

# Government adopts multi-tech approach to support home quarantine

A spokesman for the Innovation and Technology Bureau said today (March 16) that the Government is adopting a multi-tech approach in home quarantine support. With the electronic wristbands developed by the Logistics and Supply Chain MultiTech R&D Centre (LSCM) as a key solution, other technology solutions are also being introduced to complement the current monitoring system in dealing with the evolving epidemic.

Since February 8, over 50 000 people have been put under home quarantine. With the issuance of Red Outbound Travel Alert on a number of European and Asian countries and the United States, the number of people under home quarantine will continue to rise. The Anti-epidemic Fund has set aside \$50 million for home quarantine support with the aid of technology. So far, 5 000 reusable wristbands produced by the LSCM are readily available and another 60 000 disposable wristbands have been procured from the market. Among which, 5 000 disposable wristbands were delivered and tested. The remaining 55 000 wristbands will be delivered in batches.

The spokesman said that the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) has been in contact with different developers to source other technology solutions that can complement the current monitoring system and enhance the effectiveness of monitoring. The OGCIO is now in collaboration with Compathnion Technology Limited which is a local startup in the Science Park. Developed by the startup and a local university, the mobile app paired with the electronic wristbands can help analyse the change in communication signals with artificial intelligence and big data to ascertain people under quarantine are staying at their dwelling places.

"The mobile app has been used together with the electronic wristbands since last Saturday (March 14) and proven effective. To enhance the effectiveness of monitoring, the solution application will be adopted for those to be put under compulsory quarantine. In case anyone under quarantine leaves the dwelling place, the Department of Health and the Police will be alerted to take follow-up action. This solution application fits well for compulsory home quarantine as the technology is most suitable for use in indoor environment and the wristband is waterproof. This is a perfect demonstration of applying local technological development for the benefit of local people," the spokesman added.

The decision of technologies to be used in monitoring was made on a risk-based approach. During the quarantine period, various measures are used to ensure the compliance of quarantine order, including the sharing of real-time location via communications software (WhatsApp or WeChat) by those under quarantine. The staff at the communication centres set up by the OGCIO will check the location of people under quarantine from time to time and make surprise video calls to ensure that they are staying at their dwelling

places.