

Government releases Multi-functional Smart Lampposts Technical Advisory Ad Hoc Committee Report

The Government released today (March 9) the Committee Report submitted by the Multi-functional Smart Lampposts Technical Advisory Ad Hoc Committee to the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. The Committee unanimously agreed that the Government should continue to take forward the pilot scheme to install multi-functional smart lampposts as smart lampposts are key digital infrastructure for promoting smart city development and facilitating 5G mobile network implementation in Hong Kong.

After reviewing comprehensively the design and operation of smart lampposts as well as the functions and technologies employed for applications, the Committee supported the Government to install the following devices, which do not have privacy concerns, in the smart lampposts:

- LED lighting;
- Meteorological sensors;
- Air quality sensors;
- Thermal detectors; and
- Radio-frequency identification tags, Geo-QR codes and Bluetooth beacons (to identify the geo-location of a lamppost).

While the Committee noted that the Government has strictly complied with the requirements of Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, it recommended the following measures to address public concern over potential privacy issues on some of the applications:

- Use more privacy-friendly technologies as substitutes for cameras and Bluetooth detectors;
- Set up a rigorous, credible and transparent governance mechanism to review and approve any new smart lamppost application prior to installation, and make the decision fully transparent to the public; and
- Engage independent third-party professionals to conduct regular security and privacy review of technologies, functions, applications and devices of smart lampposts in accordance with relevant laws and international standards.

The Government Chief Information Officer and Convenor of the Committee, Mr Victor Lam, expressed gratitude for the great effort of the Committee and said that the Government would refine the applications and implementation arrangements of the pilot scheme in accordance with the Committee's recommendations.

"We will seek the relevant District Councils' support for continuing with the implementation work," Mr Lam said.

Set up in August 2019, the Committee is tasked to strengthen data security and personal privacy protection and instil public confidence in smart lampposts. The Committee has provided expert advice and recommendations on matters including the use of technologies and devices in individual applications, management of data, physical design of lampposts, facilitation for 5G implementation and governance arrangements as well as promotion and public engagement.

The Committee held its seventh meeting through video conferencing on February 28 and endorsed the Committee Report by circulation afterwards. The Report is available on the Multi-functional Smart Lampposts thematic webpage: www.ogcio.gov.hk/en/our_work/strategies/initiatives/smart_lampposts/.