

**Minutes of the 24th Meeting of the
Joint Committee on Information Technology (JCIT)
for the Social Welfare Sector held on 26 June 2013**

Present :

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| Mr Fung Pak-yan | (Chairperson) |
| Mrs Sarah Choy | (on behalf of Miss Sheila Kong) |
| Mr Timothy Cheng | (on behalf of Mr Pang Hon-chi) |
| Mrs Paula Leung | |
| Mr Billy Tang | |
| Mr Kwok Lit-tung | |
| Mr James Leung | |
| Dr Edith Mok | |
| Prof David Cheung | |
| Prof Leung Kwong-sak | |
| Mr Gordon Lo | |
| Ms Winnie Tam | (Secretary) |

Absent with apologies : Dr Ng Nam

In attendance :

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| Mr Lee Tat-hong |
| Ms Florence Wai |
| Mr Leung Pui-kei |

Opening Remarks

The Chairperson informed Members that the meeting was chaired by him in the capacity of Acting Director of Social Welfare because Ms Carol Yip, the Director of Social Welfare (DSW) designate, would assume her office on 8 July 2013 while Mr Patrick Nip, the ex-DSW, had taken up another post earlier on 8 June 2013.

2. The Chairperson extended welcome to all Members, in particular the four new Members who had been appointed for a period of two years from 1 May 2013 to 30 April 2015 to replace four ex-Members whose tenure expired after 30 April 2013 –

- Prof David Cheung, the Head and Professor of the Department of Computer Science of the University of Hong Kong, replacing Prof Helen Meng;
- Prof Leung Kwong-sak, the Professor of the Computer Science and Engineering Department of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, replacing Dr Ting Wai-fong;

- Mr Kwok Lit-tung, the Director of Christian Family Service Centre, replacing Mr Joseph Man; and
- Mr Gordon Lo, the General Manager of IT Industry Development of the Hong Kong Productivity Council, replacing Ms Patty Wong.

The Chairperson also appreciated the contributions to the JCIT of the four ex-Members to whom the ex-DSW had personally sent the thank-you letters.

3. The Chairperson informed Members that Mr James Leung and Dr Ng Nam had kindly accepted the re-appointment as the JCIT Members for a period of two years from 1 May 2013 to 30 April 2015 after their first tenure.

4. The Chairperson welcomed Mr Timothy Cheng, ex-Senior System Manager of SWD, who was now in his new post as the Chief Systems Manager (Business Transformation) / Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO), and attended the meeting on behalf of Mr Pang Hon-chi; and Mrs Sarah Choy who attended the meeting in the capacity of Acting Principal Social Work Officer (Information Systems and Technology Branch) / SWD on behalf of Miss Sheila Kong.

5. The Chairperson introduced Mr Lee Tat-hong who replaced Mr Timothy Cheng as Senior Systems Manager (Information Systems and Technology Branch) of SWD; and Ms Winnie Tam who replaced Mr Dirk Fung as the Secretary of the JCIT.

6. The Chairperson also welcomed Ms Florence Wai, Chief Executive Officer (Lotteries Fund) of the SWD who sat in the meeting for the first time. With apologies, Dr Ng Nam could not attend this meeting due to another engagement.

Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting

7. The draft minutes of the 23rd Meeting were sent to Members for comments on 19 February 2013. The amendment to paragraph 24 as proposed by Mrs Paula Leung had been incorporated into the revised draft minutes which was sent to Members on 20 June 2013. The minutes of the 23rd Meeting were confirmed with no further amendments from Members.

Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Last Meeting

Paragraph 8: Progress of the Review of the IT Strategy for the Social Welfare Sector (the Review)

8. The Secretary reported that the Review was closed formally with the endorsement of the final deliverable of the Review, i.e. the Project Evaluation Report prepared by the Research Team from the University of Hong Kong (HKU), by Members on 26 April 2013.

Proposed Implementation Plan for the Information Technology Strategy for the Social Welfare Sector (*Paper JC 1/13*)

9. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mrs Sarah Choy introduced the proposed implementation plan for the Information Technology Strategy for the Social Welfare Sector as depicted in the Paper JC 1/13. Mrs Sarah Choy highlighted that under the Review completed in April 2013, four strategies covering a total of 12 recommendations had been formulated for the IT development in the Sector in the coming five years. The Review had also looked into the suitability for the deployment of the Client Information System (CIS) of SWD to the subvented integrated family service centres and made the 13th recommendation that such deployment was to be put aside. As to the time needed to launch the aforesaid recommendations, the Review suggested that they were to be implemented in two phases. Phase 1 implementation would cover 11 recommendations promoting initiatives of individual NGOs not requiring additional funding resources. It would span from the first through the third year upon launching of the new IT Strategy. Phase 2 implementation would cover two recommendations with financial implications. As time would be needed to go through the required consultation and approval process when seeking additional funding resources, it would only start from the third year till the fifth year.

10. Mr Timothy Cheng suggested that in respect of Recommendation 4 of the Review, the list of successful IT projects funded by Social Welfare Development Fund (SWDF) in Phase 1 could also be considered for experience sharing, subject to NGOs' consent. If feasible, the implementation schedule of this recommendation could be advanced to 2013–14. Mr James Leung proposed that sharing of successful IT projects should not be limited to SWDF IT projects but also those supported by other funds.

11. While Mr Gordon Lo supported the promotion of sharing culture as recommended in the Review, he enquired how to make use of the list of successful IT projects provided by SWD for experience sharing among NGOs. Mr Billy Tang shared that the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) has been organising regular activities, such as seminars, forums and workshops to facilitate the sharing of IT knowledge and experience in the Welfare Sector as well as bridging the communication between the Welfare and IT sectors. Under Recommendation 11, HKCSS would develop an e-platform for NGOs to share their IT knowledge and experience in addition to these regular sharing activities. With the list of projects provided by SWD, HKCSS would invite the NGOs to share their knowledge and experience through the e-platform.

12. Mr Kwok Lit-tung advised that NGOs had to take into account the licensing matters or any other relevant guidelines to share the use of IT systems developed under the SWDF support.

13. Prof David Cheung shared that regarding Recommendation 1, the medium and small-sized NGOs might have difficulties in benchmarking their IT capacity and capability for IT planning with the use of the self-assessment form if no training or assistance would be provided. He was of the view that a proactive and top-down approach was necessary for the IT planning and enhancement of the IT capacity of NGOs, especially for small-sized ones. Mrs Sarah Choy supplemented that the template of self-assessment tool was developed by the Research Team of the Review to facilitate the NGOs to have a general picture of their IT capacity. On-going consultation and advice about the use of the template would be given to NGOs when they applied and implemented projects funded under SWDF.

14. Mr Timothy Cheng echoed that the top-down approach might be more suitable for the small-sized NGOs to persuade them in using IT to meet their business objectives. Before additional resources were secured in Phase 2 implementation, lifting the restriction in SWDF on consultancy studies for IT planning could be considered to facilitate the promotion of IT planning in the Welfare Sector. Mr James Leung also agreed that lifting the restriction on consultancy studies seemed to be a feasible and efficient way to facilitate the NGOs in their IT planning, but he opined that the lengthy implementation plan as proposed might not be able to catch up with the rapid changes in IT development.

15. Mr Billy Tang expressed that with relatively limited funding, the small-sized NGOs might still face difficulties to conduct their IT planning despite lifting the restriction in the funding scope of SWDF on consultancy service. He proposed to give NGOs more flexibility to use the existing Block Grant under the Lotteries Fund to maintain or replace the IT infrastructure. Ms Florence Wai explained that the Lotteries Fund was used in accordance with the prevalent guidelines. To expand the ambit of Block Grant to include IT infrastructure, a list of the supported items and corresponding prices had to be consolidated for the endorsement by the Lotteries Fund Advisory Committee (LFAC). In view of the time required for consultation with the concerned parties, the implementation of Recommendation 8 had to fall in Phase 2 implementation. Mr Kwok Lit-tung pointed out that there might be concern on relaxing the ambit of the Block Grant to cover the IT infrastructure which normally supported the whole agency including the non-subsided services, since the Block Grant was meant for the subsided services only.

16. In response to Dr Edith Mok's enquiry on whether the SWDF would support the training programme on project management, Mrs Sarah Choy explained that SWDF could be used by NGOs in training activities and project management might be classified as training.

17. Towards the suggestion made by Mr James Leung on advancing the implementation schedule of Recommendation 8 from Phase 2 implementation to Phase 1 implementation, Mrs Sarah Choy explained that as Recommendation 8 was not only about expanding the funding ambit but required additional resources, time was required for consultation with the NGOs and the concerned committees before putting up proposal to LFAC for consideration.

18. In relation to Prof Leung Kwong-sak's enquiry on whether the NGOs or the HKCSS had coordinated for bulk purchase of IT items for a better position in price negotiation, Mr Billy Tang shared that HKCSS not only helped NGOs obtain better offers through different sale schemes, but also provided them with information and advice on IT products and services.

19. As to the enquiries made by Prof David Cheung and Mr Gordon Lo on whether the NGOs could apply SWDF for IT planning or intranet development at this stage, Mrs Sarah Choy informed that the first round of SWDF Phase 2 application would be closed by the end of June 2013 before lifting of the restriction could be considered by LFAC. Upon endorsement of the Members on the

implementation plan, SWD would then seek the views of LFAC. Subject to its views, lifting of the restriction could only come into effect in the next round of SWDF applications.

20. Regarding the concerns raised by Prof David Cheung and Mr Gordon Lo that the new IT service model under Recommendation 7 would possibly involve recurrent cost which was not supported in the funding parameter of Lotteries Fund, Mr Timothy Cheng shared that the NGOs had to carefully assess their business needs to choose the most suitable service model. Dr Edith Mok and Mr Billy Tang shared with the Members that the new IT service model could include mobile service which was becoming more popular in the NGOs' service delivery.

21. While Members indicated endorsement of the proposed direction and time frame for the implementation of the 13 recommendations of the Review, the Chairperson thanked Members for their views and suggestions and assured that SWD would study them carefully when formulating the detailed action plan.

22. Mrs Sarah Choy informed Members that SWD would conduct a briefing to the NGOs in late July 2013 to keep them abreast of the implementation schedule of the recommendations as proposed by the Review and endorsed by Members.

[Post-meeting note:

The "Briefing Session on IT Strategy for the Social Welfare Sector" was conducted by SWD for NGOs on 31 July 2013. Around 120 representatives from 72 NGOs attended the Briefing Session.]

Progress of the IT Projects under the Social Welfare Development Fund (Paper JC 2/13)

23. The Chairperson invited Mrs Sarah Choy to update the progress of the IT projects under the SWDF as depicted in the Paper JC 2/13. Mrs Sarah Choy highlighted that a total of 113 applications from NGOs, involving 233 IT projects, were vetted and supported by Members in the three rounds of applications under Phase 1 of SWDF. These 233 IT projects were granted with about \$80 million. Out of the 233 projects, nine projects from seven NGOs involving the total approved funding at about \$1 million were called off mainly due to the following reasons:

- other funding was available; or
- changes in business needs not covered by the original project scopes.

Among the remaining 224 projects, 146 (65%) projects were completed. The other 78 (35%) projects of 47 NGOs had revised the implementation schedules beyond March 2013.

24. Mrs Sarah Choy informed members that application under Phase 2 of the SWDF had been open to the NGOs since January 2013 and the deadline of the application was on 30 June 2013. By 15 June 2013, SWD had received applications from 23 NGOs involving 64 IT projects. The applications would be circulated to Members in batches for comments as soon as all the required information was provided by the NGOs.

25. Mr Gordon Lo advised that under the “Vetting Arrangement for the IT-related Applications under SWDF”, the requirement on seven out of 10 JCIT Members for the endorsement of an application should be replaced by a percentage, namely 70%, instead of a fixed number of members because of the probable situation that a member would not give his/her view about an application in which he/she had declared conflict of interest.

Any Other Business

26. Mr Billy Tang informed Members that the HKCSS and Microsoft Hong Kong had commissioned the Public Opinion Programme of the HKU to conduct the “Survey on Local NGO’s Use of Internet Communication Tools for Youth Service”. Members were invited to peruse the findings of the Survey at the website of HKU.

27. The Chairperson thanked Members for their valuable views given in the meeting. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:05p.m.

Date of Next Meeting

28. The date of the next meeting would be fixed in due course.