

**For discussion
on 14 December 2012**

**Legislative Council
Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services**

**Provision of Information Technology Infrastructure and
Digital Audio Recording and Transcription Service System
in the West Kowloon Law Courts Building**

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members' support on the proposal to provide the necessary information technology ("IT") infrastructure and the Digital Audio Recording and Transcription Services ("DARTS") system in the new West Kowloon Law Courts Building ("WKLCB") of the Judiciary.

BACKGROUND

2. The Judiciary consulted the Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services ("AJLS Panel") on the construction of the WKLCB at its meetings on 26 April 2010 and 20 December 2011. The AJLS Panel supported the construction project. On 13 April 2012, the Finance Committee ("FC") approved the upgrading of the WKLCB project to Category A at an estimated cost of \$2,723.10 million in money-of-the-day prices for the construction of the WKLCB. Construction works have commenced in April 2012 and are expected to complete by December 2015. Its facilities should be ready for commissioning/operation by the third quarter of 2016.

3. The WKLCB will re-provision the existing Tsuen Wan Magistrates' Courts, Small Claims Tribunal, Coroner's Court and Obscene Articles Tribunal, which are now located in different law courts buildings¹. In addition to 32 courtrooms, other essential ancillary facilities will be provided, such as chambers for Judicial Officers ("JOs"), registries, a centralized accounts office and offices for some 300 support staff.

4. To ensure that the WKLCB will be operating effectively and efficiently, an appropriate IT infrastructure and the DARTS system will need to be put in place.

5. A new server centre will also be provided in the WKLCB. The existing IT infrastructure of the Judiciary includes servers, computer workstations and data networks connecting all court buildings and remote sites. Network equipment and servers are currently hosted in two server centres in the High Court Building ("HCB") and the Labour Tribunal ("LabT"). The HCB and LabT server centres act as two network hubs in providing connections among all court buildings and Internet access point for the Judiciary network. The two centres also serve as the mutual resilience and disaster recovery site for each other. However, the LabT server room is relatively small in size and has already been fully utilized. It cannot be expanded further due to the space limitation in the LabT.

6. Since 1996, the Judiciary has implemented the DARTS system which is a digitized and multi-channelled recording system to record all court proceedings and enables easy search and retrieval of audio recordings for reference by the Judges and Judicial Officers ("JJOs") and parties concerned. The transcripts of court proceedings can be efficiently produced upon request. All courtrooms and JJOs' chambers are now installed with facilities for access to the system.

¹ Currently, the Tsuen Wan Magistrates' Courts are located in the Tsuen Wan Law Courts Building, the Small Claims Tribunal in the Wanchai Law Courts Building, and the Coroner's Court and the Obscene Articles Tribunal in the Eastern Law Courts Building. All four courts/tribunals are under the purview of the Chief Magistrate.

PROPOSAL AND SCOPE OF PROJECT

7. First, we propose to provide an IT infrastructure to support the effective operation of the WKLCB. Computer equipment and network connections will be set up for the courtrooms, chambers of JOs, registries, and staff offices in the WKLCB. In addition, digital signage will be installed at the entrance of each courtroom in the WKLCB to display the daily cause list and other relevant information. Information kiosks will also be set up in the lobby areas to enable members of the public to access relevant information of the Judiciary.

8. To cater for the anticipated needs of the Judiciary in the next decade for hosting more servers and network equipment, we aim to provide a new server centre in the WKLCB. The new WKLCB server centre will address the problem of shortage of space of the existing LabT server site. It will take over from the LabT server centre the role of being the network hub and Internet access point for the Judiciary network, sharing the workload of the Judiciary information systems, and serving as the mutual resilience and disaster recovery site of the HCB server room. Most of the existing production servers and network equipment in the LabT server room will be in use for more than nine years by 2016. They will become aged and inadequate to meet the anticipated needs of the Judiciary by then. It would be therefore timely for the new WKLCB server centre to take over in 2016 in order to provide better resilience to the HCB server room and to strengthen the IT support to the Judiciary. Green measures will also be adopted in the design and implementation of the new server site aiming to make it more environmentally friendly.

9. The existing LabT server room will then be converted to a room housing computer equipment mainly for network connections within the LabT.

10. Secondly, we propose to install the DARTS system, which is now a standard system for all courts and tribunals in the Judiciary, in the 32 courtrooms and JOs' chambers in the WKLCB. Benefits of using the system have been mentioned in paragraph 6 above.

JUSTIFICATION

11. Both the IT infrastructure and DARTS system are essential systems and equipment in supporting the day-to-day court operations and ancillary services of the WKLCB. Without the proposed necessary equipment, the JOs and support staff at the new WKLCB will not be able to carry out their daily operation effectively :

- (a) Court staff will not be able to access application systems (e.g. the Case Management System) through the Judiciary's network, thus adversely affecting the effectiveness and efficiency of court operations;
- (b) No audio records of proceedings at the WKLCB could be made and no transcripts could be produced as a result. This will severely hamper the efficiency of court operations;
- (c) The magistrates' courts and tribunals hear a high volume of cases. It will surely adversely affect the efficient running of the judicial system if these courts and tribunals in the WKLCB are not equipped with IT systems and equipment which are provided at other court buildings; and
- (d) There will be negative impact on the operation of the entire Judiciary if the new server centre at the WKLCB is not provided to take over the existing one at the LabT which is subject to limitation.

12. The proposed IT infrastructure and DARTS system would enable the smooth transition of court operations from various court buildings to the WKLCB, achieve operational efficiency and minimize disruption to court services. Provision of user friendly facilities such as digital signage and information kiosks will enhance court users' experience in the WKLCB. The establishment of the new WKLCB server centre will also cater for the anticipated needs for hosting more IT equipment in providing mutual resilience and serving as a disaster recovery site of the HCB server centre.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. We estimate that the implementation of the proposed project will incur a total non-recurrent expenditure of \$51.796 million, including \$29.928 million and \$21.868 million for the IT infrastructure and DARTS system respectively. The breakdown of the project estimate is set out below, and the projected expenditure over a five-year period from Financial Year 2012-13 to 2016-17 is at the **Annex**.

	<u>\$ (million)</u>
(a) Hardware and software	33.172
(b) Implementation Services	5.103
(c) Site preparation	2.044
(d) Communication Network	6.768
(e) Contingency	4.709
Total :	51.796

14. The proposed implementation will entail an annual recurrent expenditure of \$4.178 million, including hardware and software maintenance plus other consumables arising from the IT infrastructure and DARTS system. The annual recurrent expenditure will be partially offset by the realizable savings from the current annual recurrent expenditure of \$1.177 million. The net additional expenditure of about \$3 million per year from 2016-17 onwards will be absorbed from within the existing resources of the Judiciary.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

15. We plan to implement the proposed IT infrastructure and DARTS system in the WKLCB according to the following schedule :

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Implementation Duration</u>
(a) Technical study and tender preparation	First Quarter of 2013 to Second Quarter of 2014
(b) Tendering for IT infrastructure and DARTS system	Third Quarter of 2014 to Second Quarter of 2015
(c) Site preparation and network cabling	Third Quarter of 2015 to Fourth Quarter of 2015
(d) Installation of equipment and acceptance testing	First Quarter of 2016 to Second Quarter of 2016

ADVICE SOUGHT

16. Members are invited to comment on the proposal. Subject to Members' support, we will seek funding approval from the FC in February 2013.

Judiciary Administration
December 2012

Annex

Projected Non-recurrent Expenditure of IT Infrastructure and DARTS System for WKLCB from 2012-13 to 2016-17

							HK\$'000
	<u>2012-13</u>	<u>2013-14</u>	<u>2014-15</u>	<u>2015-16</u>	<u>2016-17</u>	<u>Total</u>	
A. <u>IT Infrastructure</u>							
A.1 Hardware and Software	-	-	-	6,874	9,111	15,985	
A.2 Implementation Services	454	680	227	910	456	2,727	
A.3 Site Preparation	-	-	-	1,727	-	1,727	
A.4 Communication Network	-	-	-	6,768	-	6,768	
Sub-total :	454	680	227	16,279	9,567	27,207	
Contingency :						2,721	
Sub-total with Contingency :						29,928	
							HK\$'000
	<u>2012-13</u>	<u>2013-14</u>	<u>2014-15</u>	<u>2015-16</u>	<u>2016-17</u>	<u>Total</u>	
B. <u>DARTS System</u>							
B.1 Hardware and Software	-	-	-	10,604	6,583	17,187	
B.2 Implementation Services	-	600	700	926	150	2,376	
B.3 Site Preparation	-	-	-	150	167	317	
Sub-total :	-	600	700	11,680	6,900	19,880	
Contingency :						1,988	
Sub-total with Contingency :						21,868	
Total (A+B)	454	1,280	927	27,959	16,467	51,796	