

# City I&T Grand Challenge invites innovative solutions from community for smart living under new normal

Organised by the Innovation and Technology Commission together with the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation, the first City I&T Grand Challenge was launched today (December 18). In light of the new normal under the epidemic, the theme of the competition this year is "Innovating for Hong Kong's New Normal" and invites all sectors of the community to put forward innovation and technology (I&T) solutions focusing on two issues, namely environmental sustainability and social connectivity, to tackle problems facing the city and people in their daily lives. A series of workshops and other activities will also be held to create an I&T atmosphere in the whole community.

In his video speech for the launch of the event, the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, said that the Government has allocated over \$100 billion in recent years for I&T infrastructure and development. It has provided full support for nurturing I&T talents and fostering an I&T ecosystem. It is committed to improving the entire I&T industry chain from research and development (R&D) to production and marketing, enabling local I&T talents and enterprises to excel. The COVID-19 epidemic has led people to change their old lifestyles and to think about how to solve problems with technology. He believes that the City I&T Grand Challenge will draw creative ideas from all sectors for developing I&T and smart living proposals to help people live as usual and even in a better way in the new normal during and after the epidemic.

The Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit, said in his video address that, in addition to promoting a diversified economy and injecting new impetus into the economy of Hong Kong, an even more important objective for the Government to push forward I&T development is to improve the quality of life, bringing convenience and benefits to members of the public. Describing the City I&T Grand Challenge as an "I&T marathon", Mr Sit hoped that the whole community could take part in and benefit from it. He also hoped that the City I&T Grand Challenge will fuel community-wide enthusiasm for I&T, especially among young people.

Speaking at the media briefing of the competition today, the Commissioner for Innovation and Technology, Ms Rebecca Pun, said that while some business plan competitions put focus on the team members and product development capabilities of a company and its investment prospects, the City I&T Grand Challenge evaluates each proposal based on its originality, uniqueness and effectiveness, application of I&T, as well as social benefits and impact.

Also speaking at the briefing, the Chief Executive Officer of the Hong

Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation, Mr Albert Wong, said that everyone has the potential to be an innovator to shape the future. The City I&T Grand Challenge offers an invaluable opportunity for the public to apply creativity and develop smart solutions catering to the new normal under the epidemic for the benefit of the community.

The City I&T Grand Challenge is open for application from today till April 24, 2021. Target participants range from primary and secondary school students to local and non-local tertiary students, I&T enterprises, R&D teams and entrepreneurs. Winners will be awarded a cash prize and a trophy. For the winners of the University and Open categories, they will also have a chance to receive R&D resources and training for refining their I&T solutions for trying at a designated venue such as a government department or a public organisation.

Under each of the focused issues of environmental sustainability and social connectivity, the City I&T Grand Challenge sets up two specific scenarios for participants to select for developing innovative solutions. For "environmental sustainability", the two scenarios are surrounding disposable plastic tableware and household food waste, which are pressing environmental problems in the new normal. As regards "social connectivity", the two scenarios are mainly concerned about the physical and social well-being of senior citizens and children under the new normal of social distancing and distance learning.

The website of the City I&T Grand Challenge has been launched for the public to submit applications. A host of workshops, seminars and training activities will also be organised to introduce knowledge on technologies and entrepreneurship as well as topical daily life issues. All are welcome to join. Details are available at the event website ([citytechgc.hk](http://citytechgc.hk)).