

**Minutes of the 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the  
Joint Committee on Information Technology (JCIT)  
for the Social Welfare Sector held on 15 August 2014**

Present : Ms Carol Yip (Chairperson)  
Mr Fung Pak-yan  
Miss Sheila Kong  
Miss Donna Chan  
Mrs Paula Leung  
Mr Billy Tang  
Mr Kwok Lit-tung  
Mr James Leung  
Dr Ng Nam  
Prof Leung Kwong-sak  
Ms Susanna Shen  
Ms Winnie Tam (Secretary)

Absent with apologies : Prof David Cheung  
Mr Gordon Lo

In attendance : Mrs Sarah Choy  
Mr Lee Tat-hong  
Mr David Ng  
Mr Vincent Chan

### **Opening Remarks**

The Chairperson extended welcome to all Members, in particular two new Members, Ms Susanna Shen and Miss Donna Chan who replaced Dr Edith Mok, an Independent Member, and Mr Pang Hon-chi, representative of the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO), respectively. The Chairperson also informed Members that a thank-you letter had already been sent to Dr Edith Mok for her contribution in the six-year tenure which expired after 31 May 2014.

2. The Chairperson also introduced Mr David Ng, Senior Social Work Officer (Subventions) of Social Welfare Department (SWD), who sat in the meeting for the first time. With apologies, Prof David Cheung and Mr Gordon Lo could not attend this meeting due to other engagement.

### **Agenda Item 1 - Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting**

3. The draft minutes of the 24th Meeting were sent to Members for comments on 4 September 2013. Some textual refinements had been received and incorporated into the revised draft which was sent to Members on 6 August 2014. The minutes of the 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting were confirmed with no further amendments from Members.

### **Agenda Item 2 - Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Last Meeting**

4. The Chairperson informed Members that matters arising from the last meeting would be addressed in agenda items 3 to 5.

### **Agenda Item 3 - Information Technology (IT) Strategy for the Social Welfare Sector (*Paper JC 1/14*)**

5. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mrs Sarah Choy gave an update on the implementation progress of the recommendations made under the review of information technology strategy for the social welfare sector as depicted in the Paper JC 1/14. She highlighted that at the last meeting held on 26 June 2013, Members endorsed the implementation plan to take forward 13 recommendations by two phases in five years from 2013-14 to 2017-18.

6. Mrs Sarah Choy reported that SWD had conducted a briefing to the Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) on 31 July 2013 to keep them abreast of the implementation schedule of various recommendations. Around 120 participants had attended the briefing. In general, the participants were positive and supportive regarding the implementation of the recommendations in five years.

7. Mrs Sarah Choy remarked that, as at end-July 2014, all the 11 recommendations of Phase 1 had been put in place to promote initiatives of NGOs in enhancing their IT capacity and these recommendations did not require additional funding resources. She also drew Members' attention to, among others, Recommendations 11 and 12 regarding the launch of "e-Platform for Social Welfare Development Fund (SWDF)" as well as the sharing activities conducted by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) to facilitate NGOs' exchanges on their IT experience.

8. For the two recommendations with possible resource implication regarding funding support for IT planning and replacement / upgrading of IT infrastructure under Phase 2 from 2015-16 to 2017-18, Mrs Sarah Choy shared that SWD had started the ground works of scrutinising the ambits of various available funding sources for NGOs of the welfare sector to facilitate identification of viable implementation options.

9. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr Billy Tang shared the progress of the HKCSS' e-Platform. He highlighted that the e-Platform had been implemented since 12 June 2014 and each subvented NGO was assigned a corporate account. So far, 70 projects had been posted by NGOs in the e-Platform. In response to Miss Sheila Kong's enquiry on granting access rights to Members and uploading evaluation reports to the e-Platform, Mr Billy Tang considered that access rights could be granted for Members as they were responsible for vetting all IT projects under SWDF, but he would need to explore with Subventions Branch and NGOs as regard the feasibility of uploading evaluation reports to the e-Platform.

10. Mr James Leung and Prof Leung Kwong-sak enquired if the reasons for slippage of IT projects could be shared in the e-Platform to facilitate learning among NGOs on project management. Miss Sheila Kong supported such experience sharing and further shared that advice on effective project management was rendered to NGOs by SWD in the pre-launch briefing sessions as well as throughout the vetting process in each SWDF application phase. Mr David Ng remarked that NGOs had been encouraged to upload as much project information as possible. Dr Ng Nam opined that sharing of successful applications would be of positive value to help NGOs in their IT development.

11. The Chairperson agreed with Members' suggestion that knowledge and experience sharing should be promoted among NGOs through different kinds of channels, such as the e-Platform, workshop or live demonstration, etc.

12. As to Recommendation 13 regarding putting aside the development of SWD's Client Information System to subvented integrated family service centres, Mr James Leung put forward the concept of data mining for business intelligence and service planning. Prof Leung Kwong-sak also shared the concept of "Big Data Analysis" and the feasibility of applying such concept in the welfare sector. Mr Billy Tang reported that HKCSS had organised a forum on "Big Data" for the welfare and IT sectors in June 2014 and would launch a project on "Data Analysis" jointly with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in October 2014. Miss Donna Chan informed that the Government promoted

the re-use of public sector information, and examples of data sets of the Transport Department on real time traffic and the Hong Kong Observatory on weather data were well received by the public.

13. Miss Sheila Kong added that SWD was going to develop the next generation IT infrastructure project. The concerned project would, among various benefits, facilitate the implementation of e-communication with a view to enhancing SWD's interaction with the NGO sector through a more secure electronic data exchange platform in addition to the email system.

14. As to the promotion of new service models, e.g. cloud service, under Recommendation 7, Ms Susanna Shen highlighted that sharing of resources and economies of scale could be achieved by the acquisition of software services through cloud service. Miss Donna Chan remarked that while cloud service with a relatively low initial set-up cost together with other benefits was the industry trend, due consideration had to be given on the recurrent cost. Miss Sheila Kong supplemented that, under SWDF, NGOs with successful projects using new IT technologies for more cost-effective service delivery were encouraged to share project information with their counterparts through HKCSS' e-Platform, etc.

15. The Chairperson thanked Members for the valuable discussion on the development of IT, especially the use of new technologies, in the welfare sector. While HKCSS was commissioned to foster knowledge and experience sharing among NGOs through the e-Platform and other sharing activities, the Chairperson suggested HKCSS to keep NGOs abreast of the trend of using big data and new technologies.

#### **Agenda Item 4 - Progress of IT Projects under SWDF (*Paper JC 2/14*)**

16. The Chairperson invited Mrs Sarah Choy to update the progress of IT projects under SWDF as depicted in the Paper JC 2/14. Mrs Sarah Choy reported that till April 2014, NGOs were allocated a total sum of about \$150 million under SWDF for 403 IT projects through three rounds of application under Phase 1 and the first round under Phase 2. Among the 233 projects under Phase 1, 13 (5%) were yet to be completed with the last one targeted for completion by September 2015. She highlighted that the major reasons for slippage in these projects pointed to the importance of project management throughout the project life cycle. In particular, clear project objectives and precise users' requirements should be made known to the tenderers at the time of tendering.

17. Regarding the first round application of Phase 2, Mrs Sarah Choy reported that 170 projects from 88 NGOs had been endorsed by Members. Among the 170 projects, one project was completed in March 2014 and the rest were in progress. The second round of Phase 2 had been launched since 19 May 2014 with the application deadline set on 31 August 2014. Up to now, Information Systems and Technology Branch (ISTB) had not yet received any IT applications.

*[Post-meeting Notes: In response to the requests from a number of NGOs, the deadline of the second round application of SWDF Phase 2 was extended to 30 September 2014.]*

18. Prof Leung Kwong-sak opined that the major reason of project slippage should be related to problems concerning project governance or management. Mr Billy Tang shared his observation that many end-users in the welfare sector had difficulties in defining the user requirements clearly to the IT vendors.

19. Ms Susanna Shen remarked that key success factors of IT projects, such as the level of project control, users' involvement and commitment as well as the decision making mechanism should be examined. She also shared that some application systems, such as those designed for financial and human resource management, were very similar in nature and a start-up kit might help reduce project failures and save resources. Mr Billy Tang highlighted that the feasibility of applying the start-up kit would largely depend on NGOs' readiness to change their workflow to suit the system requirements. Mr James Leung added that each NGO had its specific business workflow which sometimes could not be easily re-engineered to suit the use of a common application system.

20. Mr James Leung and Mr Billy Tang noted that the proposed cost of implementation services varied in some of the IT projects of similar nature under SWDF Phase 2. While Members' views and concerns had been relayed to NGOs, Mrs Sarah Choy remarked that according to the Guidance Notes for Application of SWDF, NGOs should achieve the best value for money in service procurement in compliance with the Lotteries Fund Manual.

21. Ms Susanna Shen shared with Members that the Hong Kong Computer Society had recently set up a Women's Club with female volunteers who were experienced project managers. They stood ready to assist NGOs in the planning and implementation of IT projects. Mr Billy Tang added that HKCSS had taken up the liaison role in matching these volunteers with interested NGOs.

22. The Chairperson expressed her gratitude to Members for their contribution and assistance in vetting all the IT projects under the first round of SWDF Phase 2.

**Agenda Item 5 - Vetting Arrangement for IT Projects under SWDF (*Paper JC 3/14*)**

23. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms Winnie Tam reported that under the prevailing vetting arrangements, ISTB put up initially vetted applications to Members for comments and endorsement according to the agreed timeframe for the batched submission instead of an agreed number of projects for each batch. From September 2013 to March 2014, a total of 170 IT projects were sent to Members for consideration in six batches before they were submitted to the Lotteries Fund Advisory Committee for approval on the allocation of SWDF. Members were requested to give their views in a standard feedback form within 10 working days. JCIT's endorsement of all IT projects under first round of Phase 2 was completed in April 2014.

24. Ms Winnie Tam supplemented that the vetting of SWDF applications were prioritised according to the dates of application. Nevertheless, as some NGOs took longer time to fine-tune / revise their IT proposals, the date of receipt of the finalised proposals would be taken as the 'ultimate' date of application. She reported that the vetting exercise under first round of Phase 2 was conducted smoothly while the number of projects varied among the six batches. Ms Winnie Tam further shared the reasons for the uneven distribution which were depicted in the Paper JC 3/14.

25. Mr Kwok Lit-tung expressed that he was satisfied with the existing arrangement, whereas Dr Ng Nam showed concern about the large number of projects in one batch. Upon Members' deliberation about the vetting arrangement for future IT projects under SWDF, the Chairperson concluded that the current vetting arrangement would remain unchanged while the number of batches and the number of projects in each batch could be adjusted flexibly with a view to facilitating NGOs to start their IT projects as early as possible.

## **Agenda Item 6 - Any Other Business**

26. The Chairperson shared with Members that, as recommended by the Lump Sum Grant Independent Review Committee, the welfare sector should develop a Best Practice Manual (BPM) for NGOs on human resource management, financial management, as well as corporate governance and accountability. The BPM was endorsed in April 2014 and put in use among NGOs in July 2014. The Chairperson opined that HKCSS' e-Platform was one of the possible ways to facilitate sharing among NGOs to accomplish the desired practice.

27. As regards Mr Billy Tang's concern on NGOs' awareness about the de-support of Windows XP, the Chairperson advised that the information could be disseminated to NGOs through the existing channels between HKCSS and the welfare sector. In response to Mr James Leung's enquiry about the use of Block Grant for the procurement of software, Ms Winnie Tam undertook to check the information with the Lotteries Fund Projects Section and keep Members abreast of the scope of Block Grant.

*[Post-meeting Notes: Through email on 17 September 2014, Members were informed that the Block Grant could be used to replace / upgrade IT equipment, which referred to the procurement of personal computers and related software and peripherals, i.e. printer, scanner and USB flash drive for data backup.]*

28. The Chairperson thanked Members for their valuable views given in the meeting. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45am.

## **Agenda Item 7 - Date of Next Meeting**

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