

香港特別行政區政府  
保安局



The Government of the  
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
Security Bureau

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3 January 2013

Miss Betty Ma  
Clerk to Security Panel  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Hong Kong

Dear Miss Ma,

**Supplementary Information on the  
“New Immigration Control System to Support Control Point  
Operation of the Immigration Department”**

In response to requests from members of the Panel on Security at its meeting on 4 December 2012, I write to provide further information as to the comparison of the proposed Immigration Control System (ICONS) with similar systems of other advanced countries and regions, as well as the situation on the accumulated leave balance of frontline staff of the Immigration Department (ImmD).

**Comparison of ICONS with similar systems of other advanced countries and regions**

2. The comparison of the proposed ICONS of the ImmD with similar systems of other advanced countries and regions<sup>1</sup> in respect of use of information technology, clearance efficiency, application of biometrics technology and security control is tabulated at **Annex**.

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<sup>1</sup> Macau, Taiwan, Japan, Republic of Korea (Korea), Singapore, France, Finland, United Kingdom, Germany, Portugal, Australia, New Zealand and the United States, etc.

3. The annual passenger traffic handled by the ImmD is the highest among neighbouring countries and regions (see Table A of Annex). Nonetheless, the ImmD has all along been striving to provide an efficient and effective immigration control service (see Table B of Annex). Riding on the new information technology infrastructure of the ImmD, the proposed ICONS will make use of the processing capability of multiple servers and storages through adopting cloud computing and virtualisation technologies to enable flexible allocation and sharing of computer resources. The adoption of virtualisation technology will also strengthen the continuity and recovery capability and improve the overall resilience of control points.

4. Besides, the ImmD will introduce over 100 new multi-purpose e-Channels and upgrade over 430 existing e-Channels to multi-purpose e-Channels. Its scale will far exceed those in other countries and regions under comparison (see Table C of Annex). The multi-purpose e-Channels will allow more flexible deployment of e-Channels among residents, enrolled frequent visitors and departing visitors holding electronic travel documents according to passenger traffic pattern, thus further enhancing the overall clearance efficiency and handling capacity of control points.

5. ICONS will also further strengthen immigration control for incoming visitors using e-Channels through the adoption of face recognition technology in addition to fingerprint authentication. It will also improve system flexibility in meeting operational needs. The situation in other countries and regions with respect to the application of biometrics technology is detailed at Table D of Annex.

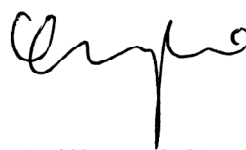
6. The automated border clearance service currently provided by other countries and regions (e.g. Australia, New Zealand and some European countries, etc.) is only available to specific categories of passengers from designated countries. In comparison, the proposed Self-Service Departure e-Channels of the ImmD will be open to all departing visitors holding valid electronic travel documents worldwide, thus enhancing overall immigration clearance efficiency. The availability of automated immigration clearance service for non-local residents in other countries and regions is detailed at Table E of Annex.

## **Leave Balance Situation of Immigration Service Frontline Staff**

7. The ImmD attaches great importance to the leave benefits of staff members, who are encouraged to take leave when the operational needs of the public service can be met. An immigration staff member is provided with at least one continuous vacation leave period in a year. A higher priority to take vacation leave would be given to those immigration staff with leave balance close to the maximum accumulation limit. Such arrangement is being made to ensure that no immigration staff would suffer from any loss in their accumulated leave.

8. The average accumulated leave balance of frontline staff of the ImmD (i.e. from Immigration Officer to Immigration Assistant ranks) has shown a decreasing trend in the past three years. By comparing the leave balance figures as at 1 September each year, the average leave balance of frontline staff in 2010, 2011 and 2012 were 104 days, 99 days and 93 days respectively. On the whole, the leave balance of ImmD staff has remained stable. The management of the ImmD will take into consideration leave arrangements for staff in the course of manpower deployment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Billy WOO', with a stylized, cursive script.

(Billy WOO)  
for Secretary for Security

**Comparisons of ICONS with similar systems  
of other advanced countries and regions**

**A. Passenger clearance statistics**

<b>Countries/Regions</b>	<b>Passenger Traffic</b>	<b>Year</b>
Hong Kong SAR	253 403 938	2011
Singapore	182 107 100	2011
Macau SAR	127 711 767	2011
United Kingdom	105 600 000	2011-12
Taiwan	31 216 270	2011
Australia	29 942 000	2011-12
Japan	23 210 000	2011
Other countries/regions under comparison	No official information available	

**B. Performance pledge**

<b>Countries/Regions</b>	<b>Performance Pledge</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Hong Kong SAR	Airport: to clear 95% of visitors within 15 minutes	98.1% (2011)
	Other control points: to clear 95% of visitors within 30 minutes	98.7% (2011)
Australia	To clear 92% of visitors within 30 minutes	93.4% (2011-12)
New Zealand	To clear 90% of visitors within 45 minutes	97.6% (2011-12)
United Kingdom	European Economic Area Residents: to clear 95% of visitors within 25 minutes Other visitors: to clear 95% of visitors within 45 minutes	97% (2011-12)
Other countries/regions under comparison	No official information available	

**C. Number of automated immigration clearance channels**

<b>Countries/Regions</b>	<b>Number of Automated Immigration Clearance Channels</b>
Hong Kong SAR	over 530 <sup>1</sup>
France	31
Taiwan	30
Finland	25
Other countries/regions under comparison	No official information available

**D. Application of biometrics technology**

<b>Biometrics Technology Applied<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Countries/Regions</b>
Face recognition	Hong Kong SAR (for Frequent Visitor e-Channel service <sup>3</sup> and Self-Service Departure e-Channel service)  United Kingdom, Germany, Finland, Portugal, Australia, New Zealand and Taiwan (supplemented by fingerprint recognition), etc
Fingerprint recognition	Hong Kong SAR (for e-Channel service for HKSAR residents and Macau SAR permanent residents)  Japan, Singapore, France, Korea and Macau SAR, etc

<sup>1</sup> Excluding the proposed e-Channels to be installed at Kai Tak Cruise Terminal and the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link control points.

<sup>2</sup> According to consultant's report, the highest accuracy rates of face recognition technology and fingerprint recognition technology are similar (99.7% and 99.4% respectively). Both technologies are considered reliable and accurate for identity verification purpose.

<sup>3</sup> On top of fingerprint recognition technology, face recognition technology is also adopted.

**E. Availability of automated immigration clearance channels service to non-local residents**

<b>Countries/Regions</b>		<b>Other Countries/Regions Allowed to use Automated Immigration Clearance Channels</b>	<b>Requirement of Pre-Enrolment</b>
Hong Kong SAR	Arrival/ Departure	Macau SAR permanent residents and frequent visitors from the Mainland or overseas	Yes
	Departure only	Departing visitors holding electronic travel documents	No
Macau SAR		Hong Kong SAR and Mainland China	Yes
Australia		New Zealand and the United States	No
New Zealand		Australia and the United States	No
The United States		Canada, Mexico, the Netherlands and Korea	Yes
United Kingdom, Germany and Portugal		Country members of the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland	No
Other countries/regions under comparison		No official information available	