

LCQ10: Attracting innovation and technology enterprises to operate in Hong Kong

Following is a question by the Hon Andrew Lam and a written reply by the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, in the Legislative Council today (November 22):

Question:

The Government has indicated that it aims to attract innovation and technology (I&T) enterprises with potential or representativeness to set up operations or expand their presence in Hong Kong. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has analysed and studied the following information on I&T enterprises operating in traditional business districts and industrial districts: (i) their numbers, (ii) the districts in which they are located, (iii) their specific I&T uses in the I&T industry chain (broken down by upstream (research and development), midstream (prototype or application development) and downstream (manufacturing)), and (iv) their scale; and

(2) as it takes time to implement and construct new development areas to support I&T development, whether the Government will attract I&T enterprises to first set up operations in traditional business districts and industrial districts, and introduce policies and measures to ensure that the ancillary facilities in such districts meet the operational requirements of I&T enterprises; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Chief Executive announced in the 2022 Policy Address specific facilitation policies on the development of technology industries, focusing on attracting enterprises and talents in technology industries with a competitive edge and of strategic significance, including life and health technology, artificial intelligence and data science, advanced manufacturing and new energy technology, etc., to establish presence or expand their business in Hong Kong.

The Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau (ITIB) is working at full steam in attracting strategic innovation and technology (I&T) enterprises. In close collaboration with the Office of Attracting Strategic Enterprises (OASES), the ITIB is liaising with Mainland and overseas I&T enterprises in strategic industries to introduce Hong Kong's strengths as well as the latest development in I&T industry, with a view to attracting them to establish presence in Hong Kong.

After consulting the Development Bureau (DEVB) and OASES, our consolidated reply to various parts of the question is as follows:

The DEVB pointed out that traditional business and industrial districts have the potential to promote the development of I&T given their historical development background. In terms of land use planning, traditional business and industrial districts are mainly zoned "Commercial", "Industrial" or "Industrial Estate" on statutory plans, which may accommodate a variety of uses, including those related to the "Information Technology and Telecommunications Industries" (such as data centre, data processing/computer centre, telesite or carrier hotel). The aforementioned uses are generally permitted in the relevant zones, therefore no planning permission is required to carry out the relevant activities within these zones. Hence, the Government does not maintain statistical breakdown on detailed information of I&T enterprises that operate in traditional business and industrial districts.

Meanwhile, the two I&T flagships in Hong Kong, namely the Hong Kong Science Park and Cyberport, have admitted a certain amount of I&T enterprises and gradually developed an I&T ecosystem of a certain scale. The Science Park and Cyberport also offer support for start-ups and tenants through incubation programmes and one-stop support services. In view of this, currently, when attracting strategic I&T enterprises to establish presence, the ITIB and OASES mainly suggest that enterprises consider existing facilities that could meet their needs, such as the Science Park and Cyberport.

Managed and operated by the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTPC), the Science Park in Pak Shek Kok, the InnoCentre in Kowloon Tong, and the three InnoParks in Tai Po, Yuen Long and Tseung Kwan O support around 1 400 enterprises. The three InnoParks provide multi-storey and highly-efficient specialised industrial buildings to encourage manufacturers to set up production base in Hong Kong, thereby promoting smart production and attracting high value-added technology industries to set up production lines in Hong Kong. The Microelectronics Centre at Yuen Long InnoPark will be commissioned next year to provide advanced infrastructure and hardware facilities designated for microelectronics. The HKSTPC will also complete Batch 1 of Stage 2 of the Science Park Expansion Programme in 2025.

For Cyberport, it currently has four office buildings in its premises, providing a series of support services to around 2 000 technology start-ups in the fields of financial technology, digital entertainment and smart living. Construction works of the Cyberport expansion project is underway for expected completion in end-2025 to cater for the needs of the ever-expanding Cyberport community. To support the tremendous local demand for computing power and promote development of the artificial intelligence (AI) industry ecosystem, Cyberport will establish an AI supercomputing centre in phases starting from 2024 to provide the local I&T industry with strategic technology infrastructure.

To better align with the goal of attracting strategic I&T enterprises into Hong Kong, the Government will make forward planning to provide more

land for I&T use and advanced manufacturing space. As the sites in San Tin Technopole (including the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park in the Loop) will be made available gradually, more options will be available for the enterprises.