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Office of the Government Chief Information Officer
Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau
2/F Murray Building
Garden Road
Hong Kong

Dear Sirs,

Public Consultation on Digital 21 Strategy

We refer to the captioned consultation paper (“Paper”) and would like to submit herewith our comments from the perspective of a logistics industry player.

The Paper outlines what the Government intends to do in the next few years in a continuous effort to develop Hong Kong into a leading digital city.

Of relevance to the logistics industry is the establishment of a R&D Centre for Logistics and Supply Chain Management Enabling Technologies with an objective of “harnessing technology to further drive efficiency and quality services in order to maintain HK’s status as a major regional port.” The main technology identified for R&D is RFID, and the Government’s major efforts will be to develop RFID tag and reader technologies, networking and infrastructure technologies, and applications and decision support technologies. It also intends to develop unified standards across Hong Kong and Pearl River Delta.

According to the Paper, the Government’s role (which has not changed from the past) is to provide the needed infrastructure, establish policy framework and regulatory environment, and support (fund) pilot projects. OBTIS is mentioned as a project supporting logistics initiatives, using RFID and GPS.

While we appreciate the Government taking the lead in defining the technology roadmap and in funding pilot projects, we would like to see the Government also playing a more active role in supporting private sector initiatives aiming at improving Hong Kong’s competitiveness through technological applications.

In the past year or so, the terminal operators, together with Oneport Ltd., have started a number of initiatives to try to improve the efficiency of the Hong Kong port. These include projects like eTR, Barge Community Platform, Green Lane and Road Manifest. We are disappointed to see that the Government has not been able to take a more supportive role in

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these initiatives. In the case of eTR, the community users understand very well the benefits of the new system, but some of them are unwilling to pay the small fees for the services. The Government instead of encouraging the community to use eTR, has in fact set hurdles for its roll out by demanding that an unanimous agreement has to be reached regarding any fee charges.

We hope that in defining its Digital 21 Strategy, the Government can take into considerations projects initiated by the private sectors, and be ready to support and fund those projects that are in line with the Government's strategic directions. We propose that a screening mechanism be installed allowing the Government to identify and sponsor private sector technological initiatives based on an evaluation process performed by the coordinated effort of a cross functional team that include industrial domain experts. We believe that, by doing so, the Government would speed up the digital evolution of the society and would see a higher rate of success.