Minutes of the 23rd Meeting of the
Joint Committee on Information Technology (JCIT)
for the Social Welfare Sector held on 19 December 2012

Present :   Mr Nip Tak-kuen, Patrick   (Chairperson)
        Mr Fung Pak-yan
        Miss Sheila Kong
        Mrs Paula Leung
        Mr Billy Tang
        Mr Joseph Man
        Mr James Leung
        Dr Edith Mok
        Prof Helen Meng
        Ms Patty Wong
        Dr Ting Wai-fong
        Dr Ng Nam
        Mr Dirk Fung   (Secretary)

Absent with apologies : Mr Pang Hon-chi

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

Opening Remarks

The Chairperson welcomed Members to the meeting and informed that Mr Pang Hon-chi of the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer was unable to attend the meeting due to another engagement.

Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting

2. The draft minutes of the 22nd Meeting were sent to Members for comments on 12 October 2012 and the amendments proposed by Dr Ng Nam had been incorporated into the revised draft minutes and sent to Members on 13 December 2012.   The minutes of the 22nd Meeting were confirmed with no further amendments from Members.

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 the only outstanding IT-related BIP project, i.e. the Human Resource Management System of the Hong Kong Society for the Protection of the Children (HKSPC), had been launched since 30 November 2012. HKSPC was preparing the claim for reimbursement of expenditure and the final report of the project.

Agenda Item 3 – Progress of the Review of the IT Strategy for the Social Welfare Sector (Paper JC 5/12)

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 5/12.

5.   At the 22nd JCIT meeting of 27 September 2012, Members endorsed the Interim Report, the second deliverable of the Review. The Research Team held a briefing session to NGOs on 28 September 2012 to present the preliminary findings and analysis of the Review and collect their views on the future direction of the IT Strategy. A total of 97 representatives from 50 NGOs attended the briefing.

6.   On the basis of the Interim Report and the views collected from NGOs in the briefing session, the Research Team prepared 'Chapter V – Recommendations' of the draft Final Report. Meetings of the Working Group (WG) and the Project Steering Committee (PSC) were held on 24 October 2012 and 3 December 2012 respectively to review the draft Final Report. Taking into account the views given by the WG and PSC, the Research Team completed the draft Final Report, the third deliverable of the Review, for Members' consideration and endorsement.

7.   There was change in membership of the Project Team. Ms Cherrie Chan had replaced Ms Rose Yu as the team member of the Research Team since 1 December 2012.

8.   Regarding the draft Final Report, Miss Sheila Kong remarked that the Research Team would give a presentation under Agenda Item 4. She further highlighted that, subject to endorsement of the Final Report by Members, the Research Team planned to produce, within January 2013, the remaining deliverables of the Review, i.e.

      (a)   Executive Summary (English and Chinese);

(b)   Chinese version of the Final Report; and

(c)   Project Evaluation Report for the Review.

9.   The Research Team had also scheduled to conduct a briefing session to NGOs in early January 2013 to share the visions, strategies and recommendations for further IT development in the Sector as recommended in the Final Report.   On finalisation of all the deliverables of the Review, the JCIT would discuss ways to take forward the recommendations in the coming meeting.

Agenda Item 4 – Third Deliverable of the Review – Final Report

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

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

11.   The Chairperson highlighted that the levels of SWD subventions varied among NGOs and some of them provided social services other than welfare services, such as education and medical services.   He enquired about the possible implications when the proposed IT Strategy for the Welfare Sector was implemented.   Dr Law Chi-kwong responded that NGOs with wider funding sources and/or diverse social service experiences were largely with higher IT maturity.   Some of the applications they had developed, e.g. HRM system, served both subvented and non-subvented service units at the same time. However, study of financing mode in relation to the subventions levels of NGOs was beyond the scope of the Review.   Mr Joseph Man shared that NGO's management, in general, was aware that they had to contribute a suitable portion of resources to IT projects serving both subvented and non-subvented services.

12.   Mr Billy Tang raised concerns that (i) the development of humanware was not sufficiently addressed; (ii) while noticing large NGOs had higher maturity level in IT development, there was no recommendation on any special assistance to small NGOs; and (iii) there was no provision of incentives, e.g. financial resources, to encourage the NGOs to formulate their IT plans.

13.   In response, Dr Law Chi-kwong shared that (i) the Research Team, instead of commenting on the qualities of NGO staff (e.g. basic IT awareness and proficiency) to address the issue of humanware, had made recommendations on the Sector's need for support from IT professionals, a kind of resources which NGOs were adept in building up and retaining; (ii) while the

Research Team was not in the position to recommend resource allocation (e.g. a sliding scale of support) among NGOs of different sizes, they had designed at the Annex of the draft Final Report an assessment tool for NGOs' self-assessment of the profiles of IT development by NGO sizes to facilitate better benchmarking; and (iii) IT planning depended much on the IT awareness and priority of NGOs' management in formulating long-term IT plans, and so provision of incentives for such purpose might not be required.

14.   Mr James Leung echoed that IT planning in NGOs was important but the IT plans needed to be reviewed and updated on a regularly basis in view of rapid IT development. Availability of resources for consultancy studies and planning was important for success. He also noted that the recommendations had not touched on the area of electronic communication and exchanges of reports between NGOs and SWD through IT systems, which was important to facilitate efficient business transactions between SWD and the Sector.

15.   Dr NG Nam opined that, in addition to the support from IT professionals in NGOs, training to increase IT awareness of social workers in NGOs was also essential for long-term success in IT development in the Sector. He hoped that there would be measures and resources to help enhance social workers' awareness of the application of IT.

16.   Dr Edith Mok shared that in the commercial field, "Business Analysts" helped to link up the business and IT personnel of the organisations in IT development. This approach was worth considering in the Welfare Sector to meet the needs of small and medium NGOs. She also suggested NGOs to consider cloud services which provided the IT services at low costs.

17.   Prof Helen Meng proposed gathering IT consultants to form an IT consulting group to study the needs of NGOs and to recommend generic IT infrastructure to them. Through this method, solutions could be replicated efficiently among NGOs.

18.   Dr Law Chi-kwong responded that IT training for social workers was not within the scope of the Review, and hence no recommendation was made in this area. On the other hand, the Review found that many IT personnel in the NGOs were familiar with the business of NGOs and had the potential of bridging the gap between IT and social services. For NGOs having the needs to develop social work staff to play the bridging role, they could make use of the SWDF to arrange for the necessary training. Regarding HKCSS and ITRC, Dr Law Chi-kwong remarked that, while these two organisations were not particularly mentioned in the Report, they could be the ones among the potential candidates to perform the business analyst roles for the Sector.

19.   Ms Patty Wong suggested that the Report should address not only the IT capacity but also the IT capability of NGOs as far as humanware was concerned. To encourage NGOs to formulate their IT strategy or plan, it could be considered as a requirement for IT-related project applications under SWDF.

20.   In response to Mr Joseph Man's enquiry on the focus of service delivery in the vision of the Review, Dr Law Chi-kwong explained that the Research Team had not specified the ways for e-services which should rather be evolved in the natural business process for the NGOs after the improvement of efficiency in administration through the use of IT application systems.

21.   Mr James Leung opined that the Research Team should elaborate more in new IT service models and the hurdles in the Sector in adopting such models. Although the HKCSS and ITRC had spent effort in building up the partnership between the Welfare and IT Sectors, measures for further strengthening the partnership would facilitate IT development in the Sector.

22.   Mr Billy Tang suggested and Dr Ng Nam echoed that cultural change in NGOs was essential for IT development in the Sector and recommendations should be made to facilitate the changes.

23.   Prof Helen Meng supported the recommendation on developing a platform for NGOs and even the IT sector to share resources and experience.

24.   Mrs Paula Leung noted that while there were recommendations on strengthening security policy and security risk assessments of NGOs, she had concerns on the data security in their day-to-day operation. Regarding the findings on progress of ICT accessibility among people with disabilities (page 21, paragraph 10 of the Final Report), she also supplemented for the Research Team's information that LWB and OGCIO had spent significant efforts in the promotion and implementation of web accessibility in recent years.

25.   Dr Law Chi-kwong thanked Members for their views and assured that the Research Team would take note and consider their comments and suggestions to fine-tune the Final Report as appropriate.

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

26.   As there were no other views from Members, the Chairperson proposed and Members agreed to endorse the Final Report in principle.   Members were invited to provide further comments on the draft Final Report, if any, to the Secretary, on or before **28 December 2012**.

[Post-meeting note:
With no further comments raised, the JCIT Members accepted the fine-tuned version of the Final Report on 25 January 2013. The Research Team was duly informed.]

Agenda Item 5 – Social Welfare Development Fund (SWDF) – Phase 2

27.   The Chairperson invited Mrs Sarah Choy to brief Members on the arrangement of the applications under SWDF – Phase 2 vide her presentation slides.

28.   Mrs Sarah Choy reported that the Phase 1 of SWDF, in which 233 IT-related projects had been given funding support under 113 applications from the NGOs since January 2010, would come to an end in March 2013. For the first round applications of Phase 2, the NGOs would be invited to submit their applications in six months from January to June 2013. A number of enhancement measures would be implemented in Phase 2 based on the views collected from NGOs and the experiences gained in Phase 1. The key enhancement measures concerning IT projects were:

(a) Fine-tuning the application form;

(b) Extending project implementation period up to three years from the date of endorsement by the Lotteries Fund Advisory Committee (LFAC);

(c) Promoting the sharing of information of approved projects; and

(d) Allowing virement of funds among IT and Non-IT projects

29.   Mrs Sarah Choy further highlighted that the vetting arrangement for the application of IT projects would remain the same as that of Phase 1. In brief, Members' endorsement / comments on IT projects would be sought by circulation. For applications exceeding $3 million, the applicant NGO would be invited to make a presentation and answer Members' queries in the JCIT meeting upon Members' request. On support of the JCIT, ISTB would seek endorsement on funding allocation from the LFAC.

30.   The Chairperson supplemented that SWD had interviewed about one third of the NGOs to collect their views and comments on the Phase 1 SWDF with a view to refining the arrangements in the Phase 2.

31.   In response to Mrs Paula Leung and Mr James Leung's enquiry on the reasons of funding virement and whether IT projects' allocation could be vired to non-IT projects, Miss Sheila Kong explained that the virement of fund was for better utilisation of resources in the implementation of NGO projects. Mrs

<u>Sarah Choy</u> supplemented that in Phase 2, NGOs could vire approved allocation among IT and non-IT projects provided that the scope of the approved projects would not be affected.

32.   <u>Mr Billy Tang</u> suggested and Members agreed that JCIT should be notified of any virement of amount exceeding 50% of the original approved allocation. <u>Mr James Leung</u> added that any virement to increase the original project cost up to $3 million or more should also be reported to JCIT.

33.   With regard to <u>Dr Ng Nam</u>'s enquiry on the project cost ceiling of the IT projects, <u>Mr Timothy Cheng</u> replied that there was no ceiling set per project but each NGO had its own funding cap under the SWDF at 9% of its annual amount of SWD subventions in 2009-10 or at $2 million, whichever the higher.

34.   <u>Dr Edith Mok</u>'s enquired if the recommendations of the Review would be included in the Phase 2 SWDF. <u>Mr Billy Tang</u> suggested and <u>Mr James Leung</u> supported to consider uplifting the restriction on CIS and Intranet projects, which were not supported in Phase 1 of SWDF, as the Research Team of the Review had made such recommendations. <u>Miss Sheila Kong</u> responded that while the Final Report was endorsed by Members in principle, the Review had not yet been completed at this stage. The Research Team would proceed with the completion of all the remaining deliverables in the coming one to two months. On finalisation of all the deliverables of the Review, the JCIT would discuss practicable ways to take forward the recommendations, in particular those with resource implication, in the coming meeting. In this connection, any scope expansion for IT-related projects under the SWDF might be considered in the following round of the Phase 2 application as appropriate.

35.   In response to <u>Ms Patty Wong</u>'s enquiry on the measures to evaluate the project performance in Phase 2, <u>Mr Timothy Cheng</u> highlighted that the Review recommended strengthening NGOs' post-implementation evaluation of their IT projects, and SWD would revise the project evaluation form for the Phase 2 SWDF projects accordingly. <u>The Chairperson</u> suggested that the revised evaluation form should include information on how the project had fitted in with the NGO's IT strategy or plan, if any.

36.   Regarding <u>Mr Billy Tang</u>'s suggestion of including the clause of disclosing project information for the purpose of sharing in the Sector, <u>Mr Timothy Cheng</u> confirmed that such request had been included in the revised application form.

37.   On the handling of NGOs' applications for virement of approved allocations among IT projects, SWD proposed and Members agreed to delegate the approving authority to ISTB on virement of funds to IT projects.

Agenda Item 6 - Any Other Business

38.   The Chairperson thanked Members for their valuable views given in the meeting.   There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Agenda Item 7 – Date of Next Meeting

39.   The next JCIT meeting will be held to discuss ways to take forward the recommendations of the Review upon finalisation of all the remaining deliverables.   The date of the next meeting will be fixed in due course.

Social Welfare Department
February 2013