

LCQ18: "iAM Smart" mobile application

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Lo Wai-kiok and a written reply by the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit, in the Legislative Council today (July 14):

Question:

In December last year, the Government launched "iAM Smart", which is a one-stop personalised digital services platform. Members of the public can use various online services after logging in, with a single digital identity, to the "iAM Smart" mobile application on their mobile phones. However, quite a number of them have relayed that the registration procedure of the application is cumbersome, and that most of the functions provided by the application do no more than connecting to the websites of the relevant Government departments. It has been reported that the number of downloads registered by the application in the first six months after its launch represents just six per cent of the Hong Kong population. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will allocate additional resources for consolidating and enhancing the various online services provided through "iAM Smart", thereby achieving the objective of bringing genuine convenience to members of the public; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it will study the establishment of an electronic payment channel in which the authentication of identity can be made through "iAM Smart", so as to facilitate the speedy disbursements of various types of cash allowances and consumption vouchers to members of the public; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will discuss with the Governments of the Guangdong Province and Macao allowing those Hong Kong people who are receiving education, working and living in the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area to carry out operations such as authentication of identity and digital signing through "iAM Smart" when using online services; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

"iAM Smart" was officially launched on December 29, 2020, with over 600 000 registrants as of early July 2021. This represents a participation rate of about 8.7 per cent based on eligible population, which is better than the half-year participation rates after the launch of similar initiatives in other countries, such as Belgium (2.6 per cent), Estonia (3.6 per cent) and Singapore (4 per cent). In order to raise the confidence of both users and online service providers in using "iAM Smart" for online identity authentication, we adopted a relatively stringent registration procedure,

which requires the user to authenticate his/her Hong Kong Identity Card from different angles and to verify his/her identity by undertaking specific actions. The user is only required to register once to confirm his/her identity, then he/she can access different online services securely through "iAM Smar" subsequently.

Regarding the different parts of Dr the Hon Lo Wai-kwok's question, our reply in consultation with the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau is as follows:

(1) The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) has been actively promoting and arranging "iAM Smart" adoption by government online services. The OGCIO also provides resources for government bureaux and departments (B/Ds) to improve and enhance their systems to support "iAM Smart" through the Capital Works Reserve Fund Head 710 – Computerisation block allocation subhead. As of early July 2021, there are over 110 commonly used online services of the Government as well as public and private organisations adopting "iAM Smart". Upon the adoption of "iAM Smart" by those government online services having completed their major system upgrades, we expect that by end-2023, the public will be able to access over 180 government online services through the "iAM Smart" platform.

The OGCIO will continue to promote the adoption of user authentication and digital signing function of "iAM Smart" by B/Ds, so as to bring greater convenience to the public with the development of more digital government services and streamlined business processes, which include allowing the public to complete the required procedures online without having to visit respective offices in person. As of now, users of "iAM Smart+" with digital signing function can digitally sign and submit online applications for renewal of vehicle licence.

(2) When the Government launched the Cash Payout Scheme (CPS) last year, we have, through the Personal Information Collection Statement (PICS) on the registration form, sought the applicant's consent to authorise the Government to reuse the personal data provided when launching similar schemes in future which are aimed at encouraging local consumption, relieving people's financial burden, and/or returning wealth to the people. The Government has also developed a registration database to maintain and facilitate the use of such data for similar schemes in the future. The Consumption Voucher Scheme, which is now open for registration, allows people to authenticate their identity using the "iAM Smart" mobile app. If a person has successfully registered and received payment/collected the cheque under the CPS, he/she does not need to fill in the personal data already provided again, and can update the data if necessary. After the registrant has acknowledged the arrangements mentioned under the PICS of the CPS, his/her data will be kept in the registration database for reuse by the Government for other similar schemes in future if necessary.

(3) The OGCIO is exploring with relevant authorities in the Mainland and Macao on the collaboration opportunities between their identity authentication systems and "iAM Smart", such as making use of the mutual

recognition of electronic signature certificates to promote cross-boundary e-commerce applications, facilitating Hong Kong citizens to use "iAM Smart" to log in different online services, conduct online transactions, and perform digital signing with legal backing, etc., in different places (including in the Greater Bay Area). We will announce further details on the associated measures in due course.