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Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

Meeting on 20 March 2023

**Updated background brief on upgrade of “iAM Smart”
to realize “single portal for online government services”**

Purpose

This paper provides updated background information on the upgrade of “iAM Smart” to realize “single portal for online government services”. It also summarizes the views and concerns expressed by Members during discussions of the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting (“the Panel”) and the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to the Development of Smart City (“the Subcommittee”) on relevant issues in recent years.

Background

2. The Chief Executive announced in the 2022 Policy Address to build a smart government, and compel all government departments to fully adopt “iAM Smart” to provide one-stop digital services by 2025, so as to realize “single portal for online government services”.

3. The “iAM Smart” platform allows members of the public to use more than 220 government and commercial online services, conduct online transactions, perform digital signing with legal backing, etc. Through the “e-ME” service of “iAM Smart”, the public can store their commonly used personal data and address¹ in advance so that they do not have to provide or fill in the same data repeatedly when using online services provided by the Government, public and private organizations in the future. Also, the infrastructure for verifying user’s identity has been established in “iAM

¹ Information extracted from the [press release issued on 31 October 2022](#): In December 2021, “e-ME” added a new address data function, which enables the public to store the utility bills for water, electricity and gas services as address proofs.

Smart” and the Immigration Department’s computer system, which facilitates the identity verification of members of the public.

4. To further facilitate members of the public in using “iAM Smart”, the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (“OGCIO”) has launched the chatbot service Bonny on “iAM Smart” to help the public search for government forms and services. A number of briefing sessions were also held to introduce to the public the functions of “iAM Smart” and to demonstrate how it could be operated. According to OGCIO, “iAM Smart” will be optimized based on public needs, allowing government departments to integrate their existing online services in a more convenient manner, simplify the workflows and develop more services that can bring convenience to the public. Ultimately, citizens will be able to enjoy various government online services more conveniently and swiftly.

5. Regarding the development of innovative services, OGCIO is currently implementing a Consented Data Exchange Gateway (“CDEG”). Members of the public may opt for authorizing the exchange of their personal data among relevant government departments by means of data interchange through the systems, thus dispensing with the processes of entering the data repeatedly. To pave the way for data interchange between financial institutions and government departments, CDEG will also be linked with the Commercial Data Interchange (“CDI”) which is being developed by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (“HKMA”). HKMA is now working with individual government departments (such as the Companies Registry) on the detailed arrangement for data interchange.

6. In order to encourage private organizations to adopt “iAM Smart”, the Administration advised that a proactive approach would be adopted by providing programming training to facilitate the industry to adopt “iAM Smart”. In 2020, OGCIO launched the “iAM Smart” sandbox programme in collaboration with Cyberport to enable public and private organizations to conduct Proof-of-Concept (“PoC”) tests and develop application solutions adopting “iAM Smart”.

7. To align with the development in the Greater Bay Area and to promote cross-boundary e-Government services, OGCIO is exploring with the Government Services and Data Management Bureau of Guangdong Province in the use of “iAM Smart” as one of the means for real-name identity authentication on the “Unified Identity Authentication Platform of Guangdong Province”. This will enable Hong Kong residents to use “iAM Smart” to authenticate themselves when registering and using the government services of Guangdong Province.

Members' major views and concerns

8. During the 2022 session, the Administration has briefed the Panel on the developments of the “iAM Smart” platform and e-Government services. At its meeting on 31 January 2023, the Subcommittee followed up with the Administration on the development of Smart Government. The major views and concerns expressed by Members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.²

“iAM Smart” registration and usage

9. Expressing concern about the small number of registered users of “iAM Smart+”, Members asked how the Administration would assess whether the “iAM Smart” platform had achieved the desired effects and enhanced users' experience, as well as whether innovative online services would be developed on the “iAM Smart” platform to boost public usage.

10. As advised by the Administration, more than 220 online services of the Government, public and private organizations were currently accessible through “iAM Smart”, such as online services of the two electricity and gas companies, the online policy application of an insurance company and other banking services. It was expected that the online versions of all government services involving identity authentication and digital signing would be introduced through the “iAM Smart” platform in the next two years. On the development of innovative services, OGCIO was in the course of developing CDEG, which allowed members of the public to opt for authorizing the sharing of their personal data among relevant government departments by means of data interchange through the systems. Also, OGCIO indicated that it would progressively extend the sandbox programme to more sectors in order to promote different industries to develop more innovative online services with “iAM Smart”.

“iAM Smart” Reward Scheme

11. Noting the launch of the “iAM Smart” Reward Scheme by the Administration in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Members questioned its effectiveness. There was also a suggestion that the Administration should provide rebate to the public using the cost savings arising from the implementation of the “iAM Smart” platform. The Administration replied that the “iAM Smart” Reward Scheme had already attracted thousands of

² The funding proposal for Capital Works Reserve Fund Head 710 “Computerization” ([FCR\(2018-199\)](#)) was approved by the Finance Committee on 4 May 2018, which was passed by the Legislative Council on 11 May 2018.

new registrations. Given the complicated nature of the rebate proposal, the Administration had to discuss with the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau whether it was feasible to do so.

Protecting the public's privacy

12. Members expressed concerns about how the Administration would protect the privacy of the public. In this regard, there was a suggestion that the Administration should devise measures for two-factor authentication to enable authentication of user identity during logins to the "iAM Smart" platform. The Administration explained that in registering an account with "iAM Smart", users were required to scan the front side of their Hong Kong Identity Cards ("HKIDs") from three different angles to allow the system to verify the authenticity of the identity cards. Users were also required to verify their identity by going through specific actions, and a two-factor authentication would be adopted for any future logins by users. The Administration would plan for additional authentication features having regard to users' needs.

13. Members enquired whether the biometric data, such as a photograph of HKID and a self-portrait digital photograph, would be uploaded onto the server during user registration. The Administration advised that the system would verify the applicant's identity against the records of the Immigration Department. The HKID photograph and self-portrait digital photograph provided by the applicant during registration for "iAM Smart" would be deleted immediately after verification of the user's identity. Other personal information provided during registration would only be used for "iAM Smart" account management. User data would be encrypted and stored in government data centres.

Strengthening the promotion of "iAM Smart"

14. To facilitate wider adoption of "iAM Smart", Members asked the Administration to step up the promotion of "iAM Smart". Members also suggested the Administration to provide registration service to residents during the territory-wide identity card replacement exercise, or require mobile phones manufacturers to pre-install the "iAM Smart" mobile application ("app") in the devices sold in Hong Kong. Members considered that the Administration could deploy volunteer teams in the 18 districts to assist the public in registering for "iAM Smart", and to streamline the registration procedures for "iAM Smart+".

15. On promotional efforts, Members suggested that the Administration should work out different promotional strategies targeting specific groups (e.g. housewives, students, working people, the civil service and the elderly)

or different age groups. Members observed that while there were numerous mobile apps which provide information on education and further education, they were largely scattered. They suggested that the “iAM Smart” platform should provide relevant links to those mobile apps and websites.

16. As advised by the Administration, OGCI had stepped up publicity to promote “iAM Smart” through various channels, including staging roving exhibitions in major shopping malls, as well as disseminating promotional videos on “iAM Smart” through the thematic website (iamsmart.gov.hk) and various media platforms (e.g. social platforms). In addition, more than 10 mobile registration teams were deployed to venues such as community vaccination centres, licensing offices of the Transport Department and libraries to assist the public in registering for “iAM Smart”. Consideration would also be given to deploying mobile registration teams at Smart Identity Card Replacement Centres to facilitate registration of “iAM Smart” by members of the public, as well as arranging for the pre-installation of the “iAM Smart” mobile app. Meanwhile, the Administration was considering increasing the number of self-registration kiosks.

Implementation of the business version of “iAM Smart”

17. Members expressed concern about the progress of the Administration’s implementation of the business version of “iAM Smart”. The Administration advised that OGCI, in conjunction with HKMA, had completed the first phase of PoC trials and research on the business version of “iAM Smart”. At present, the Government was taking the second phase forward with the commencement of a study on the digital identity of enterprises, which would be applied to CDI.

18. On the adoption of “iAM Smart” in the public and private sectors, Members were concerned that only some 10 public and private organizations had adopted “iAM Smart” to access their online services. They enquired about the difficulties encountered by private organizations interested in using the “iAM Smart” platform. The Administration explained that for some of the more complicated online services, institutions (such as banks) required a longer period of time (around a few months to a year) to perform tests prior to the launch of these services on the “iAM Smart” platform. With greater participation of organizations from different sectors in conducting tests on the application programming interfaces, the Government believed that more and more public and private organizations would join the platform, making the use of “iAM Smart” increasingly attractive.

Cross-boundary e-Government services

19. As regards the provision of cross-boundary e-Government services,

Members enquired about the implementation progress and timetable of the “Unified Identity Authentication Platform of Guangdong Province”, and whether the authorization from members of the public would be required for the use of their personal data. Questions were also raised as to whether the public could go through the processing of travel documents in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area cities in the Mainland or handle daily affairs through the use of “iAM Smart”. The Administration replied that OGCIO was exploring with the Government Services and Data Management Bureau of Guangdong Province in the use of “iAM Smart” as one of the means for real-name identity authentication on the “Unified Identity Authentication Platform of Guangdong Province”. This would enable Hong Kong residents to use “iAM Smart” to authenticate themselves when registering and using the government services of Guangdong Province.

“Single portal for online government services”

20. Members asked whether there was a need for bureaux/departments (“B/Ds”) to upgrade their respective computer systems to enable the “single portal for online government services” to be operational. They also enquired whether the objective of promoting the development of Smart Government could not be achieved if the funding for the Administration to upgrade “iAM Smart” was approved but individual departments would not upgrade their existing systems. The Administration advised that new project proposals submitted by B/Ds would be vetted by OGCIO, and priority would be given to projects that were related to system modifications and upgrade to support the “iAM Smart” services platform. It was the Administration’s plan to fully implement “single portal for online government services” within three years, so that government departments would be allowed to integrate their existing online services with “iAM Smart”, simplify the workflows and develop more services that would bring convenience to the public in the future.

21. Some Members were of the view that the Administration should enact legislation to facilitate the development of digital economy and e-Government (including “single portal for online government services”), in order to enhance governance. The Administration responded that the direction of implementing Smart Government initiatives at this stage was to push government to upgrade their systems to consolidate existing online services. Legal constraints did not cause hindrance to the implementation of e-Government services among various government departments, and where necessary, government departments would be asked to explore timely updating of statutory provisions that hindered the development of e-Government services in the future.

Relevant questions raised at Council meetings

22. Members raised questions on the “iAM Smart” platform and e-Government services at various Council meetings in recent years. The hyperlinks to the relevant questions and the Administration’s replies are in the **Appendix**.

Latest development

23. The Administration will update the Panel on the proposed upgrade of “iAM Smart” to realize “single portal for online government services” at the meeting on 20 March 2023.

Relevant papers

24. A list of relevant papers is set out in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
14 March 2023

**Upgrade of “iAM Smart”
to realize “single portal for online government services”**

List of relevant papers

A. Questions raised at the Legislative Council meetings

Date	Legislative Council Question
27 February 2019	<u>Question No. 11—Making use of next generation government cloud infrastructure</u>
17 April 2019	<u>Question No. 15—Implementation of electronic identity system</u>
29 May 2019	<u>Question No. 15—Application of blockchain technology</u>
3 June 2020	<u>Question No. 11—Application of technology in efforts to combat COVID-19 pandemic</u>
17 June 2020	<u>Question No. 8—Smart Government Innovation Lab</u>
20 January 2021	<u>Question No. 20—Smart Government</u>
14 July 2021	<u>Question No. 18—“iAM Smart” mobile application</u>
18 August 2021	<u>Question No. 13—Development of “Smart Government”</u>
8 June 2022	<u>Question No. 5—“iAM Smart” platform</u>
11 January 2023	<u>Question No. 5—“LeaveHomeSafe” mobile application</u>

B. Other papers

Date of meeting	Meeting	Paper
12 March 2018	Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting	<p>Administration's paper on the key infrastructure projects for smart city development LC Paper No. CB(4)701/17-18(03)</p> <p>Administration's response to issues raised at the meeting LC Paper No. CB(4)1051/17-18(01)</p> <p>Minutes of meeting LC Paper No. CB(4)1197/17-18</p>
11 May 2018	Finance Committee	<p>Administration's paper FCR(2018-19)9</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (paragraphs 22-49) LC Paper No. FC9/18-19</p>
9 July 2018	Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting	<p>Administration's paper on e-Government LC Paper No. CB(4)1337/17-18(03)</p> <p>Updated background brief LC Paper No. CB(4)1337/17-18(04)</p> <p>Minutes of meeting LC Paper No. CB(4)1596/17-18</p>
10 May 2019	Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting	<p>Administration's paper on electronic identity LC Paper No. CB(1)1020/18-19(03)</p> <p>Background brief on electronic identity project LC Paper No. CB(1)1020/18-19(04)</p> <p>Minutes of meeting LC Paper No. CB(1)1290/18-19</p>

Date of meeting	Meeting	Paper
10 June 2019	Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting	<p>Administration’s paper on e-Government services LC Paper No. CB(1)1135/18-19(03)</p> <p>Updated background brief on e-Government development LC Paper No. CB(1)1135/18-19(04)</p> <p>Minutes of meeting LC Paper No. CB(1)1327/18-19</p>
8 June 2020	Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting	<p>Administration’s paper on launching of “iAM Smart” platform and other digital government service initiatives LC Paper No. CB(1)710/19-20(04)</p> <p>Updated background brief on e-Government development LC Paper No. CB(1)710/19-20(05)</p> <p>Minutes of meeting LC Paper No. CB(1)919/19-20</p>
15 June 2021	Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting	<p>Administration’s paper on progress on the implementation of the “iAM Smart” platform and e-Government services LC Paper No. (1)984/20-21(03)</p> <p>Updated background brief on the implementation of the “iAM Smart” platform and e-Government services LC Paper No. (1)984/20-21(04)</p> <p>Administration’s response to issues raised at the meeting LC Paper No. CB(1)1120/20-21(01)</p> <p>Minutes of meeting LC Paper No. 1258/20-21</p>

Date of meeting	Meeting	Paper
10 October 2022	Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting	Administration's paper on progress on the implementation of the "iAM Smart" platform and e-Government services LC Paper No. CB(1)654/2022(02) Updated background brief on the implementation of the "iAM Smart" platform and e-Government services LC Paper No. CB(1)654/2022(03) Minutes of meeting LC Paper No. CB(1)703/2022
31 January 2023	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to the Development of Smart City	Administration's paper on update on the implementation of Smart Government LC Paper No. CB(1)60/2023(01) Minutes of meeting LC Paper No. CB(1)147/2023