governance and business plan. In order to develop artistic characters, an artistic/programming team will be established for each facility.

b) Partnership schemes

Over the past three years, the WKCDA has devoted much effort to establishing strategic partnerships with the local arts community and soliciting views on user requirements for the design and development of various PA venues. Different partnership models and residency schemes will be essential to the operation of individual venues and the development of a vibrant cultural district. Possible residency schemes include long-term residencies, performance-based or short-term residencies and education partner schemes. The WKCDA will continue to research and devise arrangements for programme partners and education partners for each facility. To ensure the success of the facilities, these arrangements will be finalised at least two to three years before the completion of each facility.

c) District-wide operational issues

In parallel with the design process of the facilities, district-wide management and operational issues such as human resources, structure of supporting services (e.g. stage technical) and establishment of service teams, customer service framework and technical supporting systems (e.g. ticketing system) will be developed systematically and in good time to be in place to serve each respective facility as it opens.

SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT FOR XIQU CENTRE AND FREESPACE

13. In view of the development of the Xiqu Centre and Freespace as the first batch of Phase 1 PA venues scheduled for completion in 2015/2016, one of the priorities of the WKCDA is

to augment its software development specific to these two venues for the benefit of the WKCD. Relevant initiatives are elaborated below.

A) Xiqu Centre

Audience Building

14. As indicated at paragraph 9 a) above, the West Kowloon Bamboo Theatre event was successfully held around the Lunar New Year 2012, attracting around 12,000 participants in seven days (18 to 24 January 2012). It marked the launch of the design and construction stage of the WKCD. Owing to the overwhelming response, the WKCDA plans to make it an annual event, and extend it to three weeks in 2013 to include other forms of performing arts. It is hoped that the audience reach can be increased and the public's understanding and appreciation of the traditional Chinese art form of Xiqu can be deepened.

15. The WKCDA is planning to start a school partnership scheme in 2012/2013 for Xiqu Centre involving educational institutes and primary/secondary schools to develop new generation of audience for Xiqu.

Artistic and professional development

16. To help nurture young artists, the WKCDA is planning a training programme in collaboration with the Xiqu community and educational institutes to organise master classes for Xiqu artists.

Governance and organizational development

17. In view of the opening of the Xiqu Centre in 2015/2016, the WKCDA targets to finalize the mode of governance of the Xiqu Centre in 2012/2013. To ensure artistic excellence, a dedicated artistic/programming team will be appointed. The WKCDA has been in close liaison with the Xiqu community to develop the artistic positioning, programming

direction and management of the Xiqu Centre. A user friendly and professional management system will be developed to cope with users' needs.

B) Freespace

Audience Building

18. As stated at paragraph 8 above, the WKCDA intends to present outdoor performances on the WKCD site. The portion of the future Freespace will be dedicated to temporary concerts and festivals in association with music groups, solo performers, street performers and other relevant parties to cultivate the culture and elevate the public's acceptance of outdoor performances.

19. A Freespace Festival will be organized this year to increase the public's familiarity with the site, as well as to prepare the public for the opening of the Freespace in Phase 1 starting from 2015/2016. To develop the brand of Freespace, the WKCDA aims to convert it into an annual event.

Artistic and professional development

20. Within the next two years, partnership schemes for PA groups will be developed to embrace the commissioning of Freespace.

Governance and organizational development

21. The WKCDA will take the approach set out at paragraph 12 a) above to ensure the artistic excellence of the Freespace and prepare it to be one of the best and most suitable venues for young artists and audience in WKCD.

WAY FORWARD

22. The WKCDA will implement the aforementioned plans on audience development, artistic and professional

development and governance and organizational development in preparation for the commissioning of PA facilities, and will keep Members updated on the progress in due course.

West Kowloon Cultural District Authority
June 2012

For information on
23 April 2012

Legislative Council
Panel on Home Affairs and Panel on Development
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the
West Kowloon Cultural District Project

Planning and Development of M+

PURPOSE

This paper serves to update Members on the progress of the planning and development of M+.

THE M+ VISION

2. As the Museum Advisory Group expressed in its report of 23 November 2006 to the Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD), M+ would be a single cultural institution with its mission to focus on the 20th and 21st century visual culture, broadly defined, from a Hong Kong perspective, the perspective of now, and with a global vision. M+ - the new museum for visual culture in the WKCD - will be built from inside out, meaning that its physical design will be shaped around the visions, the ideas and eventually the contents that are being formulated now and over the coming years.

3. The M+ project rests on four cornerstones -

- (a) This is an ambitious project not only in the physical sense but also in the museological aspirations. The true ambition lays in the nature of the institution that M+ is intended to be, that is, a museum for contemporary art and visual culture, which would eventually attain an international status comparable to the Museum of Modern Art in New

York, Centre Pompidou's Musée National d'Art Moderne, or Tate Modern.

- (b) This is a project with a strong public service ethos. The fundamental idea is that it should be a museum for the more than seven million people living and working in Hong Kong. It would be firmly rooted in the location and its unique culture by providing a "Hong Kong perspective". This idea is by no means unique; historically, all the museums mentioned above are deeply rooted in, and shaped by, the places where they were engendered. Today, however, it is not uncommon that new mega-museums are created mainly with a view to attracting tourists to places with a limited local public. A public service ethos and a strong local or regional focus do not necessarily undermine the capacity to attract visitors from afar. On the contrary, an essential part of travelling consists of immersing oneself in the local culture, and of experiencing something unique.

- (c) This is a project that aims to regenerate the institution we call a Museum. As described by the Museum Advisory Group, "it requires commitment, excellence and innovation at every stage." M+ will set for itself the highest international standards comparable with those of the world-leading facilities. These include codes of ethics, research, curatorship, conservation, interpretation and education, display, management and operation. While M+ should adopt the best practices in every field, it should – and this is vital - also challenge the models that currently dominate the museum sector. M+ will be a museum of its time and of its place. The cultural ecology which M+ will be a part of has different traditions, histories and experiences than those which engendered today's leading museums. The public experiences and expectations, the approach to artistic production and the relationship between the various strands in what we could broadly define as visual culture – design, architecture, visual art, moving images and so on – also differ in some respects from those of the West.

(d) As mentioned in paragraph 2 above, this is a project that will be created “from inside out”.

4. M+ will not be an isolated cultural island in the urban landscape, but a hub for visual culture in the ambitious WKCD. There will be exceptional opportunities for exchanges, not only within different fields of visual culture but also between performing arts and visual arts. In fact, this is entirely in line with the cultural production today, where interdisciplinary artistic practices would appear to be of the greatest interest. In WKCD, and especially within M+, the focus is almost exclusively on this interdisciplinary exchange.

5. M+ will reflect this interdisciplinary exchange by exploring the interface between visual art, design, architecture, film and various aspects of popular culture. Integration and cross-fertilisation will be M+'s main theme, but it is nevertheless vital that the specificities of particular art disciplines can also be presented. There is a history to be told about Hong Kong cinema and the development of Asian design, not to mention the history of ink art, which is part of both a separate thousand-year-old Chinese tradition and an integral genre in contemporary art.

6. Just as the collection and exhibitions should reflect both their time and place, so should the presentation mode. Undoubtedly, the museum's future exhibition spaces will predominantly be white cubes and black boxes, as in any other museum; however, there is also an ambition to find presentation formats that complement the material, the encounters and the traditions that the new museum seeks to communicate.

7. One of the goals is to create several “third spaces” for the works in the collection – interactive places that are neither exhibition spaces nor sequestered storage facilities. Zones that are in between “back-of-house” and “front-of-house” could be the key to realising the vision of a museum as a fundamentally educational facility, a place where learning is not merely an add-on but the core. Library and research facilities can be opened to the public, where the fascinating processes of the conservation department can be more public and less enigmatic. M+ is a project that strives to regenerate the institution

known as a museum – a place where the museum visitors become active, learning participants: users of their “museum plus”.

8. The M+ collection looks at the world from a Hong Kong perspective. The collection could be envisioned as a set of concentric circles, with Hong Kong in the middle, followed by China, Asia and, lastly, the rest of the world. In essence, the strategy for the collection is not that different from any other leading museum in the West, though the vantage-point is different.

9. All these are formulated even before the architectural design competition for M+ is announced. What kind of building should house the evolving M+ vision? A building that acknowledges the unique location of M+ on a peninsula in Victoria Harbour, opposite the spectacular forest of skyscrapers on Hong Kong Island. A building with institutional dignity, serving as a symbol for the museum as a guarantor of quality and integrity while being transparent and accessible, with a design that clearly states even from the outside that “you are welcome in, this is yours”. An architecture that provides spaces that are friendly to both art and visitors. A building for excellence and access.

10. M+ is a museum that will have a strong digital presence, and public art projects that can be viewed throughout the 40 hectares of the West Kowloon Cultural District. This is a museum that will pursue a nomadic existence and collaborate with artists in projects on sites of their choosing right up to the completion of the building at the end of 2017, and will continue to reach out to the public in their own neighbourhoods, in schools and in community centres. Yet, the building itself is vital. Now, and for the foreseeable future, the building is the museum’s main tool, and its symbolic significance is greater than ever, as the cultural genres grow ever more fluid and mutant. A museum for its time and place also requires a building for its time and place.

LATEST DEVELOPMENT

11. To realize the M+ vision, thorough planning on different aspects of the project, including staffing, capacity building, collection

and acquisition policy, acquisition committee, the museum building itself, stakeholder engagement, audience building as well as publicity, is of crucial importance. Last year, there were concrete developments in all these areas.

Staffing

12. The M+ team has grown from a headcount of three a year ago to 10 full-time staff plus three short-term contract staff, with seven more full-time posts being advertised. With the clearer understanding of the mission and vision of M+, our new recruitment announcements have garnered extraordinary interest on all fronts. Many of the more recent recruits are world-class curators. The majority of the team have a Hong Kong background, but there are also members from other parts of Asia, such as Singapore and Mainland China, as well as from Germany and the USA.

Capacity Building

13. M+ has three main routes in capacity building:

- (a) Nurturing young talents through internship programmes. The first of these, called the “Ten Week Learning Programme”, involving three aspiring curators from Hong Kong, was successfully concluded in March 2012. A new, similar programme is planned for the autumn of 2012, while for the spring of 2013 another even more ambitious internship programme is planned in connection with M+ organizing the Hong Kong participation in the Venice Biennale.
- (b) Recruiting junior staff with the right skill sets for specialized posts and sending them overseas for in-house training in collaboration with major museums, thereby bringing the knowledge to Hong Kong.
- (c) Strategic hiring of overseas experts who will come and work in M+, building up their teams and, over time, transferring their expertise.

14. The main challenge in capacity building in the museum field is not of art administration or curatorial type, but is related to specialized roles for which there is no formal training or formal training is not sufficient, such as exhibition-, loan in- and loan out-registrars, master packers, art handlers, as well as conservators.

Collection and Acquisition

15. Since the autumn of 2010, the basic acquisition strategy has been formulated on the premise of investigating the possibility of one or more major donations as the base for further individual acquisitions. The results of these investigations will be evaluated during the year and will lay the ground for future acquisitions. Before the governance structure of M+ is finalised, an interim acquisition committee is being planned, with the aim of being active before this summer.

Preparations for the M+ Design Competition

16. Over the past year, the M+ and Project Delivery team have developed a detailed schedule of accommodation and building programme for the museum building while at the same time being deeply engaged in the finalization of the Development Plan. The team is now preparing the brief and all related materials for the design competition, which is scheduled to be announced in the third quarter of 2012.

Stakeholder Engagement

17. Besides the large-scale stakeholder engagement and the series of stakeholder meetings that were held in February-March 2011, the M+ team has, over the years, organized a number of roundtable discussions as well as public forums and numerous talks in different contexts with the objective both to listen to stakeholders' views as well as to explain the developing vision for M+.

18. Besides these formal gatherings, the senior members of the M+ team have met stakeholders in one-to-one and small groups meetings – artists, designers, architects and filmmakers as well as curators, gallery owners, collectors and critics – to talk about the

plans for M+, and to listen to their views. The number of individuals that have been involved is estimated to be 1,200.

Audience Building

19. The main strategy for building audiences on a long-term basis is to organize pre-opening exhibition programmes on the WKCD site, in different parts of Hong Kong, and, after 2014, in the first of a series of Arts Pavilions that will be built in WKCD.

20. The first public project was the M+ Bamboo Theatre Exhibition and Bamboo Cinema, which attracted a lot of attention during the 2012 Chinese New Year period. Mobile M+: Yau Ma Tei will be the second project, taking place at six different sites in Yau Ma Tei during the period from 14 May to 10 June 2012. These two projects as well as other projects under planning have a strong education component, which will, over the years leading up to the opening of the M+ museum, secure growing knowledge about contemporary visual culture among the Hong Kong audience.

Publicity

21. Numerous interviews with the M+ staff have been published both in local Chinese and English media and internationally. The general media perception of M+ during the past year was positive.

**West Kowloon Cultural District Authority
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