

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 WKCDA 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