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Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project

**Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 24 November 2014**

Development of cultural software to complement the West Kowloon Cultural District project

Purpose

This paper summarizes the major views and concerns of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD") Project on issues relating to cultural software development of the project.

Background

2. By virtue of section 4(2) of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority Ordinance (Cap. 601), the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCDA") is required to perform its functions in ways which aim to achieve various objectives. They include, among others, cultivating and nurturing local talents in the arts (including local artists), local arts groups and arts-related personnel; encouraging wider participation by the local community in arts and culture; and promoting and providing arts education to the local community.

3. According to WKCDA, in promoting the development of cultural software, it will focus its work on three major areas, viz. audience development, artistic and professional development, and governance and organizational development. Prior to the opening of the arts and cultural venues in WKCD, WKCDA has been organizing a series of pre-opening programmes to enhance public awareness, groom arts talents and build audiences. According to the Administration, to tie in with the development of WKCD, the Government and its collaborators (such as the Hong Kong Arts Development Council ("HKADC") and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts ("HKAPA")) adopt a multi-pronged approach in promoting cultural software development in

Hong Kong, which includes supporting arts programme development, stepping up audience building, enhancing arts education and strengthening the grooming of talents.

Members' concerns

Respective roles of the Administration and WKCDA

4. Concern had been expressed about the delineation of responsibilities and coordination among WKCDA, the Government and its collaborators in the development of cultural software. Members had called for closer collaboration between the Home Affairs Bureau ("HAB") and WKCDA to ensure the re-alignment of the existing public arts and cultural facilities to complement the WKCD project.

5. As advised by the Administration, the planning and development of performing arts ("PA") programmes and exhibition programmes in WKCD would be based essentially on the recommendations of the Performing Arts Committee and the Museum Committee of WKCDA. Given HAB's role in overseeing arts and cultural policy to complement the WKCD project, the Administration was mindful of the need to ensure effective co-ordination between HAB and WKCDA. In the view of the Administration, the relationship between the existing and new arts and cultural venues was complementary rather than competitive and the new arts and cultural facilities in WKCD should help address the venue shortage problem currently encountered by the arts and cultural sector. Furthermore, WKCDA might not necessarily follow the current mode of operation of Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") venues and might explore a different approach to manage the WKCD facilities. The Administration was committed to building up a solid audience base to complement the expanded capacity of performance venues brought about by the WKCD development.

6. Some members considered that instead of entrusting the task of developing cultural software entirely to WKCDA, the Government should play a leading and more proactive role in the planning and promotion of cultural software development not only for the WKCD project but also for the overall long-term development of the arts and culture in Hong Kong. They urged the Government to attach importance to and allocate more resources for the promotion of cultural software development in Hong Kong.

7. The Administration advised that while WKCD was a major and important cultural project for Hong Kong, the development of local arts and culture should be promoted not solely through the WKCD project. The funding allocation for the arts and culture under the ambit of HAB had thus

been increased in recent years for implementing a range of initiatives for enhancing Hong Kong's cultural software development. WKCDA would also continue its efforts to develop cultural software for the WKCD project and the local cultural sector as a whole.

Arts education and audience building

8. Members generally took the view that nurturing of audience was pivotal to the success of the WKCD project and students should be given sufficient opportunities to cultivate their interest and appreciation ability in the arts and culture in an early stage. They called on the Administration to enhance collaboration among various government bureaux/departments to promote arts education in schools and at community level.

9. The Administration assured members that HAB had been in close discussion with the Education Bureau ("EDB") on the promotion of arts education in schools. Arts Education was one of the eight Key Learning Areas of the school curriculum for primary and secondary levels. Under the new senior secondary curriculum implemented since 2009, students were provided with more opportunities to learn and sustain contacts with the arts and culture. EDB had been supporting schools to implement arts education through the provision of learning and teaching materials, teacher training programmes, financial resources and student activities. In the 2011-2012 school year, the amount of resources directly used by various key learning areas to develop learning and teaching resources related to arts and culture was about \$8 million. The Audience Building Office of LCSD also helped to promote knowledge and appreciation of PA at community and school levels through organizing a wide spectrum of audience building schemes and arts educational activities. Besides, from 2013-2014 onwards, the District Councils would be provided with an additional \$20.8 million per annum under the Community Involvement Fund to strengthen the support for promoting arts and cultural activities in 18 districts.

10. In response to members' enquiry about whether WKCDA would work in collaboration with schools and universities to promote students' interest in arts and enhance their ability to appreciate different arts performances, WKCDA advised that it had established a Creative Learning Unit in 2011 to, among others, promote arts education in collaboration with EDB and schools. It had also obtained Short Term Tenancies from the Lands Department to accommodate temporary structures at the WKCD site for organizing a range of arts and cultural activities to build audience.

Nurturing of local arts talents and arts-related personnel

11. Some members expressed worry that there might still be a lack of sufficient arts professionals/administrators in Hong Kong upon the delivery of the first batch of WKCD facilities. Members considered that apart from enhancing the nurturing of local artistic talents, the Administration and WKCDA should also attach importance to strengthening the training of arts administrators and facility management professionals to meet the manpower demand arising from the phased commissioning of the WKCD facilities in the next few years.

12. The Administration stressed that HAB had all along been maintaining close liaison with EDB in nurturing arts professionals. Local tertiary institutions had offered various programmes in arts administration, which should help nurture arts professionals to cope with the manpower demand arising from the development of WKCD. To provide further support for the grooming of local arts professionals, the Government had provided an additional funding of \$150 million to offer more than 600 new training opportunities to strengthen the training of arts administrators for five years starting from 2013-2014. The training programmes ranged from local/overseas internships/attachments, scholarships for overseas/local arts or cultural Master's degree or professional training programmes, to in-service training for up-coming arts leaders and LCSD staff in charge of relevant duties. The Government had also increased its annual subvention to HKAPA to nearly \$300 million in 2013-2014 to support its migration from a three-year to a four-year undergraduate degree structure and commissioned HKADC to organize internship/training opportunities for local arts practitioners. In addition, WKCDA had supported and funded various capacity-building initiatives to provide more learning opportunities for practising professionals and to train new talents.

13. Members in general considered that the Administration and WKCDA should provide more opportunities for local arts talents to take part in the WKCD project, so that they would be able to benefit from the transfer of knowledge and expertise from the foreign talents engaged in the project. WKCDA responded that 90% of its serving staff members were from Hong Kong. It had always tried to recruit locally and would bring in talents from other places only when the requisite expertise could not be found in Hong Kong. In WKCDA's view, bringing in overseas expertise would not only fill the gaps in the skills required for the success of the WKCD project, but also facilitate the transfer of knowledge to local talents over time, thereby helping build up local expertise.

Support for arts groups

14. Members were of the view that funding support for various arts groups should aim at promoting diversity and balanced development of the local arts scene. The Administration was urged to increase the subvention to HKADC to strengthen its support for budding artists and small and medium-sized arts groups.

15. The Administration advised that to strengthen support for arts groups, the Government had in the 2013-2014 financial year increased its recurrent subvention to the major PA groups by \$30 million and allocated an additional \$30 million to HKADC to enhance its support for small and medium-sized arts groups. Besides, the Government had since 2011 introduced the Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme to disburse an annual provision of around \$30 million to support larger scale and cross-year arts and cultural initiatives/activities proposed by promising arts groups and arts practitioners. LCSD had also increased its funding support for young artists and small and medium-sized arts groups to stage performances in LCSD's arts and cultural programmes and activities.

16. Concern was also expressed that as many local arts groups and arts practitioners were no longer able to operate in industrial buildings owing to the rental increase in recent years, the Administration should step up efforts to make available more arts space for them in districts. The Administration advised members that additional funding had been earmarked for HKADC to renovate and make available arts space for artists in an industrial building in Wong Chuk Hang. HKADC would undertake renovation works and operate a scheme to enable new and budding artists to lease the units for arts creation at a concessionary rate.

Mode of governance of WKCD facilities

Artistic partnership framework for PA venues

17. During the discussion on the facility and artistic partnership framework for PA venues in WKDC at the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee on 28 March 2014, Hon Alan LEONG expressed concern whether WKCD would implement an artistic accountability system at the PA venues in WKCD under which the artistic directors or resident partners appointed would be tasked to take charge of the artistic programming and operation of the venues. According to WKCD, it would establish the artistic positioning for each PA venue in WKCD and develop a suitable mode of governance and a business model for each venue which supported its artistic positioning. The artistic director or resident partner appointed for each venue would take charge of the

artistic programming of the venue and be responsible for the artistic output and overall image of the venue.

18. Members urged the Administration and WKCDA to carefully devise the facility and artistic partnership framework for the PA venues in WKCD such that both major and small arts groups would be provided with the opportunity to become partners of the venues. WKCDA advised that it would first develop and establish the artistic positioning and business model for each PA venue in WKCD, based on which the requirements to be fulfilled for becoming resident or associate partners would be drawn up. WKCDA assured members that an open, objective and professional mechanism would be set up under the WKCDA Board's supervision for the selection of partners.

Xiqu Centre

19. On the future mode of governance of Xiqu Centre, one of the earliest PA venues to come on stream, members were advised that taking into account the artistic positioning and views of the Xiqu sector, WKCDA decided to directly operate Xiqu Centre, instead of engaging a single troupe to take on a residency role at Xiqu Centre. WKCDA also advised members that while the advisory committee to be set up would advise the WKCDA management on various matters relating to the programming, partnership, management and operation of Xiqu Centre, the Artistic Director to be appointed would take charge of the artistic direction of the venue and would be responsible to the management and Board of WKCDA. Dr Hon Helena WONG suggested that apart from the Artistic Director and General Manager, WKCDA should also engage an expert in Xiqu education to take charge of matters relating to the promotion of Xiqu education, audience building and community participation.

M+

20. When the Joint Subcommittee was briefed on the progress of the development of M+ at its meeting on 23 July 2014, members were advised that the governance of M+ would be implemented through the establishment of a wholly owned subsidiary company under WKCDA as a separate legal entity. Members sought clarification on the justifications for the proposed governance structure and whether it would be applicable to other arts and cultural venues in WKCD. Some members questioned whether the Administration and the WKCDA Board would be able to retain effective monitoring and control over the operation of M+ under the proposed governance structure. Concern was also raised as to whether the funding proposals for M+ would be subject to monitoring by the Legislative Council ("LegCo") under the proposed governance structure.

21. According to the Administration, the proposed governance structure would help enhance public perception of the artistic freedom and curatorial independence of M+, strengthen the capacity of M+ to raise funds and solicit donations in artworks, and put M+ on a similar basis with other major contemporary arts museums around the world. M+'s mode of governance was expected to be completely different from the performing arts venues to be built in the WKCD, the governance structure of which would be formulated in view of the unique characteristics of the major art form to be staged in each venue. In the present thinking, M+ would be the only venue to be operated by a subsidiary wholly owned by WKCD. The Administration also assured members that effective controls would be in place under the proposed governance structure, given that the budget and business plan of M+ would be subject to the approval of the WKCD Board, and the management and governance of the M+ subsidiary would need to be compliant with WKCD's policies. Irrespective of the final governance structures to be adopted for M+ and other arts and cultural venues of WKCD, the development and future operation of the venues would remain under the scrutiny of LegCo.

Blueprint and targets for cultural software development

22. Some members requested that the Administration and WKCD should jointly map out and report to the Joint Subcommittee in due course a blueprint for the development of cultural software of Hong Kong to complement the WKCD project. They were of the view that the blueprint should provide details on, among others, the mode of governance of the arts and cultural institutions in Hong Kong; the respective roles of and the coordination between LCSD and WKCD in the development of cultural software; the implementation of arts education in/outside schools and the targets to be achieved; strategies and targets for audience building; measures for strengthening the capacity of local arts groups; ways for promoting exchange with the arts and cultural communities in Mainland China, Asia and beyond.

23. Some members considered that the Administration and WKCD should set specific targets for the development of cultural software (e.g. number of visits made to public museums by primary/secondary school students, number of arts talents trained by HKAPA, and number of arts critics nurtured in a certain period of time, etc.) so as to facilitate review and monitoring of the progress made in the relevant areas of work. The Administration and WKCD were urged to incorporate objective and quantifiable targets in the blueprint for the development of cultural software.

24. The Administration advised that while it might not be suitable to set specific and quantitative targets for cultural software development, which was a long-term undertaking and relatively abstract in nature, it had kept information concerning the arts and cultural programmes organized by the Government and

its collaborators, such as the target and actual numbers of participants of individual arts and cultural events/training schemes. Besides, the key performance targets and indicators in respect of the planned programmes for the promotion and development of culture and the arts were set out in the Controlling Officer's Report incorporated in the Government's Estimates for each financial year. The Administration and its collaborating organizations had all along kept under review the effectiveness of their initiatives and enhanced their work in relevant areas as necessary and appropriate.

Latest development

25. The Administration and WKCD will update the Joint Subcommittee on the progress of cultural software development of the WKCD project at its meeting on 24 November 2014.

Relevant papers

26. A list of the relevant papers on the LegCo Website is in the **Appendix**.

**Relevant papers on
Development of cultural software to complement
the West Kowloon Cultural District project**

| Committee | Date of meeting | Paper |
|--|---------------------------------|---|
| Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project | 16.4.2010 Item II(b) | Agenda CB(2)1283/09-10(03) Minutes |
| | 14.1.2011 Item III(c) | Agenda CB(2)795/10-11(04) Minutes |
| | 27.6.2012 Item I | Agenda CB(2)2369/11-12(01) Minutes |
| | 10.6.2013 Item III | Agenda CB(2)1247-12-13(02) Minutes Supplementary information provided by the Administration in November 2013 CB(2)390/13-14(01) |
| | 29.11.2013 (Item III) | Agenda Minutes |
| | 28.3.2014 (Items III and IV) | Agenda Minutes |
| | 9.6.2014 (Item II) | Agenda Minutes |

| Committee | Date of meeting | Paper |
|------------------|------------------------|---|
| | 23.7.2014 (Item I) | Agenda Minutes The Administration's response to members' concerns raised at the meeting CB(2)316/14-15(01) |

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