

**Minutes of the 22nd Meeting of the
Joint Committee on Information Technology (JCIT)
for the Social Welfare Sector held on 27 September 2012**

Present : Mr Fung Pak-yan (Chairperson on behalf of Mr Patrick Nip)
Miss Sheila Kong
Mr Pang Hon-chi
Mrs Paula Leung
Mr Billy Tang
Mr Joseph Man
Mr James Leung
Dr Edith Mok
Prof Helen Meng
Dr Ting Wai-fong
Dr Ng Nam
Mr Dirk Fung (Secretary)

Absent with apologies : Ms Patty Wong

In attendance : Mr Kok Che-leung
Mrs Sarah Choy
Mr Timothy Cheng
Mr Leung Pui-kei
Dr Law Chi-kwong (for agenda item 4 only)
Dr Wong Yu-cheung (for agenda item 4 only)
Ms Rose Yu (for agenda item 4 only)

Opening Remarks

The Chairperson informed Members that due to another engagement at short notice, DSW sent his apologies for not being able to chair the meeting. He extended welcome to all Members and those attended the meeting for the first time, including Mr Pang Hon-chi, who had replaced Mr Victor Lam as the representative of the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer; Mr Billy Tang, who had replaced Dr John Fung as the representative of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service; Mrs Sarah Choy, who had replaced Ms Lorensa Mak as Chief Social Work Officer (Information Systems and Technology) and Mr Dirk Fung, who had replaced Mr Kwong Chong-ki as the Secretary to the JCIT. The Chairperson also introduced Mr Kok Che-leung who attended the meeting in the capacity of Assistant Director (Subventions) of the Social Welfare Department.

Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting

2. The minutes of the 21st Meeting were confirmed without amendment.

Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Last Meeting

Paragraph 3: The Information Technology (IT)-related Business Improvement Projects (BIPs)

3. The Secretary reported that as at August 2012, the remaining IT-related BIP, namely the Human Resource Management System of the Hong Kong Society for the Protection of the Children (HKSPC), was still under implementation and the completion date was further deferred to November 2012 (a delay of about one year) due to change of staff of the contractor. As confirmed by the HKSPC, they had solicited full cooperation of the contractor to complete the project in accordance with the revised schedule.

Agenda Item 3 – Progress of the Review of the IT Strategy for the Social Welfare Sector (Paper JC 3/12)

4. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Miss Sheila Kong gave an update on the progress of the Review of IT Strategy for the Social Welfare Sector (the Review) as depicted in the Paper JC 3/12.
5. After the last meeting held on 11 January 2012, the Research Team had prepared the draft Inception Report, the first deliverable of the Review, which was circulated for Members' comments. The Inception Report was finalised on 23 February 2012 upon incorporating Members' views. The Research Team held a briefing session to NGOs on 1 March 2012 to raise their awareness of the Review. From March to August 2012, the Research Team carried out data collection through a series of in-depth interviews, focus groups, case studies and questionnaire survey. A Working Group (WG) meeting and a Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting were held on 10 August 2012 and 14 September 2012 respectively to review and comment on the preliminary findings and analysis of the data collected. Taking into account the views given by the WG and PSC, the Research Team had prepared the draft Interim Report, the second deliverable of the Review, for Members' consideration and endorsement at this meeting.
6. Miss Sheila Kong highlighted that the draft Interim Report was completed three months behind the original schedule due to some hiccups in the course of data collection. Nevertheless, the Research Team had committed to making every endeavour to complete the Review in accordance with the original schedule, i.e. by December 2012. The revised work schedule of the Review was proposed for Members' consideration and endorsement. Furthermore, there was change in the Project Team Leader. The appointment

of Dr Wong Yu-cheung, the original Project Team Leader, with the University of Hong Kong (HKU) had ended on 31 July 2012. Consequently, Dr Law Chi-kwong had taken up the role of Project Team Leader since 1 August 2012, while Dr Wong continued to work in the Research Team as a Team Member upon his appointment as an Honorary Associate Professor with the Department of Social Work and Social Administration, HKU.

7. Regarding the draft Interim Report, Miss Sheila Kong remarked that the Research Team would give a presentation under Agenda Item 4. She further highlighted that the Interim Report summarised the progress of the Review, gave an overview on the preliminary findings and provided a discussion on the results. Final findings and recommendations would be provided by the Research Team in the Final Report by the end of 2012.

Agenda Item 4 – Second Deliverable of the Review – Interim Report

[Representatives of the Research Team joined the meeting at this juncture.]

8. The Chairperson welcomed the representatives of the Research Team, Dr Law Chi-kwong, Dr Wong Yu-cheung and Ms Rose Yu, to the meeting. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Dr Law Chi-kwong presented the draft Interim Report to Members vide their presentation slides.

9. Dr Edith Mok shared her experience in helping an NGO in its IT development and emphasised the importance of users' active participation and enlisting IT professional's involvement in the IT planning, project management structure and development cycle.

10. Mr James Leung raised concern on the need of supporting the development of client information systems in various service settings of NGOs instead of deploying the specific Client Information System (CIS) of SWD to NGOs. Dr Law Chi-kwong highlighted that the CIS was a sophisticated system with the setting up of workflows specific to SWD and it was practically difficult and not worthwhile to customise the workflows to suit the current practice of individual NGOs. On the other hand, various client information systems, in broad sense, had already existed in the Sector, e.g. in the form of membership or donor management systems. The Research Team would consider making recommendations on the development of client information systems in general in NGOs.

11. Miss Sheila Kong supplemented that the examination of suitability and need to deploy the CIS of SWD to the subvented Integrated Family Services Centres (IFSCs) was within the scope of the Review. It was noted in the Review that these IFSCs had already made use of IT systems / Personal Computers to store their case / client information. The concerned IFSCs had

also indicated reservation on the use of the CIS in view of the uniqueness of their workflow. The deployment of the CIS of SWD to the subvented IFSCs was thus not suggested to be pursued. As regards the client information systems in general term, the Research Team would consider making recommendations to allow NGOs to seek funding support under the existing funding scheme to implement their own client information systems to meet their respective operational needs.

12. Dr Ng Nam opined that as the major objective of the Review was to promote IT adoption and use of IT in the Sector, the Final Report should include formulation of strategies to enhance the awareness, knowledge and acceptance of IT among the personnel in NGOs from board level to senior management and frontline level. He recommended that NGOs should be encouraged to conduct business re-engineering of work processes during the implementation of application systems for the improvement in administration and service delivery. He was concerned that only the less IT-developed NGOs were accorded priority support in the draft Interim Report. While he also agreed to formulate strategies to help the less IT-developed NGOs, he felt that it was equally important to encourage those NGOs with higher IT maturity to further raise their level of IT development and share their experience in the Sector. In response, Dr Law Chi-kwong remarked that encouragement to NGOs to undertake business process re-engineering would definitely be included in the Final Report.

13. Prof Helen Meng opined that a platform for sharing of experience in the success cases of commonly needed IT systems would benefit NGOs, especially those lagging behind, in IT adoption and project implementation. Besides, participation of the users and stakeholders in the whole project development cycle would help enhance successful project completion and IT development in NGOs.

14. Mr Billy Tang noted that the Interim Report had identified problems and aimed to provide possible solutions. He was concerned whether the Review would take into account the IT development of the Government to formulate directions for the Sector, e.g. the development of e-Service and how NGOs of different sizes could follow the strategies. Dr Law Chi-kwong remarked that while IT development of the Government was not within the scope of the Review, recommendations in the Final Report would address the identified problems and propose the directions so that the JCIT could determine the IT Strategy for the Sector taking into account the availability and distribution of resources.

15. Mr Pang Hon-chi remarked that with reference to the experience of the eHealth Record Programme, it would be useful to identify successful cases in IT development among NGOs and to evaluate the successfulness of the strategic

objectives. Feedback from NGOs and clients could be gauged as indicators. Besides, strategies to gather IT demands of NGOs into a critical mass could motivate the IT industry to participate more in the IT development of the Sector.

16. Dr Ting Wai-fong opined that reference could also be drawn from the rather successful, inter-linked, Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS). On the supply of IT expertise which was another major success factor of IT development, she suggested that NGOs having their own IT teams, which were already familiar with the operation in the Sector, might provide IT service to the other NGOs. Dr Law Chi-kwong affirmed that the alternatives to facilitate cooperation in the Sector would be considered in drawing up the recommendations. Dr Wong Yu-cheung supplemented that during the interviews, some of the NGOs had already expressed willingness to share their developed systems in the Sector.

17. Mr Joseph Man shared that for large and small NGOs alike, the availability of resources was very important for IT development. It was difficult for NGOs to keep drawing from the Lump Sum Grant to cover the increasing recurrent expenditure on IT. NGOs tended to accord priority of their resources to service delivery over IT development. Dr Law Chi-kwong remarked that there was no simple way to change such mindsets and the Research Team would make recommendations to enhance the IT awareness of different levels of staff.

18. On Mr Joseph Man's enquiry about the selection criteria for participating NGOs in the in-depth interviews and case studies of the Review, Dr Law Chi-kwong responded that the consideration factors for sampling would be provided in the Final Report and only 10 case studies could be conducted in the Review due to limited resources and time constraint.

19. Mr James Leung noted that the development of administrative and management systems had been covered in the current IT strategies and enquired whether the Research Team would recommend more about service delivery, e.g. the development of e-Service, in the Final Report. Dr Law Chi-kwong confirmed that the Research Team would make recommendations from a forward looking perspective to meet the Sector's development needs. The direction of using IT to enhance service delivery would probably be a core of the Strategy. Mr Timothy Cheng echoed that NGOs should recognise their investment in IT would have returns in terms of cost and manpower savings as well as efficiency gain.

20. Dr Edith Mok suggested for the Research Team's consideration of analysing the IT maturity of NGOs by agency size so that their progress could be tracked and different strategies could be formulated in accordance with their different levels of IT maturity.

21. Dr Ting Wai-fong echoed that the proposed IT Strategy should be a diversified one to meet the needs of NGOs with different levels of IT maturity. She hoped that the strategies would target at the most needy NGOs while sustaining the momentum of the more IT-advanced NGOs in further IT development.

22. Mr Joseph Man agreed that it was worthy considering to set up a platform for sharing of the developed IT systems among NGOs to promote the sharing culture in the Sector.

23. Dr Ng Nam shared that target outcome with a time frame set out in the IT Strategy could be considered so as to provide a clear direction for implementation of the IT Strategy and to evaluate the successfulness. Besides, recurrent funding to support the maintenance and enhancement of IT systems after their live run was also essential.

24. Mr Billy Tang shared that, with donation of system development costs from an IT company, the ITRC had started the development of a Volunteer Management System and a Donor Management System under the cloud service model for NGOs' subscription. No customisation on the systems would be provided and the participant NGOs had to re-engineer their workflow to match up with the systems. Probably, this approach would suit the needs of small to medium NGOs as they would not have concerns on system development and subsequent system maintenance and upgrade. However, due to the ongoing subscription fees so incurred, the funding mode would be the determining factor for adoption of this approach for development of IT projects.

25. Mr James Leung suggested that a platform collaborated by the ITRC, the IT industry and NGOs with high IT maturity level with a view to sharing the IT knowledge and experience as well as providing support to NGOs would foster the IT development in the Sector.

26. Dr Law Chi-kwong thanked Members for their views and assured that the Research Team would take note and consider their comments when making recommendations in the Final Report.

[Representatives of the Research Team left the meeting at this juncture.]

27. As there were no other views from Members, the Chairperson proposed and Members agreed to endorse the Interim Report in principle. Members were invited to provide further comments on the draft Interim Report, if any, to the Secretary, on or before **12 October 2012**. Members also agreed to endorse the revised work schedule.

28. The Chairperson informed Members that the Research Team had scheduled to conduct a briefing session for NGOs on 28 September 2012 to

share with them the preliminary finding and analysis in the Interim Report. Upon gathering feedback from NGOs, the Research team would proceed with the preparation of the Final Report, the third deliverable of the Review.

Agenda Item 5 – Progress of the IT-related Applications under Phase I of the Social Welfare Development Fund (SWDF) (Paper JC 4/12)

29. The Chairperson invited Mrs Sarah Choy to give an update on the progress of the IT-related applications under the Phase 1 of the SWDF as depicted in the Paper JC 4/12.

30. Mrs Sarah Choy reported that 113 applications from NGOs, involving 233 IT projects, were vetted and supported by Members during the three rounds of applications under the Phase 1 of SWDF. These 113 applications were granted about \$80 million. The projects mainly fell into the categories of service delivery and capacity enhancement initiatives (65%), Websites (16%), Human Resource Management Systems (11%) and Financial Management Systems (8%). Amongst these 233 IT projects, 158 (68%) were new development projects while 75 (32%) were either re-development or enhancement projects.

31. Mrs Sarah Choy further highlighted that five IT projects of three NGOs were withdrawn, 67 (29%) IT projects were completed, and 161 IT projects were under implementation as at August 2012. Of the 161 IT projects under implementation, 110 (68%) had revised the target completion dates (among which three IT projects from three NGOs had extended their target completion dates beyond the end date of Phase I SWDF, i.e. March 2013) as they had encountered various degrees of slippage in the course of implementation.

32. In response to Mr Billy Tang's enquiry on whether NGOs should be informed of the possibility of applying project extension beyond the deadline of the Phase I SWDF in case of project slippage, Mrs Sarah Choy shared that NGOs would be encouraged to closely monitor their projects under implementation with a view to completing their projects in accordance with the planned schedule as far as possible and special requests for extension beyond the deadline of the Phase I SWDF would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Agenda Item 6 - Any Other Business

33. The Chairperson thanked Members for their valuable views in the meeting. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at

5:00 p.m. The next meeting would be held in late November / early December 2012 to consider and endorse the Final Report of the Review.

Social Welfare Department
October 2012