

Feedback on draft 2007 Digital 21 Strategy Consultation Paper

“Advancing our achievements and seizing new opportunities: building on Hong Kong’s position as a world digital city”.

Page 4 and Page 19 (Chapter 4.2)

(i) Promoting advanced technology and innovation

“We will strengthen Cyberport and the Science Park, with their technological talent and excellent infrastructure, as hubs for innovation and technology”

Page 16 and Page 19 (Chapter 4.3)

“In order to spearhead the development and application of advanced technology in the knowledge-based era, the Government will continue to demonstrate its support of advanced technology by providing financial assistance for R&D and innovative work and facilitate their wider application and commercialization”.

1. Feedback:

We recommend that Key Performance Indicators measured may be published to help the understanding of the importance of ITF and other R&D and result of various such initiatives. The key is to encourage commercialization in Hong Kong or elsewhere. Government may seek cooperation from other countries / bodies in actively promoting to enhance the Return on Investment on these R&D projects.

Page 15 (Chapter 3.2)

“The Government will continue to invest in IT to support and improve our operations. Over \$5.2 billion was earmarked for IT spending³, in the 2006/07 financial year. The outsourcing policy applies not only to new Government IT projects⁴, but also application maintenance and system management and operations⁵”

³ This is the amount of IT expenditure of the entire Government machinery, including the Housing Authority, Hospital Authority and subvented schools.

⁴ About 93% in value of our new IT projects in 2005-06 were outsourced.

⁵ The hosting services for departmental information systems of the Central Computer Centre, for example, have been outsourced since June 2006.

Page 25 Chapter 4.9.4 Software development and packaging

“The Government encourages continuous improvement in the capabilities of the software industry so as to enhance its competitiveness in Mainland, regional and overseas markets. The Government will support its e-government contractors in

developing a local centre of excellence through setting high standards of professional, managerial and technical practices. Through a pilot scheme of opening up the intellectual property in Government IT systems, IT suppliers will be able to exploit the intellectual property commercially to demonstrate their expertise and excellence in new markets. The ongoing efforts of the Government in promoting the adoption of open and interoperable standards create cross-technology platforms and cross-market development opportunities. Various government funding schemes are available to support industry initiatives in this area.”

2. Feedback:

It is laudable that Government encourages Outsourcing and thus creating more job opportunities. However many of the local smaller ISVs (less than 25 staff) will agree with us that we do not have the opportunity to participate in these projects due to the size and stringent procedures involved. It may be a good idea to publish this statistics about number of ISVs (around 500) and number of ISVs participated in Government projects (directly and indirectly separately)

We recommend that Government may create a Minority ISVs category and identify projects with minimal risk to be assigned to these ISVs on a rotational basis without going through longer Tender Cycles.

Alternatively this may be done through larger Contractors to identify smaller projects within big projects to achieve the above said concept.

Firstly this will provide opportunity for smaller ISVs to participate in the Government Projects.

Secondly this will allow to create a ranking of these smaller ISVs based on various KPA say Quality of Delivery (code), Number of Bugs during UAT, Domain Knowledge, Technical Capability, Response time and others (essentially improving the overall Professional Quality).

Thirdly it may be possible to improve efficiency through simple procedure for some projects.

Finally great reduction of tax payers money may be achieved as some of the solutions may be technically capable and robust at a much lower cost including implementation to achieve the same result compared to solutions implemented through Tendering as well as saving in terms of cost of tendering which require lot of manpower and longer timelines.

Government also can ensure some of the R&D and other Technology Fund reaches these Minority Group and encourages University Industry Participation through these ISVs. Specifics of this need to be carefully devised to ensure proper Governance.

Page 25 (Chapter 4.9.4)

"In consultation with the ICT industry, the Science Park will explore the setting up of an IT Outsourcing Centre under its Phase Two development in response to market needs. The Centre is expected to support commercialization and export of software products developed by local and Mainland software developers and offshore outsourcing".

3. Feedback:

We recommend that a portal be created for Outsourcing Project Opportunities. This could be done through the existing IT Solutions Directory. Government may generate more leads from Private sector as well as abroad for such pure Offshore/Offsite Outsourcing Projects (not for Onsite placement services). This can also be linked to the Feedback (2) above to encourage ISVs participation.

The other area Government need to focus is to improve the usage of English in the community as most of the Outsourcing Projects it is one of the key factors. To make it more practical use of English in the Government need to be encouraged (at-least in some departments or on some specific days) and wherever possible employing English Speaking staff without affecting the quality of service and by giving choice to public to encourage the use of English. In our opinion most of the Students in schools and Universities do study in English but usually refrain from speaking in English to avoid embarrassment.

Government can be a catalyst to create acceptable atmosphere. No amount of Advertising will change the attitude unless a proper atmosphere is created. Again KPI needs to be established to monitor the progress. It is not a debate about Mother Tongue or Second Language. Personally I encourage learning Cantonese and Mandarin. However since it has been identified to improve the standards of English, ways and means should be created to achieve that. Digital Strategy can address this to create a platform.

Page 16

“Reviewing the experience gained in the implementation of existing electronic services, the Government will set the agenda for a deepened e-government programme with increasing interface with citizens and business, thereby encouraging migration to the electronic channel”

4. Feedback:

We suggest that number of online enquiries received and the response time for each of the Government Department is put online and encourage the public to use this service by comparing with other channel to show the effectiveness of ICT.

Also as a standard, acknowledgement should be generated to give feedback to public who enquire through email to generate trust and confidence.

IP based Teleconference platform may be created to encourage public participation through online face to face enquiries.

Page 40 *Electronic procurement Chapter 6.9*

“Another example of e-government initiatives is our plan to embark on pilot electronic procurement (e-procurement) projects in a number of departments that will pave the way for further roll-out to other parts of the Government. The pilot project involves automation of the internal workflow, development of a procurement portal for knowledge-sharing within Government and information exchange between Government and suppliers, as well as e-catalogue and e-sourcing functions. Once the pilot projects are completed in 2009 as planned, a review will be conducted to prepare for extension to all bureaus and departments. We believe that progressive adoption of e-procurement in the Government will encourage private sector suppliers, including SMEs, to migrate to electronic commerce, thereby generating fundamental changes to their internal processes and competitiveness. Support programmes will be conducted to introduce skills and technology to SMEs to aid the migration process.

5. Feedback:

This is an excellent idea to create opportunity for different departments to share knowledge. Government may also consider to share the same application in different departments within Government. Since Government is already buying the source code in many of the cases it may make sense to re-deploy if it is feasible to avoid duplicating the entire effort. This may work in conjunction with the Chapter 4.9.4 Software Development and Packaging related to standards and Intellectual Property Rights.

This also paves way for adoption of Software as a Service (SaaS) within the Government Sector for pay as you use model.

E-learning platform may be created for more knowledge sharing and training of various skills within the Government.

Page 42 Electronic health records (chapter 6.12)

“Over the years, we have developed an enviable healthcare system in Hong Kong, but these services require a substantial commitment of resources. While further work is being done to explore a more viable long-term financial framework, there is a parallel need to review the existing healthcare system, taking into account the changing needs and expectations of the community, as well as the challenges we are facing in relation to the ageing population and the risk of communicable diseases”

6. Feedback:

There is a great need for integrating the General Practitioners and Specialists with the Health Care system. Without violating any Security and Privacy issues this can be achieved to monitor the public care by simply ensuring doctors send the necessary data to a central repository ideally real time otherwise offline. Centre for Disease Control (CDC) may also benefit in getting the information to report to WHO or other agencies. During the Past SARs situation this would have been handy to quickly notice and raise alarm that particular Doctor was getting abnormal rate of patients with similar symptoms or any other such criteria.

This data may be also used to analyze lost productivity to through Doctor visits and nature of common symptoms and others.

Digital strategy may also address impact of Telemedicine and legal framework to make this happen.

General Suggestions:

OGCIO may create more opportunity for regular feedbacks on various Specific issues from General Public, Experts and Firms on an individual basis through the www.gov.hk portal. Public community may be encouraged to express their opinions on selected topics more actively through secured login.

OGCIO being a central information centre for the public can also get feedback on various advertisements being rolled out to see the impact to encourage active ICT usage.

Thank you and we hope we have made some value addition to this consultation paper.