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Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

Meeting on 9 June 2014

Updated background brief on e-Government development

Purpose

This paper gives an account of the development of the e-Government programmes and a summary of views and concerns expressed by Members in previous discussions.

Background

2.   E-Government services offer a convenient and efficient option for the public in their dealings with the Government.   In recent years, the e-Government services have evolved from mere provision of information to citizen-centric and two-way customer services.   With the rapid advances in technology, the Administration has updated the Digital 21 Strategy for the fourth time so that it grows and evolves continuously in pace with global trends and aspiration of Hong Kong community, in particular, on e-Government services.

3.   In 2012-2013, the Administration furthered the development of e-Government services to the community.   In general, the utilization of these services continued to grow significantly.   The e-Government services and the centrally-led initiatives are highlighted as follows:

(a)   mobile version of the "MyGovHK" portal;

(b)   mobile e-Government services;

(c)   value-added re-use of public sector information;

(d) E-Government development for Food and Health Bureau, Immigration Department, Leisure and Cultural Services Department and Lands Department;

(e) New Government data centre complex ;

(f) E-Government Infrastructure Service ("EGIS");

(g) Government cloud platform ("GovCloud");

(h) Utilization of e-Government services and web accessibility; and

(i) development of cloud-based common shared services.

Previous discussions

4.   Members generally supported the development of e-Government in Hong Kong when the implementation of the e-Government programmes was raised at the meetings of the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting ("the Panel") and the Council.

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E-Government infrastructure services platform and Government cloud platform

5.   At the Panel meeting on 10 June 2013, some members opined that both the internal information and communications technology ("ICT") systems and e-Government services of some bureaux/departments ("B/Ds") were outdated. Members urged the Administration to expedite the process of enhancements to these systems and services, and to provide survey results on the internal systems used by B/Ds to further the development of e-Government services. The Administration advised that it had started to develop and implement, by using cloud technologies, a new EGIS platform for B/Ds to provide e-Government services in order to adjust the hosting capacity in response to actual demands. Under the private cloud EGIS platform, shared components such as e-payment gateway and messaging firewalls would be made available to reduce the lead time for development of e-Government services.

6.   At the Panel meetings on 9 December 2013 and 28 January 2014, some members enquired about the Administration's plan to develop

GovCloud. According to the Administration, the Government had taken the lead in using cloud services to drive industry development. The Expert Group on Could Computing Services and Standards, from the industry, academia and professional bodies, had also developed a set of best practices and guidelines for the local community, so that cloud services could be deployed and adopted widely while ensuring security.

Government data centre

7. At the Panel meetings on 8 July and 11 November 2013, some members urged the Government to formulate a set of "Green Data Centre Standards" for data centres in Hong Kong and adopt green ICT practices in the Government. The Administration advised that the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer ("OGCIO") had promulgated the "Green Data Centre Practices" for reference and adoption by B/Ds in their data centre management. To promote energy-saving practices in the industry, the OGCIO had made available in 2012 the "Green Data Centre Practices" for reference by the industry through the data centre thematic portal. Also, the Administration was in the process of consolidating six government data centres with a view to saving power consumption and implementing other green data facilities. The Administration would continue to consolidate existing data centres on this front.

8. At the Panel meeting on 28 January 2014, members noted that the Administration had completed the relevant technical feasibility study for the consolidated data centre complex which was expected to commence operation in 2019. Members urged the Administration to expedite the migration of the new government data centre complex and provide details of the migration arrangement.

Government WiFi programmes

9. At the Panel meetings on 9 December 2013 and 28 January 2014, members expressed concern about the development of Government Wi-Fi ("Gov*WiFi*") service. Members generally urged the Administration to improve the efficiency and increase the coverage of the service. Some members sought information on the Administration's plan to extend the hotspots of this service, in particular, to privately-owned shopping malls and premises managed by The Link Real Estate Investment Trust ("the Link").

10. According to the Administration, Gov*WiFi* service was currently provided at about 440 Government premises. The Government could only provide this service at public areas of Government premises under the current policy. Also, the Administration had already worked with other public

organizations to provide this service at their premises (such as public hospitals). The Administration would explore the possibility of extending the coverage of Gov*WiFi* to premises managed by the Link and consider extending the service to more Government premises such as outdoor areas.

Support to small and medium enterprises

11.　　At the Panel meeting on 8 July 2013, members opined that the Administration should be more proactive in fostering the development of local ICT industry by providing more business opportunities for the small and medium enterprises ("SMEs") through the procurement of their services and products. The Administration advised that they had all along been adopting fair, open and impartial procedures to procure the most suitable ICT products and services. Under the Administration's standing offer agreements, nine companies were providing information security services to Government, among which five were local companies and two of them were SMEs. In 2012, the total expenditure for procurement of information security services from these companies was $15 million, of which $11 million was related to procurement from local ICT companies.

12.　　Some members enquired about the Administration's plan to promote the adoption of ICT by SMEs to enhance Hong Kong's overall competitiveness. The Administration advised that it had been implementing various programmes since 2004 to encourage SMEs to take advantage of ICT to increase efficiency and productivity. The Administration had completed over the years, a number of sponsorship projects, including electronic business applications, websites and training, benefiting over 14,000 SME practitioners from various sectors. The project "Consumer Connect" sponsored under the Sector-Specific Programme ("SSP") for SMEs and completed in early January 2013, provided wholesalers and retailers with a cloud-enabled platform and application to promote their products and make available product information to consumers. In May 2013, a new round of SSP was launched by setting aside $3 million for sponsoring projects to develop applications and solutions for individual SME sectors to adopt ICT. The Administration subsequently provided statistics compiled by the Census and Statistics Department on the ICT adoption by SMEs. Details of the statistics were set out in the Administration's paper issued vide LC Paper No. CB(4)749/13-14(01) on 29 May 2014.

13.　　At the Panel meetings on 11 November and 9 December 2013, some members expressed concern about the measures put in place by the Administration to help SMEs in the ICT sector to compete fairly in Government IT contracts and tenders, and whether a policy inclination for awarding Government IT contracts and tenders to SMEs was available.

According to the Administration, the Government procurement policy and the award of contracts were subject to the World Trade Organization Agreement on Government Procurement and the tendering requirements of individual project.   When awarding Government IT contracts and tenders, the Administration was guided by two policy objectives of achieving best value for money and maintaining open and fair competition.   Nevertheless, it had introduced a listing arrangement for the procurement of government public cloud services.   Out of the 40 listed service providers, about one-third of them were SMEs.

Council meetings

14.   At the Council meetings on 20 November 2013, 26 February, 26 March and 30 April 2014, Hon CHAN Hak-kan, Hon Charles Peter MOK and Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT raised questions, among others, the enhancement of the Gov*WiFi* services, the application of digital certificates for e-Government services as well as the policies and measures to help SMEs adopt ICT.

Recent development

15.   At the special Finance Committee meeting to examine the Estimates of Expenditure 2014-2015 on 2 April 2014, Hon Charles Peter MOK enquired about the public sector information released for public consumption in machine-readable digital formats by various B/Ds.   Hon CHAN Chi-chuen also enquired about the support provided by the OGCIO to B/Ds in the development of mobile applications for e-Government services, and the measures to improve the cost-effectiveness of the mobile applications.

16.   The Administration advised that since 2011, it had made available public sector information for free-of-charge re-use through the portal Data.One (data.one.gov.hk).   So far, the portal had provided over 2,000 datasets under 15 categories.   The Administration also advised that the OGCIO provided technical support and assisted B/Ds in launching mobile applications for delivering e-services.   OGCIO would also provide funding support for development of mobile applications by B/Ds for application costing from $150,000 to $10 million.   OGCIO regularly monitored the download rates, hit rates and transaction records of the mobile applications, and would advise B/Ds on measures to improve the usage rates of the mobile applications.

Latest position

17.   The Administration will update the Panel on 9 June 2014 on the latest progress on e-Government development, and the Administration's plans and measures to support B/Ds to achieve their policy objectives and initiatives through wider and better adoption of ICT.

Relevant papers

18.   A list of the relevant papers with their hyperlinks is at

http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/itb/papers/itb_eb.htm
http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/fc/fc/w_q/cedb-ct-e.pdf
http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/question/ques1314.htm#toptbl

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