

LCQ4: Return2hk Scheme

Following is a question by the Hon Kwok Wai-keung and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (January 20):

Question:

Under the "Return2hk – Travel Scheme for Hong Kong Residents returning from Guangdong Province or Macao without being subject to quarantine under the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C)" (Return2hk Scheme), Hong Kong residents, upon fulfilment of specified conditions, will be exempted from the 14-day compulsory quarantine when returning to Hong Kong from Guangdong Province or Macao. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the total and daily average numbers of Hong Kong residents returning to Hong Kong under the Return2hk Scheme since its implementation on November 23 last year;

(2) given that from February to November last year, about 2 000 person-times of Hong Kong residents in Fujian Province benefited from the "special scheme to deliver prescription medications to Hong Kong residents who are currently in Guangdong and Fujian Provinces with urgent need for medications", whether the Government will extend the scope of application of the Return2hk Scheme to those Hong Kong residents who are in Fujian Province; and

(3) as the epidemic is under control in most provinces and municipalities on the Mainland, whether the Government will extend the scope of application of the Return2hk Scheme to those Hong Kong residents who are in such places?

Reply:

President,

Upon consulting the Food and Health Bureau, our reply to the question raised by the Hon Kwok Wai-keung is as follows:

(1) Since the implementation of the "Return2hk – Travel Scheme for Hong Kong Residents returning from Guangdong Province or Macao without being subject to quarantine under the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C)" (the Scheme) on November 23, 2020 until January 18, 2021, a total of 32 025 persons (about 560 persons per day on average) have returned to Hong Kong under the Scheme.

(2) & (3) Having considered the epidemic-control situation in Guangdong Province and Macao, the Secretary for Food and Health has specified Guangdong Province and Macao as Category 2 specified places in China with effect from November 23, 2020 and relevant conditions pursuant to the Compulsory

Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C), thereby allowing Hong Kong residents who are located in Guangdong Province and Macao to be exempted from the 14-day compulsory quarantine requirement when they return to Hong Kong, upon fulfilment of the specified conditions under the Scheme.

The Scheme is the first step forward in the resumption of normal cross-boundary flow of people amongst Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao in a gradual and orderly manner. Since the launch of the Scheme, the HKSAR Government has continually reviewed the implementation of the Scheme, closely monitored the epidemic situation in Hong Kong, the Mainland and Macao, and maintained close liaison with the Mainland and Macao authorities to explore together the next step forward.

Having regard to the overall situation at present, the HKSAR Government considers that it is not an appropriate juncture to expand the scope of the Scheme now. The HKSAR Government will continue to closely monitor the epidemic situation in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, as well as other relevant factors, and will make announcement at a suitable juncture if there is any adjustment to the scope of the Scheme.

LCQ9: Integrated Waste Management Facilities Phase 1

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hak-kan and a written reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (January 20):

Question:

Regarding the Integrated Waste Management Facilities Phase 1 currently under construction, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the latest progress of the aforesaid works, including the percentage of completion;
- (2) of the latest expenditure situation of the works, and the details of various expenditure items; whether any expenditure items have incurred cost overruns at present; if not, whether it expects such situation will occur;
- (3) whether it has assessed if the target that the aforesaid facilities will be fully commissioned by 2025 as scheduled can be met; and
- (4) whether it has formulated contingency plans to handle the situation where the works have to be suspended due to some construction workers having been confirmed to be infected with the Coronavirus Disease 2019; if so, of the

details, including the measures in place to prevent works delays and cost overruns; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Integrated Waste Management Facilities Phase 1(IWMF1), which adopts advanced incineration treatment as the core technology, can reduce the volume of waste and generate electricity through heat recovery. Capable of handling 3 000 tonnes of municipal solid waste every day, the IWMF1 is an important waste-to-energy infrastructure project in Hong Kong. Under the project, the contractor has to build an artificial island of about 16 hectares in the open sea to the southwest of Hong Kong adjacent to Shek Kwu Chau, and then construct the facilities on the artificial island. The contractor has arranged for the prefabrication of some of the concrete structures as well as electrical and mechanical (E&M) equipment of the project respectively in the Mainland and Europe, and the delivery of them to the artificial island subsequently for assembly. In so doing, the contractor can enhance quality control and speed up the progress for early completion of the project.

My reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Chan Hak-kan is as follows:

(1) The IWMF1 project is now underway in compliance with contract requirements. We have mostly completed the Deep Cement Mixing ground reinforcement of the seabed where the IWMF1 is located and the construction works for the seawalls of the artificial island. The progress achieved to date accounts for some 30 per cent of the whole project. The remaining items of the project mainly include earth filling for the artificial island, building of breakwaters, procurement and prefabrication of E&M equipment units, foundation for and construction of various plants, assembly of equipment and testing and commissioning of the facility, etc.

(2) to (4) Under the contract of the IWMF1 project, the design and construction costs are estimated to be \$18 billion. As at December 2020, the total expenditure for the project was about \$5 billion. Based on present estimation, the unspent balance is sufficient to cover all the remaining project items.

We have been closely monitoring the progress of the project. Despite the impact of inclement weather and the COVID-19 epidemic, we have worked with the contractor proactively on various measures, including improving the supply of materials, making good use of works schedule and rearranging construction sequences to expedite the works concerned. We expect the IWMF1 can be completed for commissioning in 2025 as scheduled and will keep the progress of the project under close supervision.

In line with the Government's efforts in epidemic prevention and infection control, we have required the contractor to implement strict epidemic prevention measures following the guidelines promulgated by the Centre for Health Protection; strengthen the cleaning and disinfection of

work sites and related venues; and remind all personnel involved to observe personal hygiene. In order to step up epidemic prevention efforts with a view to achieving the objective of "early identification, early isolation and early treatment", we have arranged virus testings for the contractor's frontline staff and project personnel in mid-December 2020 and early this month. The test results were all negative. However, one of the contractor's engineers felt sick later and sought medical advice on January 17. He was tested positive subsequently. The contractor immediately cleaned and sterilised the construction site and the other relevant areas thoroughly. Virus testing for the relevant personnel was arranged and quarantine measures was undertook to avoid spreading of virus in the construction site and the communities. We will continue to review the epidemic prevention measures needed for the project and arrange virus testing in line with the development of the epidemic.

LCQ15: Hiring of taxis and other vehicles by the Government

Following is a question by the Hon Frankie Yick and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, in the Legislative Council today (January 20):

Question:

Under the Use of Hourly-hired Taxis for Duty Journeys Scheme (the Scheme), government officers of various government departments may hire taxis on an hourly basis as a means of transport when they undertake duty journeys, provided that there are operational needs and it is cost effective to do so. Furthermore, the Government hires other types of commercial vehicles to meet operational needs. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the total number of hirings of taxis under the Scheme and the total expenditure so incurred by various government departments in each of the past five years, as well as the average expenditure and duration per hiring;

(2) how the expenditure incurred in the provision of transport services under the Scheme in the past five years compares with the expenditure that would have been incurred had such services been provided by means of maintaining a government fleet;

(3) whether the Government has reviewed and improved the Scheme since its introduction in 2003; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; given that the Scheme is more cost-effective than maintaining a government fleet, whether the Government will encourage government officers to make more

use of the Scheme; and

(4) of the total number of hirings of other commercial vehicles and the total expenditure so incurred, by the Government for government officers' duty journeys in each of the past five years, together with a breakdown by type of vehicles?

Reply:

President,

The "Use of Hourly-hired Taxis for Duty Journeys Scheme" (the Scheme) was launched by the Government in 2003 to enable government officers to make use of hourly-hired taxis for duty journeys having regard to operational needs and cost effectiveness. My reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Frankie Yick is as follows:

(1) The total number of hirings and total expenditure incurred by various government departments under the Scheme in the past five years from 2016 to 2020 are set out in Annex 1.

(2) The Government implemented the Scheme mainly with the aim of providing government departments with an alternative mode of transport to meet their additional, short-term or ad hoc needs for transport service. Hence, it is not appropriate to compare the Scheme with the use of Government fleet, through which regular transport services are provided, in terms of the expenditure involved and cost effectiveness.

(3) Since the launch of the Scheme in 2003, various government departments have made use of hourly-hired taxis to meet their operational needs, which shows that the Scheme has achieved its intended purpose. Furthermore, the Government Logistics Department (GLD) has from time to time kept government departments informed of the arrangements of the Scheme and reviewed relevant operational procedures with a view to facilitating departments in using the Scheme. According to the GLD's guidelines, departments are required to choose the appropriate mode of transport, including public transport, government vehicles, hired vehicles and hourly-hired taxis, taking into account operational needs and cost effectiveness.

(4) Regarding the hiring of saloon cars, buses and goods vehicles, the total number of hirings and total expenditure incurred by the Government each year in the past five years from 2016 to 2020 are set out in Annex 2.

[Missing man in Chai Wan located](#)

A man who went missing in Chai Wan was located.

Leung Yuk-ming, aged 46, went missing after he left his residence in Wan Tsui Estate on January 14 morning. His family made a report to Police on January 16.

The man returned to his residence yesterday afternoon (January 19). He sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

LCQ20: Smart Government

Following is a question by the Hon Jeffrey Lam and a written reply by the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit, in the Legislative Council today (January 20):

Question:

In 2017, the Government released the Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong, which listed "Smart Government" as one of the major areas and proposed a number of measures to make use of innovative technology to enhance public services. However, in recent years, whenever the Government introduced new schemes (such as the Caring and Sharing Scheme in 2018 which disbursed \$4,000 to eligible persons and last year's Employment Support Scheme), it still took quite a long time to establish related computer systems beforehand, and applicants were often required to fill in information repeatedly. In addition, it is learnt that the transmission of information on anti-epidemic work does not go smoothly among various government departments and public organisations. Some information is still transmitted through non-digital means (such as fax), rendering information processing labour-intensive, time-consuming and error-prone. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the government department(s) and their staffing establishments responsible for coordinating the efforts of various policy bureaux and government departments in implementing electronic services, and the relevant service indicators;

(2) of the process and average time taken for implementing electronic services in respect of existing public services;

(3) given that last month the Government launched "iAM Smart", a one-stop personalised digital services platform to enable members of the public to use various online services after logging in, with a single digital identity, the "iAM Smart" mobile application on their personal mobile phones, of the respective numbers of public services which can be provided through "iAM Smart" (i) at present and (ii) in future; whether it will set a target for the percentage of public services to be provided online; and

(4) whether it has specific plans for extensive application of artificial intelligence in the coming three years to enhance the efficiency in the provision of public services; if so, of the details?

Reply:

President,

After consulting relevant bureaux and departments (B/Ds), our reply to various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) and (2) In respect of promoting e-Government, the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) has provided support for establishing infrastructure and standards, developing common e-Government services, cyber security, management and funding arrangement for information technology (IT) projects, and management of central IT infrastructure and services, etc. As at December 31, 2020, the OGCIO deployed 1 371 Analyst/Programmer grade staff to various B/Ds to provide IT-related services. B/Ds formulate their e-Government services implementation plans, including targets and timetable, having regard to the nature and requirements of their operations and public services. At present, the implementation time of e-Government services among various B/Ds is 18 months on average. Depending on the complexity and urgency, the development, testing and rollout of individual systems and related services (such as the services in response to the epidemic) can also be completed in a few weeks at the earliest. The Next Generation Government Cloud platform launched by the OGCIO in September 2020 could facilitate B/Ds expediting the implementation of their e-Government services. The Government has also developed an information management system to retain and facilitate the future use of information collected under the Cash Payout Scheme.

(3) The one-stop personalised digital services platform, "iAM Smart", was launched at the end of December 2020 to facilitate the public to log in and use government and commercial online services with a single digital identity, using their mobile phones. "iAM Smart" currently can access 27 commonly used online services provided by the government and public utilities such as the two electricity and the gas companies. It is expected that by mid-2021, there will be more than 110 government online services accessible through "iAM Smart". The "iAM Smart" platform also provides an auto form-filling service, "e-ME", which allows members of the public to choose to store commonly used personal data in advance, thereby obviating the need for filling in the same data for different application forms. The Government will take further steps to promote B/Ds to adopt IT to streamline processes and provide more convenient services to the public.

Under the Be the Smart Regulator Programme coordinated by the Efficiency Office (EffO), about 190 licences now support electronic submission of applications. The Be the Smart Regulator Programme targets to enable electronic submission of applications for all (about 400) licences by mid-2022, saving the need for the public to visit government offices in person. In addition, the EffO has also launched the Streamlining of

Government Services Programme since mid-2019. Relevant B/Ds will continue to reform about 900 government services that involve applications and approvals, and about 450 of which have already supported electronic submission of applications. Under these two Programmes, B/Ds will adopt "iAM Smart" for suitable licence applications and government services to further enhance user experience.

(4) Artificial intelligence (AI) and big data are important technology areas underpinning smart city development. Their applications are conducive to delivery of quality and data-driven public services. The OGCI0 launched an AI chatbot "Bonny" on the GovHK portal at the end of 2019 to facilitate the public to search more than 3 300 government forms and e-Government services. The Eff0 also started piloting use of AI chatbot to handle 1823 public enquiries in December 2019. Through the Pilot Partnership Programme for Cyber Security Information Sharing, the OGCI0 has, by using AI and big data technologies, categorised cyber security intelligence more promptly and accurately and disseminated the intelligence digest to different sectors since March 2020.

To promote application of big data more effectively in the government, the OGCI0 launched a Big Data Analytics Platform in September 2020. The platform helps implement more AI and big data analytics projects through economies of scale and shared resources. Projects being implemented through this platform include:

(i) The OGCI0 and the Transport Department are jointly developing a new Traffic Data Analytics System to analyse various traffic and transport data so as to more accurately assess traffic conditions, enhancing traffic management and improving efficiency;

(ii) The OGCI0 is collaborating with the Architectural Services Department, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in analysing maintenance records and public complaints related to public toilets using big data analytics technology to strengthen public toilet management and maintenance measures;

(iii) through analysing the usage and search history of GovHK portal, the OGCI0 can better understand users' needs for enhancing the portal and user experience; and

(iv) The OGCI0 analyses the questions collected by chatbot "Bonny" to better understand public needs in order to keep enhancing the GovHK services.

The data analytics team established under the OGCI0 will continue to provide data analytics advisory service to B/Ds, assist them in applying AI and big data analytics technologies (particularly in the areas of predictive maintenance and application assessment), and support them in implementing relevant projects.

Besides, through the Smart Government Innovation Lab set up in April 2019, the OGCI0 will continue to promote active participation by industry

players to assist government departments in adopting IT, including AI and big data analytics, with a view to improving public services.