

LCQ6: Art Tech

Following is a question by the Hon Lau Kwok-fan 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 and support 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 strategies and measures to develop and promote Art Tech. Furthermore, the Government has set aside a total of \$100 million under four relevant 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 developing and promoting the integration of technology and arts. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the criteria adopted by the Government for inviting representatives from the relevant sectors to be members of the task force, as well as the (i) definition of "Art Tech", (ii) long-term goals and (iii) key performance indicators to be adopted by the task force;

(2) of the respective portions of the \$100 million funding coming from the four aforesaid funds, the criteria to be adopted (e.g. the goals to be achieved) for vetting and approving the relevant funding applications, as well as the maximum amount of subsidy to be provided for each approved application; whether the subsidies provided by these funds for art projects of non-Art Tech categories will be correspondingly reduced;

(3) whether the Government will collaborate with those institutions which currently offer relevant courses (e.g. The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong Design Institute, and Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education) in promoting Art Tech, and encourage qualified persons to teach the relevant courses, so as to train Art Tech talents and facilitate the alignment of the courses offered by institutions and the demand of the industry; and

(4) given that the East Kowloon Cultural Centre, which is currently under construction and will be commissioned in 2023, will provide Testbed Studio for applying Art Tech, how the Government ensures that the Testbed Studio and the entire Cultural Centre will (i) be equipped with the facilities needed for developing and trying out Art Tech and (ii) provide the relevant sectors with convenient channels for hiring facilities; whether it has formulated eligibility criteria for hiring the Testbed Studio?

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 meeting discussed the strategies and measures of the Task Force in developing and promoting arts technology (arts tech) in the future. The Task Force will consult the relevant industries and their representatives on the work plan as appropriate, and will invite representatives from the relevant industries or non-government organisations to attend the Task Force meetings as necessary.

Arts tech is developing rapidly and can cover a wide area. It may not be appropriate to give an official definition to it. Broadly speaking, arts tech can be interpreted as applying technology (such as virtual reality, extended reality, real-time animation, etc.) in artistic creation to enhance the content and delivery of artistic creation, support the succession of arts and deepen audience engagement and experience. The long-term goal of the Task Force is to provide employment and industry development opportunities for arts practitioners and technology talents and to bring new experience to audience simultaneously so as to further promote Hong Kong's cultural essence where the East meets the West. As the development of arts tech is still in the preliminary stage, the Government has not set any key performance indicators at this stage.

(2) 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 individuals interested in promoting arts tech to apply. The schemes above have dedicated objectives with different target applicants (details are at Annex). Applicants may submit application to the relevant funds or schemes, depending on the content of their proposals. The Government will continue to support the development of different arts projects.

For the Arts and Sport Development Fund, the Home Affairs Bureau launched the application of the 10th round of the Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme (ACDFS) in December 2020. A new category of "Arts Tech" was added in the 10th round of the ACDFS to support proposals that seek to integrate arts and technology, as well as encourage applicants to creatively apply technology to meet their artistic goals and vision. The proposals should contribute to the four objectives of the ACDFS, including capacity development of arts practitioners, arts groups, art forms and/or the arts sector; programme/content development; audience building; and arts education.

As for the CreateSmart Initiative and the Film Development Fund, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau will actively encourage and consider funding applications with arts tech elements while fulfilling the established eligibility criteria and strategic directions. Application of new technologies in the local film industry and other creative sectors will enhance the quality, variety and user experiences of products and services. It will help promote Hong Kong as Asia's creative capital.

The Innovation and Technology Fund welcomes funding applications from

the arts tech industry to help promote its development through different schemes. The Technology Voucher Programme and the General Support Programme under the Innovation and Technology Fund are relevant to the application of technology and IT culture for the promotion of arts tech. The Technology Voucher Programme provides funding to enterprises and organisations to use technological services and solutions to improve productivity, or upgrade or transform their business processes. The General Support Programme supports non-research and development projects that contribute to the upgrading and development of our industries as well as the fostering of an innovation and technology culture in Hong Kong. There is no cap on the number of funded projects and funding amounts under the funding schemes of the Innovation and Technology Fund. The Innovation and Technology Commission welcomes applications from the arts sector, applications from which had been accepted by the Innovation and Technology Fund in the past.

(3) The existing programmes related to arts or creative media offered by the post-secondary institutions cover topics related to arts tech, which helps to equip students with knowledge relevant to arts tech and inspire them to progress with the times. Moreover, the post-secondary institutions enjoy academic freedom and autonomy in programme development. They would liaise with stakeholders from time to time to keep abreast of the latest manpower trends and industry needs, with a view to ensuring that their programmes continue to serve the needs of the community and nurture talents in arts tech.

The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts has also provided programmes covering arts tech under the School of Theatre and Entertainment Arts to nurture talents for the industry.

(4) Kowloon East is a pilot area to develop a smart city in Hong Kong. As a catalyst for the implementation of the Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong, the East Kowloon Cultural Centre (EKCC) will promote arts tech at community level through diversified arts tech programmes and interactive education activities in a bid to foster interests in and understanding of the arts and technology in the community, particularly among young people. In the meantime, novel and interactive theatre experience will help broaden the audience base for performing arts and promote cultural inclusiveness.

The EKCC will inject new impetus into the performing arts through innovative technology, and explore the infinite possibilities of innovative technology with artists. The EKCC will provide local artists with an incubation platform to support them from the stage of developing creative concept and connect them with partners from different sectors. They can join hands to develop arts tech programmes from an experimental "work-in-progress" creation to a complete and mature work. The EKCC will also actively encourage community engagement in art projects to arouse public interest and understanding of arts tech by bringing diversified arts tech programmes, art installation, exhibitions, workshops, and interactive educational activities.