

# 立法會

## *Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. CB(4)858/18-19(06)

Ref: CB4/PL/PS

### **Panel on Public Service**

**Meeting on 20 May 2019**

### **Updated background brief on training and development for civil servants**

#### **Purpose**

This paper provides background information on the provision of training and development opportunities for civil servants by the Civil Service Bureau ("CSB"), and summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by members when the subject was discussed at meetings of the Panel on Public Service ("the Panel").

#### **Background**

2. The Government provides civil servants with learning opportunities that would equip them with the skills, knowledge and mindset necessary for providing quality service to the public. Whilst individual bureaux/departments ("B/Ds") provide vocational training to meet job-specific needs, the Civil Service Training and Development Institute ("CSTDI") under CSB focuses on training programmes that fulfill the common training needs of civil servants, such as leadership and management, language and communication, national affairs and the Basic Law. CSTDI also formulates policies on training and performance management, provides consultancy services to B/Ds on human resource management and promotes a culture of continuous learning in the civil service.

3. Brief descriptions of the various training programmes and activities organized by CSTDI are set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)1079/17-18(06)) for the Panel meeting on 21 May 2018. For the financial year 2019-2020, the estimated financial provision for CSB for its work on civil service training and development is \$174.1 million.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://www.budget.gov.hk/2019/eng/pdf/head143.pdf>

### Establishing a new civil service college

4. In October 2018, the Chief Executive announced in her Policy Address that the Administration had identified a "Government, Institution or Community" site with an area of about 11 000 square metres near Kwun Tong MTR Station which was suitable for composite development. The new civil service college, which was first proposed in 2017 Policy Address, will be accommodated in this composite development with other new community facilities and activity venues. The Administration is carrying out preliminary planning work for the composite development project, and the civil service college is expected to be completed in 2026. Besides, a civil service training advisory board comprising professionals and government officials will be set up to prepare for the development of the new civil service college and give guidance on training programmes for the civil service and its long-term development strategy.

### **Deliberations of the Panel**

5. The major views and concerns expressed by Panel members in previous meetings and the Administration's responses are summarized below.

### National studies and Basic Law training

6. Some members suggested enhancing civil servants' comprehensive knowledge of national studies and the Basic Law, including the principles behind the drafting and interpretation of the Basic Law, the relationship between the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Basic Law, the policy changes on the Mainland and the social and economic developments of the Mainland that might have impacts on Hong Kong.

7. The Administration pointed out that it had been devoting training resources to enhance civil servants' understanding of the Basic Law and the "one country, two systems" principle, and Basic Law formed an integral and important part of training for civil servants. In 2017, CSB had invited renowned speakers such as members of the Basic Law Committee to talk on the relationship between the Constitution and the Basic Law at seminars organized on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The Administration would also arrange national studies training programmes and visits to the Mainland to deepen civil servants' understanding of the Mainland's development and the relationship between the Central Government and Hong Kong.

8. Concerns were raised by some members that civil servants attending the national studies courses conducted in the Mainland and the Basic Law training organized by CSTDI might be exposed to one-sided views only and brainwashed into a "One country, One system" mindset.

9. The Administration advised that there was a genuine operational need for civil servants to understand the systems and other aspects of the Mainland. In attending the national studies programmes conducted in the Mainland, civil servants would meet with different organizations and people so that they could understand the political, social and economic developments in the Mainland from different angles. The Administration also highlighted that political neutrality was one of the core values of the civil service. All civil servants were well aware of their responsibility, as set out in the Civil Service Code, to implement the policies and decisions of the Government of the day in a professional and impartial manner.

10. In response to some members' view that the Mainland programmes on national studies should only be arranged for those civil servants who had close working relationship with the Mainland authorities, the Administration advised that priority for these programmes would be given to civil servants who had more direct work contacts with the Mainland. In fact, only about 700 senior and middle ranking civil servants were selected each year to attend the Mainland programmes on national studies and thematic visits organized by CSTDI.

#### Training on the use of innovation and technology

11. Noting that it was the Administration's policy to build Hong Kong into a world-class smart city, many members had expressed concerns about details of the relevant training relating to the use of innovation and technology, creativity and design thinking, smart city and new technological trends and application that would be provided to civil servants. They were also of the view that the Administration should step up training on the use of big data technologies as it could be very useful in analyzing the demand for public services.

12. The Administration responded that in designing the training programmes on the use of innovation and technology, CSB would consult the Innovation and Technology Bureau together with the Innovation and Technology Commission, both of which had a very close connection with the trade. Each year, CSTDI and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer arranged training programmes in big data analytics/applications, innovative technology, artificial intelligence, design thinking, smart city, IT security management, the use of social media and cloud computing etc., for

around 1 800 and 4 000 civil servants respectively. CSTDI had planned to further increase the annual target number of participants, while CSB would explore ways to further improve and enhance training on innovation and technology for civil servants.

#### Training on communication

13. In view of increased number of public confrontations with frontline civil servants, question was also raised as to whether CSTDI would organize courses to equip civil servants with the necessary skills to manage conflicts, including abusive language, and to cope with stress arising from these conflicts. The Administration advised that CSTDI had organized courses for enhancing the quality of customer service, handling public complaints, managing conflicts, coping with stress and maintaining emotional well-being, and efforts in this regard would be stepped up.

#### New civil service college

14. Regarding member's enquiry about the mission of the new civil service college, the Administration advised that it aimed to further enhance training for civil servants with the upgraded training facilities and more training space to be provided in the new civil service college.

15. To ensure a smooth planning and implementation of the project, a member called on the Administration to gauge views from the Kwun Tong District Council and relevant stakeholders regarding the facilities to be provided in the composite development and the interface with the transport network in the area. The Administration assured members that it would consult Kwun Tong District Council on the composite development project in due course.

#### Overseas and continuous training

16. A member urged the Administration to encourage more civil servants, in particular the senior civil servants working in the professional departments, to continuously participate in training programmes, including on-line or short courses, at renowned overseas institutions so as to broaden their perspectives and update their knowledge and techniques on the relevant discipline.

17. The Administration advised that while CSTDI offered training that fulfilled the common training needs of civil servants, professional training would be offered by relevant B/Ds to meet job-specific requirements. It would consider the provision of more overseas programmes, including on-line and short courses, for civil servants to broaden their perspectives. Individual B/Ds

would also arrange attachments to international organizations that had direct working relationship with them.

18. Noting that the Administration had offered a Training Sponsorship Scheme to encourage civil servants to pursue learning through external courses, and the Administration had extended the Scheme starting from 2018 to cover all officers at Master Pay Scale Point 49 and below and raised the sponsorship ceiling from \$6,000 to \$10,000 per applicant each year, a member enquired about details of the Scheme.

19. The Administration responded that the Training Sponsorship Scheme aimed at encouraging frontline civil servants to pursue continuous learning outside office hours. Civil servants could seek approval for attending job-related courses and then apply for reimbursement of fees after attending the courses in their own spare time. CSTDI would closely monitor the utilization trend and consider injecting additional funding based on actual requirements. In the past, an average of \$2 million to \$2.5 million was incurred by B/Ds and about 600 applications were approved under the Scheme each year. The Administration had earmarked \$3.5 million for the Scheme in 2018-2019.

#### Training for non-civil service contract staff

20. Some members asked about the provision of training for non-civil service contract ("NCSC") staff. The Administration advised that relevant training programmes, including orientation programmes and job-related training, were provided to NCSC staff to better equip them to discharge their duties. Local training activities held in Hong Kong were generally open to NCSC staff. However, leadership and management training would generally be provided only to civil servants, who would have a life-long career in the civil service and who might be required to shoulder heavier responsibilities upon promotion in due course.

#### Evaluation of training programmes

21. On the mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of various training programmes, the Administration advised that feedback from course providers, participants and departmental management would be collected systematically for course evaluation with a view to further improving the training programmes. The Administration would seriously consider the views collected and fine tune the programme contents to meet the training needs of civil servants at different levels.

### **Latest position**

22. The Administration will update the Panel on the training and development for civil servants at the Panel meeting on 20 May 2019, including providing the Panel with details on the training programmes on innovation and use of technology organized for civil servants.

### **Relevant papers**

23. A list of relevant papers is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 4  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
10 May 2019

**List of relevant papers**

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Public Service	16 February 2015	<u>Administration's paper</u>  <u>Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</u>  <u>Minutes</u>  <u>Administration's follow-up response to issues raised at the Panel meeting</u>
	21 December 2015	<u>Administration's paper</u>  <u>Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</u>  <u>Minutes</u>
	19 December 2016	<u>Administration's paper</u>  <u>Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</u>  <u>Minutes</u>
	21 May 2018	<u>Administration's paper</u>  <u>Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</u>  <u>Minutes</u>