

**For Discussion
on 11 June 2018**

**Legislative Council Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting
Progress Report on Innovation and Technology Fund for Better Living
and Digital Inclusion**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the implementation of Innovation and Technology Fund for Better Living (“FBL”) and the progress of the Government’s work on digital inclusion (“DI”).

Background

2. The Innovation and Technology Bureau (“ITB”) launched the \$500 million FBL on 31 May 2017 to encourage and fund the use of innovation and technology (“I&T”) in developing projects that bring more convenience, comfort and safety to daily living, or address the needs of specific community groups. The FBL encourages the application of local innovation for the good of the local community and transforms innovative ideas into deliverables for the benefit of society, thereby promoting an I&T culture and enhancing our I&T competitiveness.

3. Besides, with the rapid development of technology, certain community groups (including the elderly and the underprivileged) may face digital divide problems due to lack of access to technology products and services. The Government has hence been seeking to promote DI and encourage various sectors to play an active part in helping those in need to keep abreast of the development of the digital society.

Innovation and Technology Fund for Better Living

Progress of Implementation

4. As at end-May 2018, the FBL Secretariat received a total of 48 applications. Among them, 16 do not meet the eligibility criteria¹ and have

¹ Mainly because the applicants are private enterprises.

been returned to the applicants. Of the 32 eligible applications, the FBL Secretariat has completed initial assessment of 24 applications which have been referred to the FBL Assessment Panel (“the Panel”) for consideration. The remaining 8 eligible applications are undergoing initial assessment by the Secretariat.

5. Depending on the complexity of the projects and whether the information and documents submitted by the applicants were complete, it took 4 to 22 weeks, or an average of 13 weeks, for the FBL Secretariat to process an application from its receipt to its submission to the Panel for discussion.

6. The Panel has so far convened three assessment meetings to process the 24 eligible applications, of which 13 have been approved and 11 were not supported for funding because they did not meet the assessment criteria². The total grant for the approved projects was about \$38 million. The grant for each project ranged from \$0.7 million to \$5 million, with an average of \$2.9 million.

7. Projects funded by the FBL falls into different categories, including service platform for persons with rehabilitative needs, devices helping the disabilities to do exercise, teaching tools for children with special learning needs, mobile application promoting healthy diet, service platform for space sharing in the community, and mobile application encouraging elders to do exercises, etc. Projects for which fund agreements have been signed between ITB and the successful applicants³ are at Annex 1. The projects will gradually roll out upon completion of the development work, for use by the general public or their target groups.

Promotion and publicity

8. The Secretariat conducted a series of promotion and publicity activities over the past year to introduce the FBL and encourage applications, including distributing promotional pamphlets to eligible organisations, introducing the FBL through media, holding briefing sessions, participating in public talks and seminars, and meeting with representatives from different organisations or groups, etc. The activities attracted over 1 200 participants. Responses to the FBL from different sectors are positive, and the Secretariat has received more than 1 000 enquiries to date. We will continue to promote and advertise the FBL through different channels.

² Assessment criteria include (a) benefits to be brought to the public or specific community groups; (b) innovation and technology content; (c) feasibility and sustainability; (d) financial considerations; and (e) technical and management capability of the applicant.

³ ITB has signed fund agreements with the applicants of eight projects. Information of other approved projects will be uploaded onto the FBL website after the signing of fund agreements.

Monitoring and Review

9. We will closely monitor the implementation of the FBL. We also plan to conduct a review two years after its implementation to study whether such aspects of the FBL as the mode of operation, eligibility criteria and coverage require enhancement or adjustment.

Digital Inclusion Measures

10. In the past few years, the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (“OGCIO”) has launched various DI initiatives. Details are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Information and Communications Technology Support Programmes for the Elderly

11. In November 2017, the OGCIO launched the third round of the Information and Communications Technology (“ICT”) Outreach Programme for the Elderly (“the Outreach Programme”) for a 12-month period. In addition to institutionalised elders, elders receiving day care centre services and home care services as well as those “hidden” elders, we have extended the target groups to those with dementia to help them slow down deterioration with the aid of digital technology. The third round of the programme is implemented by three non-profit-making organisations, with an aim to benefit around 2 300 elders of whom about 20% are suffering from dementia.

12. Moreover, we will regularise the Outreach Programme from 2018-19 onwards to provide elders (including those with dementia) with basic information and knowledge in ICT. Through the district networks of Elder Academies, more active elders with basic ICT knowledge will be provided with advanced training to enhance their capability in adopting digital technology in their daily living. Upon completion of training, these more agile elders can serve as trainers to help other elders acquire further technology knowledge. To facilitate the elderly and those in need to continue to learn about digital living and technology, we plan to launch a web-based learning platform in 2019 for sharing learning resources. We will collate and develop online learning resources through non-profit-making organisations, Elder Academies, etc.

13. The Internet adoption rate of the elderly in 2017 was 51.2%⁴, which met the three-year target of 50% as set in 2014. With the implementation of

⁴ Source: the percentage of persons aged 65 or above having used the Internet in the past 12 months in the Thematic Household Survey conducted by the Census and Statistics Department in 2017.

the new programmes and the rising education level of elders, we anticipate that 70% of the elders will use the Internet and electronic services in their daily life in five years.

Internet Learning Support Programme

14. The OGCIO launched the Internet Learning Support Programme (“ILSP”) in 2011 to help eligible families acquire home broadband services and computer equipment at affordable prices, and to provide students and parents with free technical advice and computer check-up services, as well as training and advisory support. The two ILSP Implementers are the Boys’ & Girls’ Clubs Association of Hong Kong and WebOrganic. As at April 2018, about 470 000 services have been provided to about 73 000 eligible families. A summary of the relevant services is set out at Annex 2. The ILSP will end in end-August this year. Relevant government departments and other non-profit-making organisations will continue to support needy students in undertaking Internet learning through various means, including –

- (a) disbursing the Subsidy for Internet Access Charges to eligible families;
- (b) providing free Wi-Fi services at all 69 public libraries in Hong Kong, and subsidising about 170 study rooms and youth service centres operated by non-profit-making organisations to provide free Wi-Fi services;
- (c) the Education Bureau (“EDB”) is implementing the Fourth Strategy on Information Technology in Education, which includes enhancing the quality of e-learning resources and schools’ professional training as well as involving parents, stakeholders and the community. The EDB has also set up a counselling hotline to provide support services for students and parents on the healthy use of the Internet. School social workers will also provide counselling services for students. Besides, non-profit-making organisations will provide computer training for parents at an affordable fee;
- (d) the Commission on Poverty will provide subsidies for needy primary and secondary students to purchase mobile computer devices for e-learning under the Community Care Fund for three years, starting from the 2018/19 school year; and
- (e) other non-profit-making organisations will provide families with economic difficulties with new or second-hand computers with relevant technical support.

15. From the 2018/19 school year onwards, the two implementers will continue to provide students from low-income families with Internet learning support services, including the provision of broadband Internet access services at discounted prices, relevant training and related advisory support services.

Web/Mobile App Accessibility Campaign

16. Currently, all 555 government websites have met the Level AA standard of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 2.0 promulgated by the World Wide Web Consortium (“W3C”). For mobile applications (“apps”), since W3C has not yet published official accessibility standards that are entirely applicable to mobile apps, OGCIO has introduced the “Mobile Application Accessibility Handbook” which includes the “Baseline Accessibility Criteria for Government Mobile App”, and issued an internal circular in April this year requiring all government mobile apps to conform to the relevant standards by July 2019.

17. Besides, OGCIO has engaged the Hong Kong Internet Registration Corporation Limited (“HKIRC”) to promote web/mobile app accessibility by leveraging the HKIRC’s expertise in website operation and its extensive customer network to further promote the wider adoption of accessibility design among enterprises and organisations, and enhance the promotion effort and popularity of web/mobile app accessibility across different sectors of the society. HKIRC launched the Web Accessibility Recognition Scheme in March 2018. As at end-April this year, 238 websites and 61 mobile apps have already enrolled in the scheme. The awards presentation ceremony of the scheme will be conducted in two stages. The first stage will be held in June this year to commend enterprises and organisations that have attained gold awards in the past three consecutive rounds, thereby encouraging other organisations to participate and follow suit. The remaining awards will be presented at the awards presentation ceremony to be held at the end of this year.

Advice Sought

18. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

**Innovation and Technology Bureau
Office of the Government Chief Information Officer
June 2018**

**Projects Approved under the Innovation and
Technology Fund for Better Living**

	Projects with Fund Agreements signed (Organisation)	Objective	Beneficiary Group	Application of Innovation and Technology	Grant Approved (HK\$)
1.	Development of Intelligent Target Aiming Device for Visually Impaired Archery (Hong Kong Productivity Council)	To help visually impaired persons take part in archery	Visually impaired persons	Computer vision, digital image processing	1,166,742
2.	HOPE Chinese Words and Sentences Game Mobile App (Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association)	To help primary students learn parts of speech and sentence structure in Chinese	Children with dyslexia	Mobile application	1,242,000
3.	VRehab Generation (Tung Wah Group of Hospitals)	To provide rehabilitation services	Elders and people with disabilities	Virtual reality	3,352,770
4.	Implementation of Robot Drama Education Programme for Reducing Challenging Behaviours to the Kindergarten Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)	To coach children with autism spectrum disorders to behave appropriately through robot drama	Children with autism spectrum disorders (aged 3 to 6)	Programmed robotics	2,845,696
5.	Pioneer Integrated Palliative and Hospice Care System (iPAHCs) (The Society for the Promotion of Hospice Care)	To improve the quality of in-home hospice care and strengthen support to families of patients	Terminally ill patients and their caregivers	Systematic data management and analysis	4,993,770

	Projects with Fund Agreements signed (Organisation)	Objective	Beneficiary Group	Application of Innovation and Technology	Grant Approved (HK\$)
6.	Early Literacy Mobile App (iOS version) (SAHK)	To provide language learning activities for children to enhance their Chinese language abilities in reading and writing	Pre-school children with academic ability at K1 level or above (especially those with specific learning difficulties)	Mobile application	792,233
7.	Baduanjin (Eight-Section Brocades) Health Programme Game (North Point Kai-Fong Welfare Advancement Association)	To promote healthy lifestyle and encourage the elderly to practise Baduanjin exercise	Elders	Mobile application with artificial intelligence	4,523,930
8.	One Click Care	To provide a one-stop information and service platform for persons with disabilities or special needs and their families	Persons with disabilities or special needs and their families	Mobile application and website platform	1,877,500
				Total:	20,794,641

Note: Among the 13 approved projects, fund agreements have yet to be signed with 5 of them, including: a mobile application promoting healthy diet; a service platform for space sharing in the community; a mobile application for supporting health management of patients; an augmented reality music textbook for enhancing the initiative of lower primary students with special needs in learning music; and a service platform for patients with rehabilitation needs.

**Summary of
Internet Learning Support Programme Services**

Service Item	Result as at April 2018
1. Number of eligible families served	73 156
2. Total number of services rendered	477 696
(a) Number of training services provided for eligible parents and students	143 638
(b) Number of social support services rendered	127 597
(c) Number of technical support services rendered	167 050
(d) Number of computer equipment sale services ⁵	13 301
(e) Number of Internet package sale services	26 110

⁵ The service scope of ILSP does not include the provision of financial subsidies for purchasing computers and related products.