

Appointment of Directors of Hong Kong Cyberport Management Company Limited

The Government today (March 20) announced the appointment of three new Directors and the reappointment of six serving members to the Board of Directors of the Hong Kong Cyberport Management Company Limited, for a two-year term from April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2026.

The three new Directors are Mr Nicholas Chan Hiu-fung, Mr Ken Wong Kin-hang and Mr Patrick Tsang On-yip. Six serving Directors, Mr Simon Chan Sai-ming, Professor Christopher Chao Yu-hang, Ms Ivy Cheung Wing-han, Mr Michael Leung Kin-man, Ms Erica Ma Yun and Ms Maggie Tsoi Tsz-shan, have been reappointed to the Board.

The Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, welcomed the above appointments. He said, "Over the past two years, the Board has made remarkable contributions by leading Cyberport in its public mission of building a digital technology community, nurturing start-ups, and attracting top-notch enterprises and talent to Cyberport. I am confident that under the Board's leadership, Cyberport will continue to further advance the development of the digital technology ecosystem and take forward various key initiatives such as the Artificial Intelligence Supercomputing Centre, which will help Hong Kong develop into an international innovation and technology centre."

Professor Sun also expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the outgoing Directors, Ms Karen Chan Ka-yin and Mr Hendrick Sin, for their contributions to Cyberport over the past six years.

The full membership of the Board with effect from April 1, 2024, is as follows:

Mr Nicholas Chan Hiu-fung
Mr Simon Chan Sai-ming
Professor Christopher Chao Yu-hang
Ms Ivy Cheung Wing-han
Mr Jack Kong Jianping
Mr Lau Kwok-fan
Mr Michael Leung Kin-man
Ms Erica Ma Yun
Mr Victor Ng Chi-keung
Dr Derrick Pang Yat-bond
Dr Charleston Sin Chiu-shun
Mr Patrick Tsang On-yip
Ms Maggie Tsoi Tsz-shan
Mr Ken Wong Kin-hang
Mr Eric Yeung Chuen-sing
Permanent Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry

LCQ14: Development of mobile communications services

Following is a question by the Hon Stanley Li and a written reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau, in the Legislative Council today (March 20):

Question:

Regarding the development of mobile communications services, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that at present, the terms and conditions of telecommunications licences do not require licensees to provide mobile network coverage for specific locations, and mobile network operators (MNOs) may decide on their own whether or not to install the relevant equipment (e.g. antennae and mobile network base stations) having regard to factors such as commercial costs, how the Government ensures that the quality of fifth generation (5G) mobile networks in Hong Kong meets public expectations;

(2) given that the Government indicated last month that it would expedite the expansion of mobile network infrastructure in rural and remote areas through subsidies, and that it planned to conduct an industry consultation on the implementation and technical details within this year, of the specific timetable for the consultation and the progress of the preparatory work;

(3) of the total number of complaints received by the Government about poor 5G mobile network signals in each of the past three years; how the Office of the Communications Authority will follow up complaints about signal coverage blind spots (including those in urban areas, rural areas and MTR stations, etc.);

(4) given that in order to assist MNOs in setting up radio base stations, the Government has opened up 1 500 government premises to MNOs and allowed them to install base stations on such premises at a nominal rent of \$1 per year, of the rental situation of such premises, and whether it will, in the future, consider adjusting the nominal rent for government premises in urban areas;

(5) given that some residents of Tseung Kwan O have relayed to me that 5G mobile network signals cannot be fully received in the LOHAS Park area, of the Government's solution; and

(6) how it will facilitate the research and development of the sixth generation (6G) mobile network technology in the future, so as to introduce 6G mobile network base stations in collaboration with MNOs in a timely manner, thereby achieving "full coverage" of 6G mobile networks in Hong Kong?

Reply:

President,

Since the commercial launch of the fifth generation (5G) mobile services in April 2020, 5G coverage has now reached over 90 per cent of the Hong Kong population, covering major locations in urban areas and all MTR lines of 98 stations and achieving coverage of 99 per cent in core business districts. There are over 6 million 5G users, representing almost 90 per cent of the population. According to a report published by an international survey organisation in July 2023, Hong Kong ranked the first in Asia Pacific and European regions in terms of 5G availability.

In consultation with the Office of Communications Authority (OFCA), our reply to the Hon Stanley Li's questions is as follows:

(1), (2), (4) and (6) To further enhance the coverage of 5G mobile network and prepare for future development of more advanced mobile communications technology, the Government has been implementing the following measures, including:

(i) Increasing mobile communications infrastructure: The Legislative Council passed the amendments to the Telecommunications Ordinance (Cap. 106) on the third reading on February 21 this year, enabling the implementation of the initiative proposed in the 2022 Policy Address to enhance 5G infrastructure by allowing access for mobile network operators (MNOs) to install mobile communications facilities in reserved space in new or redeveloped specified buildings in future. Specified buildings under the Ordinance cover commercial, industrial, residential, and hotel buildings. In addition, new government buildings and public housing estates will also follow the relevant arrangements for the provision of mobile communications facilities. The aforementioned amendments will come into effect on a date to be specified by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development by notice published in the Gazette later. The relevant arrangements will help further expand the coverage and capacity of mobile network in Hong Kong;

(ii) Ensuring the supply of 5G spectrum: As one of the measures announced in the 2023 Policy Address, the Government will conduct auctions for the spectrum in the 850/900 MHz, 2.3 GHz and the newly launched 6/7 GHz bands in the fourth quarter of this year, providing a total of 510 MHz of spectrum for public mobile services. The Government will continue to keep in view the technology and market developments and make available more suitable spectrum for MNOs to develop their services and other innovative technologies. MNOs who acquire the spectrum in these bands will benefit from the Inland Revenue (Amendment) (Tax Deductions for Spectrum Utilization Fees) Ordinance 2024 which took effect in January this year, allowing full tax deductions for the relevant spectrum utilisation fees.

At present, when the Government assigns spectrum to MNOs through auctions, MNOs are required to provide mobile network coverage to a specified

percentage of the population within five years of the issue of the licence to ensure the effective use of the spectrum. Relevant MNOs are also required to submit a performance bond to ensure the fulfilment of their network coverage obligations. To date, all MNOs have complied with these commitments;

(iii) Improving Network Coverage in Remote and Rural Areas: The 2023 Policy Address announced that the Government will expedite the expansion of mobile network infrastructure in rural and remote areas through subsidies, with a view to improving network coverage in these areas. We are now working on the preliminary preparatory work for the implementation of the scheme, including drawing up the eligibility criteria for participating MNOs, proposed areas and scope of coverage, number of mobile network facilities to be constructed, implementation timetable, funding mechanism and amount, etc. We will consult the industry this year to finalise the specific arrangements of the scheme.

In addition, the Government will continue to implement the Subsidy Scheme to Extend Fibre-based Networks to Villages in Remote Areas, under which the new fibre-based networks covered by the Subsidy Scheme will be extended to a total of 235 villages in phases by 2026. At present, fibre-based networks have been rolled out to more than 150 villages under the Subsidy Scheme, which will facilitate the current and future installation of mobile network facilities;

(iv) Strengthening the 5G network capacity at major public event venues: The Government will implement measure announced in the 2023 Policy Address to proactively co-ordinate with relevant organisations and MNOs to enhance the 5G network capacity at major public event venues, including the Central Harbourfront Event Space, Hong Kong Coliseum, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, AsiaWorld-Expo, etc. OFCA is reviewing the needs for mobile communications facilities at these venues with the respective venue owners, government departments and MNOs. OFCA has also been actively co-ordinating with relevant departments in respect of the approval process, with a view to enhancing the relevant facilities to increase the 5G network capacity at these venues as soon as possible; and

(v) Facilitating MNOs to install radio base stations (RBSs): The Government will continue to implement the pilot scheme proactively and facilitate MNOs to install RBSs at government premises. Having considered MNOs' suggestions and taking into account the technical feasibility and location of different venues, the Government has opened up about 1 500 venues managed by different government departments across different regions of Hong Kong to allow MNOs to install RBSs in these sites with a streamlined application procedure and a nominal rent (\$1 per year). By end February this year, more than 120 applications have been approved. We will review the list of venues in a timely manner to ensure that the pilot scheme effectively increases 5G coverage. In addition, the Government has also established a mechanism to facilitate the installation of RBSs at sheltered bus stops and public payphone kiosks by MNOs, and will reserve space and loading capacity at multi-functional smart lampposts in various districts for the installation of RBSs, with an aim to facilitating a broader expansion of 5G network coverage.

We anticipate that the 5G network coverage in Hong Kong will be even higher and more extensive after implementing the aforementioned measures. These measures are also applicable to the future development of more advanced mobile network services (including 6G). OFCA will continue to actively coordinate and implement these measures to ensure better and more comprehensive coverage of 5G network in Hong Kong.

To prepare for the development of more advanced mobile network services (such as 5.5G and 6G), major MNOs in Hong Kong have already actively commenced testing and validating 5G-Advanced (commonly known as 5.5G) network technologies. Depending on the supply of equipment and devices that support 5.5G technology, 5.5G could be more widely deployed in the market. The Government will also closely monitor the development of 6G technology, and the related services are expected to be launched by 2030. The Government will continue to monitor market developments and implement measures to support the further advancement of mobile services, ensuring that mobile network infrastructure of Hong Kong remains at the forefront of the world.

(3) The number of complaints received by OFCA about the quality of 5G mobile network services over the past three years is as follows:

Year	Complaint cases
2021	37
2022	45
2023	64

The aforementioned complaints mainly concern issues related to the speed and coverage of 5G network. Upon receipt of the relevant complaints or opinions, OFCA will carefully review the relevant cases according to the established mechanism, including contacting the complainant to further understand the nature of the issue and conducting on-site tests if necessary. Depending on the circumstances of each case, OFCA will refer the case to MNOs for follow up and improvements to ensure that the relevant issues are properly addressed.

(5) OFCA is aware that major MNOs have made multiple applications in the past to set up RBSs at LOHAS Park, but such requests have not been accepted by the relevant property owners and property management companies. Nevertheless, OFCA has been actively assisting MNOs in liaising with the relevant property owners and property management companies. As a stop-gap measure, after inspecting nearby public facilities and undergoing technical feasibility study, OFCA suggests that MNOs could set up RBSs in a government property near LOHAS Park (i.e. Tseung Kwan O Salt Water Pumping Station managed by the Water Supplies Department). On OFCA's suggestion, MNOs have submitted applications to the relevant government departments and OFCA is actively coordinating the approval process, with a view to activating the use of RBSs as soon as possible so that the mobile network coverage in LOHAS Park can be improved.

LCQ16: Provision of physical activities for primary and secondary students

Following is a question by the Hon Vincent Cheng and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (March 20):

Question:

The findings of the Territory-wide Physical Fitness Survey for the Community announced by the Community Sports Committee last year have pointed out that the physical activity level of children and adolescents failed to attain the level recommended by the World Health Organisation (i.e. an average of 60 minutes or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activities per day per week). There are views that increasing the physical education (PE) lesson time for primary and secondary students can promote their physical and mental health. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as the discussion paper on "Physical Education and Arts Education in Primary and Secondary Schools" submitted by the authorities to the Panel on Education of this Council on the second of last month has pointed out that in general, schools strengthen students' physical development through a life-wide learning approach, which includes introducing physical activity sessions such as morning exercise, increasing the proportion of physical activities in multiple intelligences lessons, arranging students to take part in physical activities during recess, lunch break or after school, and organising school team training, inter-house/class sports competitions, etc., whether the authorities have compiled statistics on the proportion of schools adopting the aforesaid learning approach, with a tabulated breakdown by geographical constituency for the 2021 Legislative Council General Election; whether the authorities have assessed the effectiveness of adopting the aforesaid learning approach by such schools;

(2) whether it has compiled statistics on the number and types of new sports introduced by all schools in Hong Kong, as well as the proportion of schools which have introduced new sports; if so, of the details (including whether students take part in new sports in PE lessons or in the form of extra-curricular activities);

(3) given that the Government has been supporting schools in employing retired athletes as School Sports Promotion Coordinators through the Retired Athletes Transformation Programme since 2018, of the number of retired athletes employed through the Programme in the past five years, as well as the sports to which such athletes belonged and their average salaries;

(4) as the Physical Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary One to Secondary Six) currently stipulates that schools should allocate five per cent to eight per cent of the total lesson time to PE lessons at the primary level, but the Primary Education Curriculum Guide (Pilot Version) introduced in 2022 recommends that the PE lesson time should account for no less than five per cent of the total lesson time, of the authorities' current requirement for the PE lesson time in primary schools;

(5) whether the authorities have reviewed and compiled statistics to see if the percentage of the PE lesson time in primary and secondary schools has reached five per cent to eight per cent of the total lesson time, and have compiled detailed statistics on the average weekly PE lesson time in primary and secondary schools; if the authorities have, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(6) as it is learnt that the PE lesson time for students in Hong Kong is significantly less than that for students on the Mainland and in Singapore and Finland, and a public opinion survey has pointed out that over 75per cent of the parents of students are in favour of increasing the PE lesson time, whether the authorities will consider conducting a study on increasing the PE lesson time and forging a consensus with the education sector and others; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Physical Education (PE) is one of the five domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics, thus has always been an essential component of school education to foster students' balanced, whole-person development throughout their journey in primary and secondary schools. The Education Bureau (EDB) has explained in detail the direction and strategies for promoting PE in primary and secondary schools to the Legislative Council Panel on Education (Note 1) in February 2024. Helping students lead a healthy lifestyle is one of the seven learning goals of primary and secondary education. Apart from providing at least two PE lessons per week for students in accordance with the PE curriculum guide as required by the EDB, schools generally adopt a life-wide learning approach with diversified physical activities within and beyond the classroom to develop students' motor skills, enhance their physical fitness, form a habit of regular participation in physical activities and promote a healthy lifestyle, thereby instilling in them positive values and attitudes.

Our reply to the Hon Vincent Cheng's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) The EDB has all along been supporting schools to promote school PE development through a life-wide learning approach, including conducting ongoing renewal of curriculum guides, developing learning and teaching resources, providing training for PE teachers, organising teacher professional networks, and launching the "Active Students, Active People"

Campaign, with a view to assisting schools in flexibly arranging different sports-related activities for students. As revealed from our communication with schools and relevant information collected, schools generally adopt a life-wide learning approach to promote the development of PE. For example, having regard to school contexts, a variety of appropriate physical activities may be arranged for students before morning assemblies, during recess or lunch break, and after school hours; sports-related extra-curricular activities and activities such as sports days, swimming galas and school team trainings are organised; opportunities to participate in inter-school sports competitions are offered for students to engage in different sports activities.

To promote newly emerging sports, the EDB encourages schools to flexibly introduce different kinds of sports in alignment with the PE curriculum. The EDB has also developed a variety of learning and teaching resources on newly emerging sports such as rope skipping and 3-on-3 basketball, and conducted professional development programmes for teachers to introduce various newly emerging sports such as pickleball, tchoukball and floorball so as to enhance teachers' knowledge. As the introduction of different sports in a school depends on a number of factors such as the physical environment and facilities available, student interests, teachers' expertise and experiences, the EDB does not have the statistics of related information.

In addition, schools also actively participate in sports activities organised by different government departments. For example, the School Sports Programme (SSP) organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has been well-received by schools since its launch. A total of over 345 000 students from 608 schools participated in the SSP in 2022-23. In 2023-24, the SSP will also promote newly emerging sport events such as 3-on-3 basketball. To encourage students to engage in physical activities, improve their cardiovascular and musculoskeletal health with the aim to reduce the risk of chronic non-communicable diseases, starting from the 2019/20 school year, the criteria of physical activities in the "sportACT Award Scheme" has included daily routine physical activities such as housework, stair climbing, brisk walking during commuting, and hiking, so as to integrate physical activity into their daily lives.

(3) Organised by the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau, the Retired Athletes Transformation Programme aims to provide additional opportunities for athletes to realise their potential for post-retirement career development in the longer-term, allowing them to assist schools and sports organisations in promoting sports, and identifying and nurturing potential sports talents. In the past five years, a total of 249 retired athletes have been employed as School Sports Promotion Coordinators under the programme. The number of retired athletes employed and their relevant expertise are as follows:

Sports	School Year				
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24

Triathlon	4	4	1	1	1
Handball	6	6	4	6	6
Water Polo	0	0	1	0	0
Athletics	4	4	5	4	3
Table-tennis	1	1	1	1	1
Badminton	0	1	0	0	0
Football	3	3	7	8	6
Cricket	1	1	0	0	0
Karatedo	5	5	5	3	3
Tenpin Bowling	7	7	6	6	6
Judo	2	2	2	2	2
Boxing	0	0	0	2	2
Cycling	9	8	3	5	6
Baseball	1	1	1	1	1
Taekwondo	1	2	3	3	4
Windsurfing	1	0	0	0	0
Sports Climbing	1	1	1	1	1
Squash	1	2	1	1	1
Canoe	0	0	0	1	1
Dragonboat	0	0	1	1	1
Rowing	4	4	3	2	2
Fin Swimming	1	1	1	1	1
Basketball	0	0	1	0	0
Total	52	53	47	49	48

The salary of the retired athletes employed is determined by their years of training as senior or professional athletes, as well as their relevant working experiences. The starting salary is between \$17,980 and \$25,590 per month.

(4), (5) and (6) The education systems, curriculum frameworks, teaching and assessment policies in different regions are developed based on factors such as their unique social culture, background, spatial environment, history and economy. In formulating the PE curriculum in Hong Kong, the EDB and the Curriculum Development Council have taken into account students' development needs as a whole and have sought to balance the diverse expectations of Hong Kong society regarding student learning. Currently, primary and secondary schools are providing at least two PE lessons per week for students in accordance with the curriculum guide and, through a wide range of physical activities, foster students' interest in sports, develop their motor skills and improve their physical fitness. These initiatives aim to develop students' habit of doing regular exercise and cultivate their positive values

and attitudes.

According to the Primary Education Curriculum Guide (Pilot Version) (2022), primary schools are required to allocate at least five per cent of the total lesson time to PE lessons, without an upper limit. Schools can fully utilise the flexible lesson time to promote a balanced physical and mental health development among students. The recommended lesson time is a result of extensive consultation with and support obtained from the school sector. According to observations during curriculum visits, some primary schools have flexibly arranged three or more PE lessons per week, demonstrating that this recommendation has provided schools with greater flexibility in timetabling.

The promotion of students' physical development in schools is not confined to PE lessons. Schools should make good use of flexible lesson / learning time through a life-wide learning approach, and encourage students to participate in physical activities in their spare time. The EDB has issued the EDB Circular No. 5/2024 titled "Developing an Active and Healthy Lifestyle Through Promoting Physical Activities"(Note 2) in February 2024 to provide strategies, specific recommendations as well as information on relevant curriculum resources and support measures to schools. The circular contains examples of physical activities and a logbook to guide students in participating in physical activities beyond PE lessons. Students may take part in school team training and engage in routine physical activities such as brisk walking, stair climbing, household chores, stretching exercises to integrate the habit of exercise into their daily lives.

The EDB has been using various means such as inspections, school visits and regular contacts with schools to understand and review the implementation of work in schools (including PE lesson time). Professional advice and support will be provided to schools to facilitate schools' self-improvement and sustainable development. If any non-compliance is found, immediate follow-up actions will be taken. The EDB will continue to provide support and collaborate with the LCSD and other departments to assist schools in promoting students' physical fitness and health.

Note 1:

www.legco.gov.hk/yr2024/english/panels/ed/papers/ed20240202cb4-123-3-e.pdf

Note 2: applications.edb.gov.hk/circular/upload/EDBC/EDBC24005E.pdf

**[Speech by FS at OASES Partnership
Signing Ceremony \(English only\) \(with](#)**

[photo/video](#)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at the OASES Partnership Signing Ceremony today (March 20):

Chief Executive, representatives of our valued strategic enterprise partners, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to today's signing ceremony.

Allow me to congratulate you on choosing Hong Kong to expand your business in this region. Whether you're setting up a global R&D centre or regional headquarters, rolling out new trade, or developing Web3 payment services or production facilities for green and low-carbon construction technologies, Hong Kong is where you want to be.

We have a comprehensive and sophisticated financial eco-system to support your funding needs at all stages of development. Our world-class academic and research institutions and their R&D capabilities offer boundless opportunities for collaboration. The "one country, two systems" arrangement is here for the long run. It guarantees openness and global connectivity, the rule of law, the free flow of capital, data, talent, as well as seamless alignment with best international business practices.

Strategic enterprises are our highly valued partners. By expanding your operations here, you will bring investments, advanced technology and job opportunities to our community. And beyond investments and jobs, the entrepreneurship and innovation spirit that you will inject into our economy are highly treasured.

Ladies and gentlemen, today's ceremony is another significant advance in Hong Kong's rise as an international innovation and technology hub. OASES will continue to reach out to strategic enterprises. This year, it will meet with more than 300 of them from around the world. And I have no doubt that there will be more significant signings in the months, and years, to come.

There is much more that we are striving hard at. We will continue to support R&D to drive the commercialisation of research outcomes, as well as new industrialisation. We will continue to nurture local start-ups and talent, enhance STEM education and boost the compelling collaboration with our sister cities in the Greater Bay Area.

With the support of the community, and you, our partners, I am confident that Hong Kong is on its way to becoming a beacon of innovation and technological excellence in the Asian region and the world beyond.

I am grateful to OASES, the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau, Invest Hong Kong and other Government departments, for their diligent and

invaluable work in bringing a world of strategic enterprises and talent to Hong Kong.

I wish you all the best of health and business in the year to come and a long and rewarding future with us here in Asia's world city. Thank you.



LCQ12: Measures for recruiting talents from Vietnam, Laos and Nepal

Following is a question by the Hon Jimmy Ng and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (March 20):

Question:

The Chief Executive proposed in the 2023 Policy Address delivered on October 25 last year the relaxation of the visa policy in respect of employment for Vietnamese talents and the criteria for Vietnamese applying for "multiple-entry visas" for business and travel, as well as the visa policy for Laotian and Nepalese talents for employment, training and study in University Grants Committee-funded institutions in Hong Kong starting from that day. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) since the implementation of the aforesaid measures, of the respective numbers of visa applications for employment made by Vietnamese talents which were received, approved and rejected by the Government, and the average time required for vetting and approving each application; whether it has compiled statistics on the employment of such talents in Hong Kong after obtaining employment visas, such as the trades in which they are engaged and the average salary; if so, of the details;

(2) since the implementation of the aforesaid measures, of the respective numbers of visa applications made by Vietnamese through the multiple-entry visa arrangement for (i) business and (ii) travel which were received,

approved and rejected by the Government, and the average time required for vetting and approving each application;

(3) since the implementation of the aforesaid measures, of the respective numbers of visa applications made by Laotian and Nepalese talents for (i) employment, (ii) training and (iii) study in Hong Kong which were received, approved and rejected by the Government, and the average time required for vetting and approving each application; whether it knows the employment and training details of such talents in Hong Kong; and

(4) whether it will step up efforts in promoting the aforesaid measures to Vietnamese, Laotian and Nepalese nationals and helping them acquire more up-to-date information about Hong Kong; if so, of the details?

Reply:

President,

To further attract more talents to Hong Kong, the 2023 Policy Address announced that starting from October 25, 2023, the visa policy would be relaxed for Vietnamese talents to come to Hong Kong for employment. In response to the calls of society, we have also relaxed the criteria for Vietnamese applying for multiple-journey visas to come to Hong Kong for business and travel, so that more Vietnamese frequent travellers are eligible for such multiple-journey visas. Meanwhile, we have also relaxed the visa policy for Laotian and Nepalese talents for employment, training and study in eligible full-time programmes at undergraduate level or above offered by University Grants Committee-funded (UGC-funded) institutions, with a view to promoting exchanges on various fronts with talents from these places.

Having consulted the Labour and Welfare Bureau, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau and the Immigration Department (ImmD), my reply to various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) In the past, Vietnamese talents could only take up employment in Hong Kong through the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates. Under the relaxation measures introduced in October 2023, Vietnamese talents may apply for entry for employment in Hong Kong through other talent admission schemes, including the General Employment Policy and the Top Talent Pass Scheme, etc. A breakdown of the number of applications and approvals as at the end of February 2024 is set out as follows:

	October 25, 2023 to February 29, 2024
Number of applications received	42
Number of applications approved	31
Number of applications rejected	0

Number of applications withdrawn by the applicant / which could not be processed further	6
Number of applications being processed	5

For visa applications submitted under various talent admission schemes, the assessment will normally be completed by the ImmD within four weeks upon submission of all required information and supporting documents by the applicants.

Relevant government departments do not maintain other statistical information mentioned in the question.

(2) At present, travelers of individual countries/regions (including Vietnamese) are required to apply for a visa to visit Hong Kong. Regardless of whether they intend to come to Hong Kong for leisure or business, they may apply for a "visit visa" from the ImmD. A person who has been granted a "visit visa" may enter Hong Kong as a visitor. In addition to leisure activities, visitors may also engage in general permitted business-related activities specified by the ImmD, such as concluding contracts, participating in product orientation, and attending seminars, etc.

Statistics on applications made by the Vietnamese for multiple-journey "Visit Visas" to Hong Kong between the introduction of the relaxation measures in October 2023 and the end of February 2024 are set out in the following table:

	October 25, 2023 to February 29, 2024
Number of applications received	493
Number of applications approved	490
Number of applications rejected	0
Number of applications withdrawn by the applicant / which could not be processed further	1
Number of applications being processed	2

Following the implementation of the new measure, the average monthly number of multiple-journey "visit visa" applications approved for Vietnamese is about six times the number in 2019 (a monthly average of 19 applications). In general, the multiple-journey "visit visas" are valid up to two years, for a stay of not more than 14 days in Hong Kong for each journey.

It normally takes four weeks for the ImmD to process visa applications for visiting Hong Kong upon receipt of all required documents.

(3) Under the relaxation measures, Laotian and Nepalese talents may apply for employment in Hong Kong through various talent admission schemes. They may also apply for training and study in eligible full-time programmes at undergraduate level or above offered by UGC-funded institutions. A breakdown of the number of applications and approvals between the introduction of the relaxation measures and the end of February 2024 is set out as follows:

Laos

	Employment	Training	Study
Number of applications received	5	0	0
Number of applications approved	4	0	0
Number of applications rejected	0	0	0
Number of applications withdrawn by the applicant / which could not be processed further	0	0	0
Number of applications being processed	1	0	0

Nepal

	Employment	Training	Study
Number of applications received	90	41	0
Number of applications approved	74	28	0
Number of applications rejected	0	0	0

Number of applications withdrawn by the applicant / which could not be processed further	0	10	0
Number of applications being processed	16	3	0

For visa applications submitted under various talent admission schemes, the assessment will normally be completed by the ImmD within four weeks upon submission of all required information and supporting documents by the applicants. For applications for training and study in Hong Kong, the ImmD normally takes four weeks and six weeks respectively to process the visa applications upon receipt of all required documents.

Relevant government departments do not maintain other statistical information mentioned in the question.

(4) Following the introduction of the relaxation measures, we have been promoting and/or introducing our new policy to relevant stakeholders through the Labour and Welfare Bureau, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, the Tourism Commission and/or relevant departments and organisations under their purview, including the Hong Kong Talent Engage, respective overseas Economic and Trade Offices, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and the Hong Kong Tourism Board, etc. We have also maintained close contact with the Consuls-General in Hong Kong concerned. Looking ahead, the Government will continue to actively take forward publicity and promotion efforts on the relaxation measures, and maintain communication with the stakeholders.