

LCQ1: Promoting digital corporate identity

Following is a question by the Hon Shang Hailong and a reply by the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, in the Legislative Council today (October 30):

Question:

The Financial Secretary has indicated in the 2024-2025 Budget that the Government will set up a "Digital Corporate Identity" (CorpID) Platform to enable authentication of identity of enterprises using electronic government services or conducting online business transactions in a secure, convenient and efficient manner. The Government's goal is to roll out the Platform progressively from end 2026 onwards. However, there are views pointing out that notwithstanding the pressing demand of enterprises for CorpID, the Government's progress in the relevant work appears to be slightly slow. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) given that the Digital Policy Office has been established since July this year, whether the Office can give priority to the work on setting up the CorpID Platform, so that the target launch date of the Platform will be advanced to 2025;
- (2) as there are views that the current utilisation rate of personal digital certificate is on the low side, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) may also be less inclined to adopt CorpID in the future, of the Government's plan in place to publicise CorpID's functions, and whether it will consider providing incentives to promote more extensive use of CorpID by SMEs, thereby facilitating smart city development; and
- (3) whether it will consider introducing new eligibility criteria for future funding schemes of enterprises, such as accepting applications only from SMEs using CorpID, so as to enhance their participation in CorpID?

Reply:

President,

Promoting the development of smart city and digital economy in Hong Kong is one of the development directions of the Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Development Blueprint. The Digital Policy Office (DPO) is expediting the development of relevant digital infrastructure, including the development of the "Digital Corporate Identity" (CorpID) Platform, to support digital and intelligent transformation.

My reply to the questions raised by the Hon Shang is as follows:

(1) The CorpID Platform provides various functions, including corporate identity authentication, digital signing, pre-filling of forms and storage of digital licences and permits, etc, which facilitate corporations to undergo corporate identity authentication and corporate signature verification in a secure, convenient and efficient manner when using e-government services or conducting online transactions, hence alleviating the current paper-based and complicated procedures.

The CorpID Platform is a brand new and complex large-scale digital infrastructure. The DPO must make adequate preparation and conduct comprehensive testing, including security risk assessment and audit, third party independent testing, as well as cybersecurity testing, etc, to ensure the security and reliability of the Platform. Since the Legislative Council approved of its funding in June this year, we have been pressing ahead with the project at full speed, including the collection of business requirements from stakeholders to ensure that the system design and functionalities meet the needs of different public and commercial application scenarios.

The DPO strives to invite tender within this year and award the contract for design and development of the system in the middle of next year, with a view to launching the CorpID Platform progressively from end-2026. On the premise of ensuring system security and stability, the DPO will explore the feasibility of compressing the timeline.

(2) and (3) The CorpID will offer users a corporate-based digital certificate. The Government has been driving the application of digital certificates. At present, digital certificates are being used in many domain areas including "iAM Smart", "Government-to-Business" services (such as the Government Electronic Trading Services) and "Business-to-Business" services (such as financial services, secure email transmission), etc. With the growing number of citizens using "iAM Smart" and the launch of the CorpID Platform, the adoption of digital certificates will be further promoted.

The DPO plans to implement the following measures to attract and encourage corporations and government departments to use the CorpID:

1. in collaboration with the government departments that have business dealings with corporations, roll out several functions through connecting with the CorpID Platform. The DPO will also require all corporate-related e-government services to support the use of the CorpID within 18 months after its launch;
2. through a Sandbox Programme, the service providers interested in supporting the CorpID can conduct proof-of-concept testing and develop their applications to design application scenarios and solutions that better meet the market demands;
3. consider integrating the CorpID Platform with other corporate identity standards widely adopted in the industries for interoperability;
4. facilitate registration by enabling applicants to submit online

applications through the CorpID Platform and create their CorpID once verified successfully, so that they can complete the application process while staying indoors; and

5. publicise and promote the convenience and main functions of the CorpID to the industry through diversified channels, including websites, social media and communications platforms, promotional videos, industry organisation activities, etc.

The above work will help government departments and corporations better understand the functions, advantages and applicability of the CorpID Platform. Various departments can also utilise the CorpID as a technical solution for identity authentication and digital signing in accordance with their own policies, individual project objectives, development needs and technical requirements, etc, to facilitate the implementation of various policy measures in order to enhance efficiency and benefit the public and businesses.