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Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

Meeting on 8 June 2015

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. The new "Smarter Hong Kong, Smarter Living" Strategy sets out the framework for Hong Kong to leverage on new technologies to propel continuous economic and social development on various fronts, and to deliver intuitive and integrated e-services to the public with a view to fostering a thriving information and communications technology ("ICT") industry.

3. In 2013-2014, 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) Government cloud platform ("GovCloud");
- (b) development of cloud-based common shared services;
- (c) E-Government Infrastructure Service ("EGIS");
- (d) New Government data centre complex ("the Complex");
- (e) mobile version of the "MyGovHK" portal;
- (f) mobile e-Government services;
- (g) utilization of e-Government services and web accessibility;
and
- (h) Government-wide release of public sector information.

Previous discussions

4. Members generally supported the development of e-Government in Hong Kong when the implementation of the e-Government services was raised at the meetings of the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting ("the Panel"), the Finance Committee ("FC") and the Council. Members consider that the Administration should put in place key performance indicators or objective targets to better track the progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the e-Government services.

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Government cloud platform and e-Government infrastructure services platform

5. At the Panel meeting on 9 June 2014, some members enquired about the progress of developing and promoting the use of cloud computing by government bureaux/departments ("B/Ds") and whether any study was conducted on the benefits of using the GovCloud. The Administration advised that GovCloud was launched to support hosting of common e-Government services for shared use by B/Ds, such as Electronic Recordkeeping System, e-Procurement System and Government Human Resources Management Services. The new EGIS was also rolled out in

April 2013 to host 110 additional e-Government services progressively on top of the 118 e-Government services in the former platform.

6. The Administration supplemented that external cloud platforms maintained by contractors were also available to support certain B/Ds' operations such as collaborative workspace, servers for websites, video conferencing systems and office automation. New e-Government services would be recommended to be incorporated into GovCloud, if appropriate. In addition, a study on the development of an "Enterprise Architecture" for the Government was being conducted with a view to stepping up the utilization of government cloud platforms.

Support to small and medium enterprises, mobile version of the "MyGovHK" portal and public sector information

7. At the policy briefing of the Panel on 19 January 2015, the Panel noted that the Administration had been implementing various programmes since 2004 to encourage small and medium enterprises ("SMEs") to take advantage of ICT to enhance efficiency and productivity. In 2014, the Administration had provided funding support to the security industry to implement a "Security Cloud Human Resources Management System" under the Sector-specific Programme for paperless recruitment and other human resources management work. The project commenced in August 2014 and would be completed by end 2015.

8. The Panel also noted that the Administration had launched the InfoCloud portal and published a practice guide for procuring cloud services to provide SMEs with information on cloud computing, user guides and best practices. To drive the adoption of cloud computing services among SMEs, the Administration launched a "SME Cloud Promotion Campaign" in December 2014, providing free training and organizing promotional activities to enhance SMEs' awareness and understanding of cloud computing services.

9. On the "MyGovHK" portal, the Panel noted that the number of accounts on MyGovHK, the personalized platform on the Government's one-stop portal, had continued to grow since its launch in December 2010, reaching 187 000 in December 2013 and over 250 000 in December 2014. To enhance user experience and meet the ever-increasing demand of the public for mobile services, the mobile version of MyGovHK was developed and launched in September 2014. As at 31 December 2014,

there were 96 Government mobile applications ("apps") and 71 mobile websites. The Administration would continue to support B/Ds to develop quality mobile e-government services leveraging on the unique capabilities of mobile technology.

10. The Panel was also informed that the Data.One public sector information ("PSI") portal (<http://data.one.gov.hk>) provided some 3 000 datasets in 17 categories for free re-use. To fully tap the potential of PSI, the Administration would make available all open government data in digital format from 2015 onwards and work closely with B/Ds in releasing data on the PSI portal for digital re-use.

New Government data centre complex

11. At the Panel meeting on 8 December 2014, members supported in principle the funding proposal to conduct pre-construction consultancy services for carrying out the design and site investigation for the construction works of the Complex, amounting to \$52.6 million in money-of-the-day prices, subject to the approval of FC in mid 2015. Noting that some B/Ds would continue to use existing government data centres and outsourced data centre services upon completion of the Complex, some members expressed concern whether the Government's objectives in building the Complex could be met. Some other members expressed concern about the construction plans and estimated construction cost of the Complex which were not provided by the Administration.

12. The Administration advised that the Complex would replace existing government data centres with relocation needs, accommodate new service requirements that could not be handled by existing data centres and accommodate data centre services for B/Ds which needed to switch their IT operations from outsourced data centres to government data centres. The Administration would co-ordinate the data centre needs of B/Ds and encourage them to join the Complex. On the estimated construction cost, the Administration explained that prior to the completion of the pre-construction consultancy services, it would be difficult to give an estimate on the construction cost of the Complex. The Administration assured members that the proposed building cost for the Complex would be provided when seeking funding approval from FC for the actual construction works.

Utilization of e-Government services and web accessibility

13. At the Panel meeting on 9 June 2014, some members opined that the progress of e-Government development in Hong Kong was slow and certain e-Government services were neither user-friendly nor convenient to the public. Some other members expressed concern that certain B/Ds had encountered difficulties in solving financial and legal issues involving in new e-Government services and in developing Application Programming Interfaces for making their data available to the public. They urged the Administration to enhance the internal support and communication among B/Ds in this respect.

14. The Administration advised that the departments concerned had greatly improved the interface design and user experience to encourage wider use of e-Government services. Under the new Digital 21 Strategy, the Administration proposed to work with the relevant parties to facilitate the provision of free digital certificates to all Hong Kong citizens, thus unlocking the potential of digital identity and enabling the public to use online services requiring authentication and signature in a safe and secure manner. The Administration would coordinate effort and support among B/Ds to resolve difficulties they encountered involving new e-Government services.

15. Some members enquired about the number of downloads, the overall utilization publicity programmes and the contents of the apps launched by the Administration for the use by the public. Some other members enquired about the progress of measures to facilitate persons with disabilities to access online information and services.

16. The Administration advised that mobile apps served as platforms to provide useful information, such as news about weather, traffic, food and safety, etc. Certain apps were developed to serve specific needy groups and the number of downloads was not substantial. The Administration had published a booklet and produced a video to promote these apps to the public and would step up its publicity effort in this respect. The Administration further advised that web accessibility had been incorporated in all government websites with 90% enhanced to comply with the Level AA of the latest version (Version 2.0) of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines promulgated by the World Wide Web Consortium. The remaining websites would be enhanced to comply with the standard in 2014-2015.

Government WiFi programmes

17. At the Panel meeting on 9 June 2014, members expressed concern about the coverage of Government Wi-Fi ("GovWiFi") service and urged the Administration to increase the coverage of public Wi-Fi services so as to further advance Hong Kong's position as a highly connected city. Some members relayed the concern of the Wi-Fi service providers about the difficulty encountered when making use of lamp posts for the installation of Wi-Fi equipments to provide public Wi-Fi services.

18. According to the Administration, it regularly monitored the service quality of GovWiFi with clear targets to extend the coverage of the service which was currently provided at some 450 Government premises with 2 300 hotspots. By 2015, the service would extend to 600 Government premises with 3 000 hotspots. With the concerted efforts of the industry and the Government, it was estimated that the number of public Wi-Fi hotspots would be doubled from currently 10 000 to 20 000 by the end of 2014. To make it easier for the public and visitors to access free public Wi-Fi service in Hong Kong, a common Wi-Fi Branding, "Wi-Fi.HK" providing completely free or time-limited free of charge service, was launched in June 2014 in 3 700 Wi-Fi hotspots and would be extended to 6 000 Wi-Fi hotspots in 2014.

Finance Committee

19. At the special FC meeting to examine the Estimates of Expenditure 2015-2016 on 30 March 2015, Hon SIN Chung-kai, Hon WONG Ting-kwong and Hon WONG Yuk-man enquired about the percentage of government premises with GovWiFi services coverage, the measures taken to expedite the provision of the service to the public and the estimated expenditure for providing GovWiFi services in 2015-2016. Hon CHAN Chi-chuen also enquired about the support provided by the Administration to B/Ds in the development of apps for e-government services.

20. The Administration advised that as at February 2015, over 2 900 Wi-Fi hotspots had been installed at a total of 513 government premises in the 18 districts across the territory under the GovWiFi for free use by the public and visitors. Premises with higher coverage include community halls/centres (about 90%), cooked food markets/centres, sports venues as well as cultural and recreational centres (about 60% for each). The Administration would further extend the GovWiFi services to about 80

more government premises in 2015-2016. About 200 additional hotspots would be provided and the estimated expenditure involved was around \$2.8 million. The total estimated expenditure for providing GovWiFi services in 2015-2016 was around \$9.2 million.

21. The Administration further advised that it had implemented different measures to enhance support for B/Ds in developing user-friendly apps that catered for their needs, including organizing thematic seminars to update departments on the latest development and functions of mobile technology so that they could make beneficial use of it, beefing up the practice guide to assist departments in developing apps that were more convenient to use, and providing practical application templates for common apps features (such as version update and use of Global Positioning System) for departments' use and reference.

Latest position

22. The Administration will update the Panel on 8 June 2015 on the latest progress of e-Government development, and the Administration's initiatives to support B/Ds to achieve their policy objectives and initiatives through wider and better adoption of ICT.

Relevant papers

23. 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/yr15-16/english/panels/itb/papers/itb_gp.htm

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/panels/itb/minutes/itb20140609.pdf>

http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/fc/fc/w_q/cedb-ct-e.pdf

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