

LCQ20: Measures on promoting development of Art Tech

Following is a question by the Hon Ma Fung-kwok and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Caspar Tsui, in the Legislative Council today (February 24):

Question:

The Chief Executive has indicated in the 2020 Policy Address that the Government will actively promote the development of Art Tech. To this end, the Secretary for Home Affairs will take the lead in setting up a cross-bureau task force (task force), and invite the participation of representatives from the relevant sectors and non-governmental organisations in the formulation of relevant strategies and measures. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) when the task force will be set up, and what sectors and organisations the representatives of which will be invited to participate in the work of the task force;
- (2) given that the Government has set aside a total of \$100 million under four funds (i.e. the Arts and Sport Development Fund, the Innovation and Technology Fund, the Film Development Fund and the CreateSmart Initiative) for the relevant sectors to apply for funding for implementing projects on integrating technology and arts, of the division of labour among these funds;
- (3) whether the Government will draw reference from the strategies of the authorities in the United Kingdom, South Korea and Taiwan for developing Art Tech, and in the long run establish a dedicated subsidy fund for Art Tech; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (4) apart from providing a Testbed Studio for applying Art Tech in the East Kowloon Cultural Centre which is under construction, whether the Government will gradually upgrade the facilities in the performance venues under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), such as upgrading the stage equipment, providing free WiFi and increasing the bandwidth of the wireless network, so as to offer more venues for applying Art Tech;
- (5) whether LCSD will support arts groups in conducting more creative activities that integrate technology and arts, including assisting them in online live broadcasting or re-broadcasting of the relevant activities, as well as sponsoring and procuring more programmes of online live broadcast performances; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (6) whether LCSD will incorporate more Art Tech elements in the exhibits of its museums to enhance the viewing experience of visitors; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (7) of the measures in place to promote the exchanges and collaboration

between arts workers and members of the technology sector, so as to spur the development and innovation of Art Tech?

Reply:

President,

(1) The inter-departmental Task Force on Arts Technology (Task Force) led by the Secretary for Home Affairs convened its first meeting on February 17. The members of the Task Force include representatives of the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, Education Bureau, Innovation and Technology Bureau, Innovation and Technology Commission and Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). Arts and technology have wide coverage. Arts tech is even rapidly developing. The interfacing and connection of arts and technology with other industries are also constantly changing. The Task Force will consult the relevant industries and their representatives on its work plan as appropriate, and invite representatives from the industries or non-government organisations to attend the meeting, taking into account the development of arts tech and other needs.

(2) and (3) As mentioned in the 2020 Policy Address, relevant policy bureaux have set aside a total of \$100 million under funds or schemes of their respective purview (including the Arts and Sport Development Fund, the Innovation and Technology Fund, the Film Development Fund and the CreateSmart Initiative) for those who are interested in promoting arts tech to apply. The Innovation and Technology Fund does not have a cap on the number of applications of a particular category. The funds or schemes above have dedicated objectives and different target applicants, the details of which are at Annex. In order to assist the industry to take forward proposals related to arts tech, the Task Force will provide a one-stop service to answer applicants' queries and refer them to the suitable fund or scheme.

(4) The LCSD plans to join hands with artists, creative media schools and technology professionals in the promotion of arts tech development. The East Kowloon Cultural Centre (EKCC), which is now under construction, will provide a testbed studio to be equipped with the following advance technology:

- Stage computerised execution system and real-time tracking system for incorporating and automating various stage facilities, including projection mapping and audio/visual systems to create immersive and multi-sensational experience;
- 3-dimensional flying system and hanging system for enhancing stage effects;
- optical fibre that connects multiple venues inside the EKCC for live streaming of performances onto the digital displays/signage, as well as webcasting to audience outside the EKCC;
- augmented/virtual/mixed/extended reality equipment including 270 degree LED screens that enable different modes of presentation in stage productions incorporating synchronised virtual reality and physical stage sets; and
- live streaming and recording with cinematographic and image processing

system to reach out and interact with a larger number of audience outside the theatres.

In addition to the EKCC which is under construction, the LCSD is also actively enhancing the broadband network facilities of its performance venues to provide high-speed and secure data transmission services for live streaming or recorded performances of art groups. It is expected that 70 per cent of performance venues will be equipped with optical fiber broadband facilities in the first quarter of 2021. Currently, the public space in performance venues is equipped with free GovWiFi. Performance venues will gradually expand their WiFi networks in major and ancillary facilities for art groups and the public use from 2021-22 onwards so that arts groups and members of the public can enjoy Internet connection. We will discuss with the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and stakeholders to explore the feasibility of using 5G Internet access in performance venues.

In addition, the LCSD performance venues are procuring by phases 4K digital light processing projector, 4K pan-tilt-zoom camera, camera remote controller and related digital equipment for live streaming, immersive effect sound system, digital sound console and LED moving lights to support visual art creations of arts groups that incorporate arts tech as well as live streaming or video recording.

(5) To dovetail with the Government's broad direction in developing high technology and adopting technology in service delivery, the LCSD has launched the Edutainment Channel, a brand-new one-stop online resources centre which enables the watching of live-streaming/recorded cultural programmes any time comfortably at home as well.

In 2020-21, the LCSD engaged and supported small- and medium-sized local arts groups and artists in curating and producing online programmes for the Edutainment Channel under the contents of "101 Academy Series", "WeWeWebWeb Carnival", "ReNew Vision" and "Click for Arts". Ranging from performances, basics of arts appreciation to interactive and learning programmes, these online programmes are well received by the public.

In 2021-22, the LCSD will continue to produce and offer programmes for broadcasting on its platforms so that cultural programmes of a wide variety suiting different tastes and ages could be provided online. More diverse and quality performing arts programmes from around the world will continue to be provided to members of the public, and live relays at different locations or live streaming will be arranged for selected mega shows free-of-charge. Apart from enhancing Hong Kong's status as an international cultural metropolis, this initiative will also serve the purpose of providing quality programmes to people from different communities and all walks of life.

In addition, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, arts groups were not able to conduct outbound cultural exchange activities and performances in the Mainland and overseas; and have thus switched to online. In order to provide more performance opportunities to local arts groups as well as to enhance the understanding of Hong Kong arts groups by Mainland and overseas audiences, some programmes, including selected Greater Bay Area touring programmes and

some from the upcoming Hong Kong Week 2021 @ Guangzhou, have been recorded and switched to online viewing on the Mainland online platforms.

(6) The LCSD museums will continue to explore application of new technology when staging exhibitions to enhance visitors' experience. A recent example is the "Honouring Tradition and Heritage: Min Chiu Society at Sixty" exhibition currently showing at the Hong Kong Museum of Art. The exhibition applied augmented reality technology complemented with interactive exhibits and animations to facilitate visitors' appreciation of the production of traditional paintings, ceramics, jade carvings and silk work in an interesting way.

(7) The LCSD is planning an expo in April 2021 for the technology and arts and cultural sectors to explore the integration of arts and technology and to foster potential collaborations. The LCSD expects that nine companies from the innovation and technology industry and about 1 600 arts practitioners would join the expo. Besides, with the setup of the testbed studio at the EKCC, the LCSD plans to collaborate with artists, creative media schools under tertiary institutions and technology professionals in the promotion of arts tech development. With the support of the technology professionals on the curating and application of arts tech, artists and local young people aspiring to start a career in the arts industry may use the testbed studio as an incubator to exchange, create, experiment and rehearse their works before staging. Alternatively, they may showcase their newly created works in the form of art installation, exhibition, workshop, etc. It is anticipated that productions staged at the EKCC throughout the year will create more job opportunities in the arts and related technical areas, and offer more chances for the young people to showcase their talents.