

New Smart LAB co-creates innovative IT solutions with industry to enhance public services

The Smart Government Innovation Lab (Smart LAB) was officially launched today (May 30) to provide a platform for encouraging innovative solutions and product suggestions from the IT sector, particularly local start-ups and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), to address public service delivery and operational needs. It aims to facilitate the adoption of innovative technology to enhance city management and provide better public services for citizens. The Acting Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Dr David Chung, described the setting-up of Smart LAB as a milestone towards the development of a "smart government".

With the objective of "Connect, Inspire, Co-create", Smart LAB aims to connect the service needs of individual departments with quality solutions from the industry. Proof-of-concept and technology testing will be arranged to enable departments to have a better picture of the effectiveness and limitations of suitable solutions, thereby assisting them in formulating innovative measures that are conducive to streamlining operations and upgrading services. Located in Cyberport, Smart LAB also showcases technologies that are being tested, or have been successfully tested, in various departments to inspire wider adoption by other departments. To foster exchanges and sharing between departments and the industry, technology forums and thematic workshops will be organised regularly with a view to co-developing more I&T solutions that best suit the public service needs.

Dr Chung said at the opening ceremony that Smart LAB is a testing ground and showroom to pull together government departments and I&T enterprises. It will not only further assist departments in the adoption of IT, but also open up more business opportunities for local start-ups and SMEs. The ultimate goal is to bring quality services to the public.

The Government Chief Information Officer, Mr Victor Lam, added that the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) is working with the Cyberport and the Hong Kong Science Park in organising technology forums. These technology forums will be conducted at quarterly intervals so that government departments can grasp trends and get updates on the latest solutions and products, while industry players can get hold of the business needs of government departments. The first forum, themed "Smart City Infrastructure", will be held on June 26 at Cyberport, followed tentatively by another in September at Hong Kong Science Park. Mr Lam said he expected that the move would give start-ups and SMEs a greater chance in bidding for government projects.

Also newly launched today is a dedicated website for Smart Lab (www.smartlab.gov.hk), where service needs of different departments are

listed. Industry players are invited to submit technology proposals to address such challenges. IT solutions put forward by the industry are also available on the website for government departments to search for suitable solutions and potential suppliers.

Since the establishment of Smart LAB in April, the OGCI0 has already approached some bureaux and departments to explore the feasibility of adopting various IT solutions. Technologies that have undergone or are undergoing proof-of-concept testing are now on display at Smart LAB. These include anti-bot solutions to prevent people from using computer programmes to automatically book public facilities; smart sensing technology and geographic information services for monitoring tree stability; video analytics for monitoring traffic conditions; virtual reality technologies for assisting the design of construction sites, monitoring of construction process and urban development planning, as well as others related to the Internet of Things, blockchain, artificial intelligence, cloud technologies and big data.