

Executive Summary

To ensure Hong Kong's ability to compete and succeed in the global information economy, we need to implement effective short and medium term measures to address market requirements for IT skills, and to adopt longer term, sustainable solutions to develop a skilled IT workforce for the future.



An estimated 61,000 people were engaged in IT-related work in Hong Kong as at March 2000. And IT professionals are required not only in the IT industry but in almost every other sector of the economy. This has led to a shortfall in IT manpower supply that has become a global phenomenon. There is an estimated global deficit of 500,000 IT-related jobs that is forecast to grow to one million next year, and demand may outstrip supply by as much as 20% within five years.

The Government has recognised the importance of providing an adequate supply of quality IT manpower. We are fully committed to building an IT-savvy workforce to sustain the development of our information economy. We have identified this as a strategic area we need to focus on in the 2001 Digital 21 IT Strategy.



The Government has consistently made substantial investments in education and training. Excellent foundations in basic education are laid by implementing a visionary 5-year strategy for IT in education. Tertiary institutions have responded positively to market demand and introduced various IT curricula at degree level or above. Five thousand graduates from IT and related disciplines are expected to enter the IT workforce each year. Vocational training, employees retraining and industry support bodies now provide a wide range of IT programmes below degree level. We estimate that there will be over 3,000 IT personnel with sub-degree qualifications each year for entering into the workforce for IT-related employment.

To support life-long IT learning, which is crucial in a knowledge-based economy, there is a wide spectrum of continuing and professional education programmes provided by publicly funded bodies, local commercial training institutions, and overseas institutions operating in Hong Kong.

All of these initiatives complement one another and provide a full range of training opportunities from basic education to life-long learning.





The **Task Force on IT Manpower** has examined the situation in Hong Kong and elsewhere, and recommended a package of immediate and longer term measures on how best to bridge the gap between supply and demand. These measures are :

- Implement the scheme to admit Mainland IT professionals.
- Streamline the admission regime for overseas IT professionals.
- Expand post-secondary programme.
- Encourage world-renowned private IT training institutions to operate in Hong Kong.
- Implement an academic plan in the Cyberport to develop professional IT talent.
- Accredite IT skills below degree level.
- Encourage Hong Kong and Mainland talent overseas to work here.
- Intensify exchange/internship programme with emphasis on IT and improve the standard of English through immersion.
- Collaborate with the industry to provide professional IT training for secondary students.
- Enhance output of university graduates in IT and related disciplines and increase IT content in both IT and non-IT disciplines.
- Promote and accept credit transfer/exemption in universities for IT-related disciplines.
- Set up corporate schools in IT field in collaboration with the industry.
- Explore the feasibility of establishing a community IT college.

The **Task Force on IT Manpower** considers the implementation of these measures crucial to help strengthen IT manpower supply for sustaining our development in the global information economy. But Government's efforts alone will not be sufficient. This also involves the industry, business sector, academic institutions, industry support bodies and the community as a whole. We must work hand in hand together to build an IT-savvy workforce for Hong Kong.

