

LegCo Panel on Public Service
Meeting on 15 January 2001

3-year Training and Development Programme

This paper briefs Members on the detailed proposals regarding the 3-year Training and Development (T&D) Programme.

Background

2. At the meeting of the LegCo Panel on Public Service on 20 November 2000, we briefed Members on the objectives and the framework of the 3-year T&D Programme to be launched from 2001/02 to 2003/04. Separately, we have also consulted the Civil Service Training and Development Advisory Board^{*}, the Staff Sides and departmental representatives for views. All of them fully supported the launching of the 3-year T&D Programme as this would enhance the long-term employability of civil servants. The Advisory Board welcomed in particular the increased emphasis being placed on promoting continuous learning in addition to training to enhance skills and work culture of staff. The Staff Sides stressed that equal training opportunities should be provided to all staff so as to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Civil Service. Particular focus should be given to junior staff as they had less training opportunities in the past. They also suggested that external resources be commissioned to conduct training for civil servants if existing training facilities could not cater for the demand. Taking into account the feedback received, we have now worked out the detailed proposals on the funding allocation and the programmes for each of the 3 major areas we will focus on under the 3-year T&D Programme.

3. We would like to stress at the outset that the new programmes and enhanced training under the 3-year T&D Programme are in addition to the

^{*} The Civil Service Training and Development Advisory Board advises the Civil Service Bureau on international training and development best practices and how such practices could be adopted in the Hong Kong Civil Service context. It is chaired by the Secretary for the Civil Service and comprises representatives from the private sector and government representatives.

regular training programmes provided by the Civil Service Training and Development Institute (CSTDI) and departments. As part of its continuous training efforts, CSTDI will be spending \$155 million in 2001/02 on service-wide training yielding 67,000 training places in addition to the learning opportunities available through its cyber learning and self-learning packages. A further 360,000 training places are expected to be offered by departments. With the injection of \$50 million under the 3-year T&D Programme, we expect an additional 30,000 training places to be made available each year, making a total of 90,000 additional training places in the next three years. Out of the 90,000 training places, we estimate that about 60% of the places will go towards benefiting junior staff.

Detailed Programmes

4. The detailed programmes under each of the three major focus areas are set out in the following paragraphs.

Training for the affected staff in the VR grades

5. Appropriate training will be provided to staff affected by the Voluntary Retirement (VR) exercise so that they can acquire the necessary skills to adapt to the new working environment and to pursue further in their career. The focus will be placed on four main categories of staff, namely, staff who will be redeployed to other positions and whose job nature will change as a consequence, clerical and secretarial staff, staff of the obsolescent grades and staff managers and supervisors of VR staff.

6. We intend to reserve \$14 million to support the retraining programmes for these staff covering both departmental training programmes which mainly provide vocational skill training, and common retraining programmes which provide generic skill training, e.g. IT and language training, customer service training and skills in enhancing self motivation and personal effectiveness. Seminars and workshops on change management will also be organised. We expect that about 19,000 training places will be offered. The programmes will start progressively this year to tie in with the departure of VR takers and the redeployment plans of departments.

7. Apart from the \$14 million reserved specifically for this purpose, we have also asked departments to use some of their savings achieved through deletion of posts under the VR Scheme to organize training for staff affected by the exercise. For example, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and Leisure and Cultural Services Department will organise training for frontline staff on how to work with contractor staff.

Training in relation to the Civil Service Reform initiatives

8. We have explained in our last paper the need to acquaint staff with the new Civil Service system and to introduce more programmes to enable departmental management and staff to take forward the implementation of the Civil Service Reform initiatives. Under this programme area, we propose to -

- (a) organise seminars on the Mandatory Provident Fund, workshops on handling staff discipline and improving performance, and managing a diverse workforce under mixed staff situations;
- (b) design special programmes aimed at increasing staff's sense of responsibility and accountability, motivation and commitment geared towards a performance-based and service-oriented culture;
- (c) provide training to help management staff lead staff to better understand and support various reform initiatives and the new Civil Service system; and
- (d) develop two new training resource packages on performance management and continuous service improvement. The performance management package will cover setting performance targets, competency-based performance assessment and staff development through coaching and development; whilst the continuous service improvement package will cover quality service delivery and work process improvement tools and job aids.

9. We estimate that a sum of \$6 million will be required to provide training under this programme area. 15,000 training places are expected to be offered through these programmes.

Promotion of continuous learning culture

10. Various means to enhance staff's access to training and learning opportunities were discussed at the last meeting. Further details of the proposals are as follows -

- (a) Expansion of CSTDI's Cyber Learning Centre (CLC) – the existing capacity of the CLC of 10,000 registered users will be enhanced through upgrading its current system and developing a central e-learning platform. The spectrum and contents of the programmes under the CLC will be enriched and a service-wide registration drive will also be conducted next year to attract more civil servants to make use of the CLC. In addition to the \$5 million from CSTDI's own departmental funding, a sum of \$4 million will be allocated from the \$50 million to enable an additional 15,000 users to be registered, making a total of 25,000;
- (b) Launching of a Training Incentive Scheme - \$18 million will be allocated to departments to provide financial incentives as an encouragement to civil servants pursuing continuous and self-development training to update knowledge and skills, meet the challenges of this knowledge-based society, and to enhance their employability in the long term. This Scheme is additional to the other training assistance currently in place where reimbursement is provided to staff for attending courses which are relevant to the individual's work. It serves to add more flexibility to the current system so that some staff who are normally not eligible for certain kind of training under existing arrangement may do so through this Scheme (e.g. a clerical officer who is normally not eligible for management skill training can now apply to study such a course in an external institution). It aims to encourage civil servants to embark on self-initiated external study programmes or short courses that are employment-related to suit their personal development needs, interests, time and learning mode. The Scheme will work on a refund of course fee basis. The incentive will be set at a maximum amount of \$1,000 or not exceeding 75% of course fees, whichever is less. To enable more staff to benefit from this

Scheme, no staff will be qualified for the provision of the financial incentive for more than one course. The Scheme will be launched from April 2001 and we expect that at least 18,000 training places will be offered through the Scheme;

- (c) Development and acquisition of self-learning resources - \$1.5 million will be allocated to provide more self-learning training packages in the form of cyber, CD-ROM or paper-based learning packages on a wide range of subjects including China studies and government practices. The target users will be extended to all staff bringing about 10,000 training places;
- (d) Enhancing resources in departments – work is already underway to strengthen the departments’ learning infrastructure, learning resources and training facilities. CSTDI will continue to work closely with departments on this front. \$2.5 million will be reserved for such purpose; and
- (e) Promotional and experience-sharing activities – we will allocate \$4 million to organise promotional activities to encourage greater access to the e-learning platform and to support organisation-wide learning. These activities include experience sharing sessions, publicity and promotional activities and exhibitions on learning resources.

11. A summary of the proposed funding allocation for the 3 main focus areas is set out in the Annex.

Staff Release

12. Members have expressed concern about staff release at the last meeting. As most of the courses to be offered under the 3-year T&D Programme will be short courses of one or two days in duration and different learning modes will be provided, staff release should not be a serious problem. For training which lasts for a month or more, departments will either arrange another officer to take up the post of the staff who attend training, or make acting/doubling up or across arrangement. An allowance will be provided to staff who cover for their colleagues during a training period exceeding one month. We will reinforce the

message to departments that a healthy balance between staff training and operational efficiency can be maintained and that staff should be released for training as far as possible. In view of the benefits from training in developing the staff and their contribution to the work place, it is expected that departments will make every effort to facilitate staff to leave and attend courses. To assist departments, CSTDI will proactively approach them to facilitate the development of departmental T&D plans to support the programme initiatives.

Evaluation

13. We will conduct surveys to assess participants' reaction to the programmes. We will also collect feedback from departments and supervisors on skill enhancement and behavioural change after training and the impact on the departments' service delivery. Since the 3-year T&D Programme aims at achieving long term culture and mindset change of civil servants, this will be measured against staff's commitment to continuous learning, performance at work and service to the public where applicable.

Number of Training Days

14. At the Panel meeting on 20 November 2000, we briefed Members that the average number of training days for all civil servants is 10 days and that for non-disciplinary service civil servants alone is 4.6 days. Members further asked about the 'typical' number of training days per year attended by the majority of the civil servants. As our training statistics are not compiled on individual officer basis, we do not have such information. An indication of the degree of variation in training days among staff can be gained from the distribution of training days in departments. According to a survey conducted in 1998/99, of the 86 departments/bureaux surveyed, staff in 72 departments/bureaux received over 2.5 days training per year on average.

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Annex

Proposed Funding Allocation

Initiatives	Funding (\$M : million)	No. of Training Places
Training for affected staff in the VR grades	\$14M	19,000
Training in relation to CSR initiatives	\$6M	15,000
Promotion of continuous learning culture	\$30M	56,000
- Training Incentive Scheme	(\$18M)	(18,000)
- Cyber Learning Centre	(\$4M)	(15,000)
- Self learning resources and facilities	(\$8M)	(23,000)
Total :	\$50M	90,000