

HKO awarded at 19th APICTA Awards (with photos)

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) bagged two Winner Awards at the 19th Asia Pacific Information and Communications Technology Alliance (APICTA) Awards with its in-house developed nowcasting system.

Joined by 250 teams from 15 economies, the 19th APICTA Awards was held from November 19 to 22 in Ha Long, Vietnam. The nowcasting system named SWIRLS (Short-range Warning of Intense Rainstorms in Localized Systems) developed in-house by the HKO won two Winner Awards in entries titled "Public Sector and Government category – Government & Citizen Services" and "Technology category – Artificial Intelligence".

The HKO's nowcasting system SWIRLS makes use of weather observations from radars, lightning sensors and rain gauges, in combination with information and artificial intelligence technologies, to provide effective forecasts of rainfall and lightning a few hours ahead, supporting the HKO's rainstorm forecasting and warning services. In turn, such services assist members of the public, government departments and public utilities in taking precautionary measures ahead of inclement weather to safeguard public safety and reduce damage. The HKO also shares the source code of SWIRLS with other regions to promote Hong Kong's internationally leading role in respect of nowcasting techniques and applications in weather services.

SWIRLS also won the Smart Business Grand Award and the Smart Business (Solution for Business and Public Sector Enterprise) Gold Award at the Hong Kong ICT Awards 2019 in April this year.

