

City I&T Grand Challenge invites innovative solutions for Hong Kong's future (with photos/video)

To promote an innovation and technology (I&T) culture and enhance the application of I&T in the community, the second City I&T Grand Challenge, organised by the Innovation and Technology Commission together with the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTPC), was launched today (March 16). The theme of the competition this year is "Hong Kong's Got I&T". All sectors of the community are invited to put forward I&T solutions focusing on two subjects, namely "I&T for Nature (Yama)" and "I&T for Community (Community Wellness)", to enhance the experience of nature and create a caring society in Hong Kong. A series of workshops and other activities will also be held to promote a positive I&T atmosphere in the community.

Officiating at the launching ceremony, the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, said that teams participating in the inaugural City I&T Grand Challenge had skilfully applied technology to propose practical and considerate solutions to tackle problems and pain points in people's lives. He encouraged students and the public to actively participate in the competition to contribute for better living and the future of I&T in Hong Kong.

Mr Chan added that the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has been committed to investing in I&T development in recent years to bring new impetus to the city's social and economic development, to enhance its competitiveness, as well as to create more quality employment opportunities for people in Hong Kong. He stated that President Xi Jinping's proposal of developing new quality productive forces by adapting measures to local conditions in which factors of production being transformed towards digitalisation and intelligentisation, has also been the direction for the Budget this year. As Hong Kong possesses unique advantages in artificial intelligence, data industry, biomedicine and green technology, the Government will develop these key areas in the future, so as to further create room for the I&T development.

The Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, said in his welcoming remarks that, the winning solutions of the first City I&T Grand Challenge serves as a testament of strong creativity, observation and operability of the people in Hong Kong. He was pleased to learn that some projects have been successfully applied into community for benefit of the general public with the use of technology, while some winners even joined the incubation programmes offered by the HKSTPC and Cyberport to continue their journeys in research and development. Professor Sun also invited the community to participate in the competition and to achieve the "I&T for all" target.

Also speaking at the ceremony, the Chairman of the HKSTPC, Dr Sunny Chai, said that the HKSTPC was delighted to be the co-organising partner of the City I&T Grand Challenge once again. The previous cohort saw a highly enthusiastic response despite the pandemic, with a number of innovations already being trialed in public organisations, including the internationally-recognised "Smart Belt" which transformed navigation for the visually impaired and enhanced their independence while travelling. He looked forward to unearthing more innovative ideas in the competition to solve critical societal issues through I&T.

In addition, the winners of the first City I&T Grand Challenge shared their experiences of the initial competition at the launching ceremony. They believe that the competition provided an ideal platform and resources for them to realise their I&T solutions to bring convenience to daily lives. Through the sharing, it is hoped to inspire society to join this year's competition and promote social progress through innovation.

The City I&T Grand Challenge is open for submission from April 5 to May 16. Primary and secondary school students, local and non-local university and tertiary students as well as all sectors of the community are invited to participate. Winners in all groups will receive a cash prize and a trophy. Winners of the University/Tertiary Institute and Open groups will also have the opportunity to receive funding of up to HK\$1 million for research and development and training to refine their I&T solutions for trials at designated venues such as government departments or public organisations.

The competition calls for innovative solutions for daily life issues under two sub-themes, namely "I&T for Nature" and "I&T for Community". "I&T for Nature" revolves around improving the operation and management of country parks and campsites, and enhancing hikers' experiences in nature with the use of I&T. "I&T for Community" is about enhancing support for carers through the application of I&T.

A series of workshops, seminars and trainings will be organised on sub-themes of the competition and I&T related knowledge. All activities are free of charge and members of the public are welcome to join. Details are available on the City I&T Grand Challenge website (citytechgc.hk).

