

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

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**Panel on Home Affairs**

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat  
for the meeting on 10 May 2021**

**Progress Report on East Kowloon Cultural Centre**

**Purpose**

This paper summarizes the past discussion of the Panel on Home Affairs ("the Panel") on the construction of the East Kowloon Cultural Centre ("EKCC").

**Background**

2. With the relevant funding application approved by the Finance Committee ("FC") in July 2015,<sup>1</sup> EKCC is currently under construction and scheduled for opening in 2023. EKCC comprises a multi-purpose auditorium of 1 200 seats for large-scale events, a thrust stage theatre of 550 seats for medium-scale events and three studios with seating capacities ranging from 120 to 360 mainly for rehearsals and performances of music, dance and drama on a smaller scale.

3. At its policy briefing-cum-meeting on 11 January 2021, the Panel was informed that EKCC under construction would converge arts with technology. Equipped with all-round computerized stage facilities, an execution system and a live streaming system, EKCC would inject novel ideas and effects into the theatre. The Administration further indicated that EKCC would serve as an incubator for artists and young people while nurturing audience; whereby creativity and the performing arts would lead Hong Kong into the smart era and further elevate Hong Kong's status in the international arts arena.

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<sup>1</sup> The upgrading of project 60RE to Category A at an estimated cost of \$4,175.7 million in money-of-the-day prices for the construction of EKCC was approved by FC on 15 July 2015.

## **Panel's discussion**

4. At its meeting on 12 December 2014, the Panel was consulted on the proposed construction of EKCC. The major concerns expressed by members are set out below.

### Project scope and facilities

5. Members in general supported the proposed construction of EKCC and considered that it could help boost Hong Kong's arts and cultural development. Some members enquired whether the proposed EKCC would be equipped with specialist stage facilities and equipment, including stage and lighting system, audio-visual equipment and backstage facilities, to facilitate the efficient mounting and staging of different types of professional stage performances. In these members' view, the design of EKCC should be practical and appropriate for its intended functions.

6. The Administration advised that the EKCC project aimed to provide a cross-district performing arts venue with multi-purpose facilities for performances and rehearsals. The design was practical, having regard to the functional needs and the latest developments in the performing arts sector. The stage equipment, such as flying bars, audio-visual and lighting systems as well as backstage facilities, would be able to support professional performances. The Administration further advised that it had conducted wide consultation with relevant stakeholders before finalizing the project scope of EKCC. All of them were strongly supportive of the proposed design and use of the facilities in EKCC.

7. Some members enquired about the design of the public open spaces of the proposed EKCC and its accessibility to members of the public. The Administration advised that EKCC would be a green building with open spaces of about 11 500 square metres which could cater for different types of activities ranging from outdoor performances and community events to leisure activities to make the city life more vibrant and abundant. EKCC would be easily accessible as it was connected to the Kowloon Bay MTR Station. Space was reserved in the current design for possible future footbridge connection from the neighbouring Amoy Gardens should their residents decide to fund and build the connecting footbridge.

## Positioning of the East Kowloon Cultural Centre and provision of performing arts facilities in Hong Kong

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8. Some members raised concern about the positioning of EKCC in relation to the Government's overall planning for development of arts and cultural venues in the territory as well as its interface with other performing arts facilities, in particular those being planned in the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD").

9. The Administration advised that the positioning of EKCC would complement the new performing arts facilities being planned in WKCD. While WKCD would provide a cluster of world-class arts and cultural facilities and become a hub for overseas visitors commensurate with Hong Kong's status as a metropolis, EKCC was intended to be a cross-district cultural venue to serve local communities and Hong Kong's arts groups. In planning the performing arts facilities of WKCD, the planned development of EKCC had already been taken into account. According to the market analysis commissioned by the WKCD Authority, the demand for performing arts venues could not be fully met by the WKCD project alone. WKCD would be different from EKCC in positioning, objectives, management and operation.

10. Some members raised concern about the acute shortages of performing arts facilities in various districts in Hong Kong. They enquired how the commissioning of EKCC would help ease the problem. In these members view, the Administration should increase the provision of smaller-scale civic centres across the territory. They also suggested that the Administration should consolidate existing resources and come up with a refined venue allocation system such that district cultural groups and local organizations could have a higher chance of being allocated time slots to use the facilities.

11. The Administration advised that the proposed EKCC could help alleviate the acute shortage of performing arts facilities in the East Kowloon region and Hong Kong at large. It aimed to serve the communities and arts groups of four districts in Hong Kong. Meanwhile, the Administration was aware of the high demand for venues capable of accommodating small to medium-scale performances organized by district cultural groups and local organizations. In assessing the need for such performance venues (e.g. civic centres) at the community level, the Administration would take into account all relevant factors set out in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines including the overall planning at large, the community needs, views of the cultural sector, utilization of existing venues, population trend and relevant art forms. The Administration pledged to keep under review the requirement for district performance venues in the course of planning the overall provision of cultural facilities in future, having regard to the on-going developments of the 18 districts.

### **Relevant Legislative Council question**

12. At the Council meeting of 24 February 2021, Hon LAU Kwok-fan raised a written question on, amongst other things, the application of Art Tech at EKCC. The question and the Administration's reply are in **Appendix I**.

### **Recent development**

13. The Administration will brief the Panel on the latest progress of the EKCC project at the next meeting on 10 May 2021.

### **Relevant papers**

14. A list of relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 4  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
3 May 2021

## Press Releases

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LCQ6: Art Tech  
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Following is a question by the Hon Lau Kwok-fan and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Caspar Tsui, in the Legislative Council today (February 24):

Question:

The Chief Executive has indicated in the 2020 Policy Address that the Government will actively promote and support the development of Art Tech. To this end, the Secretary for Home Affairs will take the lead in setting up a cross-bureau task force (task force) and invite the participation of representatives from the relevant sectors and non-governmental organisations in the formulation of strategies and measures to develop and promote Art Tech. Furthermore, the Government has set aside a total of \$100 million under four relevant funds (i.e. the Arts and Sport Development Fund, the Innovation and Technology Fund, the Film Development Fund and the CreateSmart Initiative) for the relevant sectors to apply for funding for implementing projects on developing and promoting the integration of technology and arts. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the criteria adopted by the Government for inviting representatives from the relevant sectors to be members of the task force, as well as the (i) definition of "Art Tech", (ii) long-term goals and (iii) key performance indicators to be adopted by the task force;

(2) of the respective portions of the \$100 million funding coming from the four aforesaid funds, the criteria to be adopted (e.g. the goals to be achieved) for vetting and approving the relevant funding applications, as well as the maximum amount of subsidy to be provided for each approved application; whether the subsidies provided by these funds for art projects of non-Art Tech categories will be correspondingly reduced;

(3) whether the Government will collaborate with those institutions which currently offer relevant courses (e.g. The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong Design Institute, and Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education) in promoting Art Tech, and encourage qualified persons to teach the relevant courses, so as to train Art Tech talents and facilitate the alignment of the courses offered by institutions and the demand of the industry; and

(4) given that the East Kowloon Cultural Centre, which is currently under construction and will be commissioned in 2023, will provide Testbed Studio for applying Art Tech, how the Government ensures that the Testbed Studio and the entire Cultural Centre will (i) be equipped with the facilities needed for developing and trying out Art Tech and (ii) provide the relevant sectors with convenient channels for hiring facilities; whether it has formulated eligibility criteria for hiring the Testbed Studio?

Reply:

President,

(1) The Inter-departmental Task Force on Arts Technology (Task Force) led by the Secretary for Home Affairs convened its first meeting on February 17. The meeting discussed the strategies and measures of the Task Force in developing and promoting arts technology (arts tech) in the future. The Task Force will consult the relevant industries and their representatives on the work plan as appropriate, and will invite representatives from the relevant industries or non-government organisations to attend the Task Force meetings as necessary.

Arts tech is developing rapidly and can cover a wide area. It may not be appropriate to give an official definition to it. Broadly speaking, arts tech can be interpreted as applying technology (such as virtual reality, extended reality, real-time animation, etc.) in artistic creation to enhance the content and delivery of artistic creation, support the succession of arts and deepen audience engagement and experience. The long-term goal of the Task Force is to provide employment and industry

development opportunities for arts practitioners and technology talents and to bring new experience to audience simultaneously so as to further promote Hong Kong's cultural essence where the East meets the West. As the development of arts tech is still in the preliminary stage, the Government has not set any key performance indicators at this stage.

(2) As mentioned in the 2020 Policy Address, relevant policy bureaux have set aside a total of \$100 million under funds or schemes of their respective purview (including the Arts and Sport Development Fund, the Innovation and Technology Fund, the Film Development Fund and the CreateSmart Initiative) for individuals interested in promoting arts tech to apply. The schemes above have dedicated objectives with different target applicants (details are at Annex). Applicants may submit application to the relevant funds or schemes, depending on the content of their proposals. The Government will continue to support the development of different arts projects.

For the Arts and Sport Development Fund, the Home Affairs Bureau launched the application of the 10th round of the Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme (ACDFS) in December 2020. A new category of "Arts Tech" was added in the 10th round of the ACDFS to support proposals that seek to integrate arts and technology, as well as encourage applicants to creatively apply technology to meet their artistic goals and vision. The proposals should contribute to the four objectives of the ACDFS, including capacity development of arts practitioners, arts groups, art forms and/or the arts sector; programme/content development; audience building; and arts education.

As for the CreateSmart Initiative and the Film Development Fund, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau will actively encourage and consider funding applications with arts tech elements while fulfilling the established eligibility criteria and strategic directions. Application of new technologies in the local film industry and other creative sectors will enhance the quality, variety and user experiences of products and services. It will help promote Hong Kong as Asia's creative

capital.

The Innovation and Technology Fund welcomes funding applications from the arts tech industry to help promote its development through different schemes. The Technology Voucher Programme and the General Support Programme under the Innovation and Technology Fund are relevant to the application of technology and IT culture for the promotion of arts tech. The Technology Voucher Programme provides funding to enterprises and organisations to use technological services and solutions to improve productivity, or upgrade or transform their business processes. The General Support Programme supports non-research and development projects that contribute to the upgrading and development of our industries as well as the fostering of an innovation and technology culture in Hong Kong. There is no cap on the number of funded projects and funding amounts under the funding schemes of the Innovation and Technology Fund. The Innovation and Technology Commission welcomes applications from the arts sector, applications from which had been accepted by the Innovation and Technology Fund in the past.

(3) The existing programmes related to arts or creative media offered by the post-secondary institutions cover topics related to arts tech, which helps to equip students with knowledge relevant to arts tech and inspire them to progress with the times. Moreover, the post-secondary institutions enjoy academic freedom and autonomy in programme development. They would liaise with stakeholders from time to time to keep abreast of the latest manpower trends and industry needs, with a view to ensuring that their programmes continue to serve the needs of the community and nurture talents in arts tech.

The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts has also provided programmes covering arts tech under the School of Theatre and Entertainment Arts to nurture talents for the industry.

(4) Kowloon East is a pilot area to develop a smart city in Hong Kong. As a catalyst for the implementation of the Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong, the East Kowloon Cultural Centre (EKCC) will promote arts tech at community level through diversified arts tech programmes and



interactive education activities in a bid to foster interests in and understanding of the arts and technology in the community, particularly among young people. In the meantime, novel and interactive theatre experience will help broaden the audience base for performing arts and promote cultural inclusiveness.

The EKCC will inject new impetus into the performing arts through innovative technology, and explore the infinite possibilities of innovative technology with artists. The EKCC will provide local artists with an incubation platform to support them from the stage of developing creative concept and connect them with partners from different sectors. They can join hands to develop arts tech programmes from an experimental "work-in-progress" creation to a complete and mature work. The EKCC will also actively encourage community engagement in art projects to arouse public interest and understanding of arts tech by bringing diversified arts tech programmes, art installation, exhibitions, workshops, and interactive educational activities.

Ends/Wednesday, February 24, 2021  
Issued at HKT 18:07

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**Funds and Schemes that can support Arts Tech**

|   | Responsible Bureau                              | Objectives  |
|---|---|---|
| Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme (ACDFS)                                  | Home Affairs Bureau                             | With the objectives of strengthening the cultural software and building the capacity of the arts sector of Hong Kong, ACDFS provides funding support for innovative and impactful proposals that contribute to the objectives of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• capacity development of arts practitioners, arts groups, art forms and/or the arts sector;</li> <li>• programme/content development;</li> <li>• audience building; and</li> <li>• arts education.</li> </ul> |
| Film Development Fund (FDF)   | Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) | FDF aims to support projects and activities conducive to the long-term development of the Hong Kong film industry along four strategic directions (namely, nurturing talent, enhancing local production, expanding markets and building the audience).  |
| CreateSmart Initiative (CSI)  | CEDB  | CSI aims to provide funding support for projects that are conducive to the development of the seven non-film creative industries against three strategic foci, namely nurturing talents and facilitating start-ups; exploring markets; and promoting Hong Kong as Asia’s creative capital and fostering a creative atmosphere in the community.   |
| Technology Voucher Programme (TVP) under the Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF) | Innovation and Technology Bureau (ITB)          | To support local enterprises/organisations in using technological services and solutions to improve productivity, or upgrade or transform their business processes.   |
| General Support Programme (GSP) under ITF   | ITB   | To support non-research and development (R&D) projects that contribute to the upgrading and development of our industries as well as the fostering of an innovation and technology culture in Hong Kong.  |

**Relevant documents on the  
Progress Report on East Kowloon Cultural Centre**

| <b>Committee</b>          | <b>Date of meeting</b>   | <b>Paper</b>   |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Panel on Home Affairs     | 12.12.2014<br>(Item III) | <a href="#">Agenda</a><br><a href="#">Minutes</a>                                    |
| Public Works Subcommittee | 30.6.2015                | <a href="#">Agenda</a><br><a href="#">Minutes</a>                                    |
| Finance Committee         | 15.7.2015                | <a href="#">Agenda</a><br><a href="#">Minutes (1)</a><br><a href="#">Minutes (2)</a> |
| Panel on Home Affairs     | 11.1.2021<br>(Item III)  | <a href="#">Agenda</a><br><a href="#">Minutes</a>                                    |
| Legislative Council       | 24.2.2021                | <a href="#">Official Record of Proceedings</a><br><a href="#">Pages 35 to 40</a>     |

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Legislative Council Secretariat  
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