

LCQ16: Development of high-tier data centres and cross-boundary transmission of data

Following is a question by the Hon Charles Mok and a written reply by the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Nicholas W Yang, in the Legislative Council today (May 23):

Question:

â€‹ Regarding the development of high-tier data centres and cross-boundary transmission of data, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the Government's timetable for putting up sites for sale by tender for the development of high-tier data centres, and the estimated time needed from the disposal of sites by the Government to the completion of the data centres concerned;

(2) given that the Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation (which was signed in June last year between the Government and the Mainland authorities under the framework of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement) includes the work to "strengthen exchanges between the two places regarding cross-boundary data flow, and form a joint working group to study feasible policy measures and arrangements" in respect of co-operation in electronic commerce, of the details and progress of this work; and

(3) whether, in tandem with strengthening the exchanges between the two places regarding cross-boundary data flow, the authorities have formulated policies and guidelines on the arrangements for cross-boundary transfer of personal data, so as to safeguard the privacy of Hong Kong people; if so, of the details and progress of the relevant work; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

â€‹ My reply to the question raised by the Hon Charles Mok is as follows:

(1) The Government is committed to promoting the development of data centres in Hong Kong and, in 2012, set aside three sites in Tseung Kwan O for high-tier data centre use. The first site was sold in October 2013. The Government is taking active steps to prepare for disposing the remaining two sites by open bidding in the second half of 2018. The lease conditions will require the new data centre to be completed within a specified timeline. Drawing on the experience in developing the first site, it takes about four years from site disposal to completion and commissioning of the data centre.

(2) and (3) After the signing of the Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation in June 2017, the Joint Working Group comprising members from the

Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, the Cyberspace Administration of China and experts from Hong Kong and the Mainland has held two meetings. In formulating specific measures, the Joint Working Group will consider the importance of protecting personal data and relevant regulatory requirements, including Hong Kong's Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance.