

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Hong Kong Computer Society's Response to Budget 2024:**  
**Support the Government in Continuing to Invest in I&T Development**  
**Promote Digital Economy and Digital Infrastructure**  
**Praise for the Vision of allocating funds to develop I&T**

**February 28, 2024. Hong Kong**—The Hong Kong Computer Society (HKCS) expressed support to the 2024 Budget delivered today by Mr. Paul Chan, the Financial Secretary. The Budget clearly indicated its focus on four major areas of Hong Kong's I&T development, including consolidating Hong Kong's scientific research advantages and promoting the development of technological industries; developing innovation and technology infrastructure and promoting "new industrialisation"; promoting the development of digital economy and digital transformation, and nurturing start-ups and IT talents, as well as the funding allocations corresponding to the four areas.

<b>Project Items</b>	<b>Fundings</b>
<b>Consolidate Hong Kong's scientific research advantages and Promote the development of technology industries</b>	
Launch of a three-year AI Subsidy Scheme to support local universities, research institutes and enterprises to leverage the AI Supercomputing Centre's computing power, strengthen the cyber security and data protection of the Centre, and launch promotional and educational activities, etc.	\$3 billion
Promote the development of life and health technology	\$10 billion
Provide subsidies to local universities to establish inter-school and inter-disciplinary life and health research and development institutes	\$6 billion
Support the InnoHK research clusters to establish their presence in the Lok Ma Chau Loop	\$2 billion
Provide assistance to start-ups engaging in life and health technology in the HSITP (Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park) in the form of incubation and acceleration programmes, etc, support the set up of the InnoLife Healthtech Hub in the HSITP of the Loop	\$200 million
Launch a Frontier Technology Research Infrastructure Support Scheme to assist the eight University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities, on a matching basis, in procuring	\$3 billion

facilities and conducting research projects which cover various fields such as AI, quantum information, integrated circuit, clinical medicine and health, and gene and biotechnology that are led by top researchers local and overseas.	
Provide funding to Technology Transfer Office of the UGC-funded universities	For each university every year up to \$16 million
<b>Develop IT infrastructure and promote "new industrialization"</b>	
Launch a New Industrialisation Acceleration Scheme (NIAS) enterprises in designated industries and open for application from to provide each enterprise with funding of up to \$200 million on a matching basis of one (Government): two (enterprise).	Total \$10 billion, funding support of up to \$200 million to each enterprise
<b>Develop digital economy and promote digital transformation</b>	
Introducing the "Digital Corporate Identity" platform to facilitate corporate identity authentication and verification and signature	\$300 million
Provide digital training courses and technical support for elderly people	\$100 million
<b>Nurture Start-ups and IT talents</b>	
Under the "Knowing More About IT" Programme, to allocate funding to publicly-funded primary schools in the next two academic years to enhance primary school students' interests in information technology and its applications	\$134 million

Dr. Rocky Cheng, President of HKCS, said: "With the public fiscal deficit worsens, we are pleased to see the fiscal budget still provides certain allocations for multiple innovation and technology fields, and includes some creative measures, such as its support of the opening of the AI Supercomputing Centre, launch a three-year AI Subsidy Scheme to support local universities, research institutes and enterprises to leverage the Centre's computing power and achieve scientific breakthroughs, strengthen the cyber security and data protection of the Centre, and launch promotional and educational activities; launch and open for application from a New Industrialisation Acceleration Scheme (NIAS) to provide enterprises in designated industries with funding for each enterprise of up to \$200 million on a matching basis of one (Government): two (enterprise); and launch a Frontier Technology Research Infrastructure Support Scheme to assist the eight University Grants Committee (UGC)

funded universities, on a matching basis, in procuring facilities and conducting research projects that led by top researchers local and overseas. These measures are all visionary and worthy of praise."

Dr. Cheng furthered: "We are also pleased to see certain allocations for multiple innovation and technology fields in the Budget, including attracting innovative technology enterprises, funds and talents in an all-round way; supporting the digital transformation of SMEs and logistics processing in catering and retail industries; in line with national policies to build Hong Kong into an international innovation and technology center and continue to promote its digital economy, green technology, digital currency, e-government, Web 3.0, new industrial development and so on, while building a good data trading ecosystem, and promising to continue to invest resources to promote and fund local scientific research and transformation, building digital infrastructure, supporting start-ups, strengthening the training of scientific and technological talents and allocating funds to support primary schools in holding scientific and technological activities, relaxing the listing conditions for scientific and technological innovation companies, and implementing the development the Northern Metropolis and the HSITP. We are highly motivated by all these initiatives which demonstrate the government's determination and vision to promote the development of science and technology innovation for the establishment of Hong Kong as an international innovation and technology center."

### **Further recommendations regarding the implementation of various technological measures in the Budget-from the Hong Kong Computer Society**

Dr. Cheng continued: "The Government will merge the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and the Efficiency Office to establish a Digital Policy Office, which will be responsible for formulating digital policies, integrating internal government resources, and coordinating various departments to provide digital services. It is recommended that the Government formulate a five-year strategies and respective roadmaps for digitalization. In addition, the Government should conduct systematically reviews and improvements of the IT governance structure, system architecture, application development and operation processes, quality and risk management, procurement and project management, talent resource allocation, technology systems and so on to avoid the risks of IT crisis."

Dr. Cheng further pointed out that the Hong Kong Computer Society welcomes the Government's commitment to allocating resources and funding local universities,

research institutions, and enterprises in leveraging computing power. He suggested that the government could strengthen funding for skills training in artificial intelligence (AI) applications, nurturing and attracting companies that provide AI development and services. This approach serves two purposes: establishing an ecosystem and setting standards for application and governance to mitigate the risks associated with AI adoption. In addition to the proposed allocation of HKD 3 billion in the Budget to support the utilization of computing power by local universities, research institutions, and enterprises for research breakthroughs, he also recommended that the government provide incentives to encourage collaboration among investment, industry, academia and research sectors, thereby enhancing Hong Kong's technological capabilities in the field of AI. Furthermore, he suggested optimising the course lists of the Continuing Education Fund (CEF) and the New Industries and Technology Training Programme (NITTP) by incorporating more courses related to generative AI. Regular reviews and updates of course content should be conducted to keep up with the rapid changes in technology. Moreover, the Government is actively strengthening the cybersecurity of critical infrastructure. It is recommended to increase funding and educate the public about computer fraud and basic cybersecurity knowledge. Expanding and subsidizing cybersecurity training programs would help meet the demand for professionals in this rapidly growing field.

Dr. Cheng said: "HKCS has always committed to promoting the professional development of the industry and nurturing young talents. The government's deployment to prepare for the future technological era is consistent with the Hong Kong Computer Society's attitude of keeping pace with the times. The five Specialist Groups (SGs) established by HKCS including Artificial Intelligence SG, Cyber Security SG, Enterprise Architecture SG, FinTech SG, Innovation and Entrepreneurship SG, as well as the promotion of financial technology professional certification and related training, are responses to market needs. Our five Specialist Groups bring together industry elites and are willing to provide the government with ideas and suggestions, and we look forward to contributing to the necessary preparation works in bringing Hong Kong into a new era of technology."

### **About the Hong Kong Computer Society (HKCS)**

Founded in 1970, the Hong Kong Computer Society (HKCS) is a recognised non-profit professional organisation focused on developing Hong Kong's Information Technology (IT) profession and industry. Their members come from a broad spectrum of Hong Kong's IT community, from corporations to like-minded individuals, all coming

together to raise the profile and standards of the IT profession and industry. As a well-established IT professional body, the Society is committed to professional and industry development as well as community services to ensure the IT sector continues to make a positive impact on peoples' lives with three main goals, namely, 1) talent cultivation and professional development, 2) industry development and collaboration, and 3) the effective use of IT in our community.

For more details, please visit <http://www.hkcs.org.hk>.

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**Appendix: IT-related Measures of Budget 2024-2025**

## **Appendix: IT-related Measures of Budget 2024-2025**

In the budget announced today, there are various IT-related measures, which include:

- **Attracting Enterprises, Capital and Talent on All Fronts**
  - The Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises (OASES), the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau (ITIB), Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) and the Hong Kong Investment Corporation Limited (HKIC) actively reach out to enterprises from the Mainland and overseas, and proactively attract and assist high value-added technology industries and enterprises to establish a foothold in Hong Kong.
  - Next month, 10-plus strategic enterprises will sign a partnership agreement with OASES. The companies have either confirmed setting up or expanding their businesses in Hong Kong, or they are planning to do so. Together with the 30 companies from the first batch, they are expected to bring about over \$40 billion in investment to Hong Kong, creating about 13 000 jobs over the next few years. Their presence in Hong Kong will attract upstream, midstream and downstream partners from their industry chains, promoting our Innovation and Technology (I&T) sector's vibrant development.
  - Performing its role of channelling capital and leveraging market resources, the HKIC will attract more I&T companies to establish their presence in Hong Kong, accelerating the development of strategic industries. The first batch of direct investment and co-investment projects will be implemented in the first half of this year, covering areas such as life technology, green technology and finance, semi-conductors and chips, as well as the upgrading and transformation of manufacturing industries.
  - The HKIC will also encourage enterprises in its investment portfolio to engage more actively in local, Mainland and overseas I&T networks, where they can explore more application and development opportunities, while identifying potential investors and their target clientele.
  - A Summit on Start-up Investment and Development in Hong Kong will also be organised. It will bring together prominent figures in the start-up ecosystem, with a view to boosting collaboration among the investment, industry, academic and research sectors. That will help support I&T enterprise development at varying stages.
  - In recent years, we have rolled out a number of measures, including the Top Talent Pass Scheme (TTPS), to trawl for talent. In the past year or so, more

than 140 000 applications were approved under various talent admission schemes. About 100 000 of them have already arrived in Hong Kong. The Labour and Welfare Bureau will review the relevant arrangements in the middle of this year to ensure the competitiveness of these measures and their effectiveness in addressing our manpower demand.

- The HKTE will organise a Global Talent Summit and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area High-quality Talent Development Conference in May. Their aim is to promote Hong Kong's advantages as an international talent hub, enabling the flow of talent among the cities of the GBA.
- Joined hands with regulators and HKEX in implementing a number of measures, including establishing the listing regime for specialist technology companies

- **Digital Transformation**

- SMEs in the food and beverage industry and the retail industry will be invited to select suitable options among ready-to-use basic digital solutions and apply for subsidies on a matching basis early this year under the Digital Transformation Support Pilot Programme. The solutions will focus on three areas: digital payment and shopfront sales, online promotion and customer-management solutions. It is expected that at least 8 000 eligible SMEs will benefit from the pilot programme.
- Have been making continuous enhancements to the Dedicated Fund on Branding, Upgrading and Domestic Sales (BUD Fund). They include raising the cumulative funding ceiling per enterprise and streamlining application procedures. Proposed to inject \$500 million more into the fund to help SMEs boost their competitiveness and tap into Mainland and overseas markets. This includes the launch of "E-commerce Easy" under the fund. It will provide support of up to \$1 million per enterprise for implementing e-commerce projects in the Mainland.

- **Green Technology**

- More than 200 green-technology companies work out of Hong Kong, with some equipped with globally competitive technologies and have successfully tapped into Mainland and overseas markets.
- The Government's Green Tech Fund funds research and development (R&D) projects which help Hong Kong decarbonise and enhance environmental protection, and encourages their subsequent practical

applications. With \$400 million injected into the Fund, thirty projects from local universities, public research institutes and enterprises have been approved, involving a total grant of about \$130 million for subsidising local research projects

- Will launch the Green and Sustainable Fintech Proof-of-Concept Subsidy Scheme in the first half of this year. It will provide early-stage funding support for green fintech, facilitating commercialisation and fostering the development of new green fintech initiatives.

- **Digital Economy**

- The Digital Economy Development Committee (DEDC) has undertaken in-depth studies on promoting the development of digital economy over the past two years. The DEDC's report covers recommendations on many areas, including promotion of digital policies, initiatives for enhancing digital infrastructure, facilitation of the safe and orderly flow and usage of data, acceleration of enterprise digital transformation and talent development. Some of these recommendations have been implemented, including making preparations for the establishment of the Digital Policy Office.
- Have commissioned an expert group to undertake an in-depth study on how to develop a robust data trading ecosystem in Hong Kong, the scope of which includes Hong Kong's role as a "super connector" in data trading as well as promoting the formulation of international data trading rules. The aim is to enable us to unleash the potential of data elements and facilitate its development into a new industry with an enormous growth momentum, hence empowering the upgrading and transformation of traditional industries.
- The HKMA completed Phase 1 of the e-HKD Pilot Programme last October, and has studied domestic retail use cases in various areas such as programmable payments, offline payments and tokenised deposits. Phase 2 of the pilot programme will soon commence to further explore new use cases.
- Project mBridge, another important initiative, has also achieved good progress. Phase 1 of its service, which is expected to be launched this year, will become one of the first projects around the world to settle cross-boundary transactions for corporates using central bank digital currencies
- Will expand the scope of e-CNY pilot testing in Hong Kong. Members of



the public may set up e-CNY wallets easily for use and for topping up funds by the Faster Payment System, thereby further enhancing the efficiency and user experience of cross-boundary payment services.

- The ITIB and the Cyberspace Administration of China launched an early and pilot implementation arrangement for the "Standard Contract for the Cross-boundary Flow of Personal Information Within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Mainland, Hong Kong)" last December. During the first phase of implementation, we have invited the banking, credit referencing and healthcare sectors to participate, and their responses have been very positive. Having regard to outcomes of the pilot implementation in the first phase, we will gradually extend the coverage of the facilitation measures so that various business sectors of both places may leverage cross-boundary data with a smoother flow, thereby providing more cross-boundary services for the convenience of the public and enterprises.
- Collaborated with Guangdong Province to launch the Cross-boundary Public Services thematic website. We also connected iAM Smart with the Unified Identity Authentication Platform of Guangdong Province in November last year. Having set up iAM Smart registration service counters in Guangzhou as well as in Qianhai and Futian in Shenzhen, we have also introduced the first self-service kiosk for Hong Kong's Cross-boundary Public Services in Guangzhou. This will facilitate Hong Kong residents and enterprises in the GBA cities to access the Cross-boundary Public Services and register for iAM Smart.
- The Government will set up a "digital identity of enterprises" platform, i.e. the business version of "iAM Smart", to enable authentication of identity and verification of signature of enterprises using electronic government services or conducting online business transactions in a secure, convenient and efficient manner without having to go through complicated procedures, thus saving time and reducing the risk of human error. The expenditure involved is estimated to be about \$300 million and our goal is to roll out the platform progressively from end-2026 onwards.
- Strive to reduce digital exclusion and promote the wider use of information technology by various community groups, including elderly persons. The Government will allocate \$100 million under the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund to provide, in the next three years, elderly people aged 60 or above with digital training courses and technical support, so that they can integrate into the digital era more easily and enjoy

the benefits that digital technology brings. The first group of projects is expected to commence in the fourth quarter of 2024 at the earliest and benefit at least 50 000 elderly persons.

- The Government has been improving public healthcare services and enhancing the patient experience on various fronts with specific performance indicators. These include shortening the waiting time for specialist out-patient services and making wider use of telehealth services. The performance indicators of certain services, including medication delivery and electronic medical certificates, were met early last year.
- The Government seeks to assist the logistics industry in better capitalising on the latest developments and business opportunities in smart logistics and e-commerce. To encourage the logistics industry to enhance productivity through technology application, the Government launched a \$300 million Pilot Subsidy Scheme for Third-party Logistics Service Providers in 2020 to provide subsidies to eligible logistics service providers. So far, the scheme has benefited over 190 enterprises, involving a total of about \$137 million. The scheme was enhanced in February this year, with the funding ceiling for each applicant enterprise increased from \$1 million to \$2 million and the scope of funding extended to cover services related to the application of ESG technology solutions.
- For the past three years, the Intellectual Property Department (IPD) granted an average of more than 10 000 standard patent registrations each year. The Government will introduce into the Legislative Council (LegCo) in the first half of 2024 a proposal to amend the Inland Revenue Ordinance with a view to implementing the "patent box" tax incentive, which will reduce substantially the tax rate for profits derived from qualifying IP to five per cent. This incentive aims to encourage enterprises to devote more resources to R&D and conduct commercialisation transactions making use of patents and other IP protections.
- Planning for the establishment of a WIPO Technology and Innovation Support Centre (TISC) in Hong Kong to enable our integration into the country's TISC network. The TISC will focus on providing specialised services such as patent search and analysis for the protection of scientific research results and enhanced support to the I&T sector, while promoting IP trading at the same time. The TISC also helps nurture local I&T talent well versed in patent knowledge. In this regard, I have set aside \$45 million to support the Hong Kong Productivity Council in establishing and operating

the TISC. It is anticipated that the TISC will commence operation by 2025 the earliest.

- **Web3.0**

- In last year's Budget, the Government proposed to expedite development of the Web3.0 ecosystem and has made good progress over the past year
- At present, there are over 220 enterprises specialising in related technologies in Cyberport, including three unicorns. Last year, Cyberport organised a number of promotional and educational activities, attracting more than 29 000 participants. It also rolled out a subsidy scheme to encourage enterprises to conduct proof-of-concept testing, with a view to accelerating market application of the relevant technologies.
- Having successfully issued the first batch of inaugural tokenised green bonds in February 2023, we issued the second batch of tokenised green bonds in early February this year, worth a total of \$6 billion and denominated in Hong Kong dollar, Renminbi (RMB), US dollar and Euro. This is the world's first-ever multi-currency tokenised bond issuance, and has attracted overwhelming subscription by global institutional investors
- Consulted the public on a legislative proposal to develop a regulatory regime for stablecoin issuers in end-2023, with the aim of putting in place a regulatory regime that safeguards financial stability without compromising innovation.
- The HKMA will soon roll out a "sandbox" for entities interested in issuing stablecoins to conduct trials, under manageable conditions, on the issuance process, business models, investor protection and risk management system. The "sandbox" will also facilitate communication on future regulatory requirements.
- Embracing the principle of "same activity, same risks, same regulation", the SFC has implemented a licensing regime for virtual asset (VA) trading platforms since last June. This regime enables investors to conduct trading on licensed trading platforms in compliance with the relevant international standards and in a protected environment, thereby enabling Hong Kong to surpass many major jurisdictions in the regulation of VA trading.
- To strengthen investor and customer protection, we have launched a consultation on the regulation of over-the-counter trading of VA. We will continue to promote the development of Hong Kong's VA market in a stable and responsible manner through a multi-pronged approach, which includes

timely dissemination of information, holistic public education and enhanced enforcement.

- **International Innovation and Technology Centre**

- The Government has committed substantial resources to building a vibrant I&T ecosystem by focusing on enhancing I&T infrastructure, research capacity, talent, etc

- ◆ As at end-2023, the number of tenants of the Hong Kong Science Park and Cyberport, together with past and current incubatees, amounted to some 4 500, an increase of more than 60 per cent over the past five years. Among them, 16 have been listed, nine have become unicorns, and a total of some \$130 billion has been raised while more than 1 700 local and non-local awards have been won.

- ◆ Cyberport is expediting the establishment of an AI Supercomputing Centre to meet the demand of research institutes and the industry for computing power. The first phase facility is expected to start operating within this year at the earliest. By early 2026 at the soonest, the computing power of the supercomputing facility is expected to reach 3 000 petaFLOPS. The scale of such power is equivalent to the capacity of processing nearly 10 billion images in one hour.

- ◆ Will allocate \$3 billion to Cyberport for the launch of a three-year AI Subsidy Scheme to support local universities, research institutes and enterprises to leverage the Centre's computing power and achieve scientific breakthroughs. The subsidy will also be used to strengthen the cyber security and data protection of the Centre, and launch promotional and educational activities, etc. to encourage Mainland and overseas AI experts, enterprises and R&D projects to come to Hong Kong.

- ◆ To capture a market with huge potential, and dovetail with the national strategy for technological development, the Government is fostering R&D of microelectronics. Will establish the Hong Kong Microelectronics Research and Development Institute (HKMSRDI) this year. It will spearhead and facilitate research collaboration on the third-generation semiconductors among universities, R&D centres and the industry, and to realise R&D outcomes by making use of the comprehensive manufacturing industry chain in the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

- Life and Health Technology

- ◆ In the previous Budget, \$10 billion was earmarked to promote the development of life and health technology. Of this, \$6 billion will be used to provide subsidies for local universities to collaborate with Mainland and overseas organisations to set up life and health technology research institutes. The purpose is to facilitate relevant R&D activities and transformation of R&D outcomes, and to attract leading I&T talent and research teams around the world to Hong Kong.
- ◆ The Government will set up the Greater Bay Area International Clinical Trial Institute in the Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone this year. It will provide one-stop support to attract more local, Mainland and overseas pharmaceutical and medical device enterprises to conduct clinical trials in Hong Kong. We will also actively seek support from the National Medical Products Administration for record filing, so that such data can be used by these enterprises when applying for marketing authorisation of their products in the Mainland.
- New Industrialisation Development
  - ◆ Will launch a \$10 billion New Industrialisation Acceleration Scheme (NIAS) this year. Enterprises engaging in life and health technology, AI and data science, advanced manufacturing and new energy technology will each be provided with funding support of up to \$200 million on a matching basis of one (Government): two (enterprise). Applicant enterprises shall invest no less than \$200 million in Hong Kong.
  - ◆ Apart from the above funding support on a matching basis, enterprises participating in the NIAS may receive subsidies to engage research talent under the Research Talent Hub. They may also, on a pilot basis, engage a small number of non-local technical personnel under the Technology Talent Admission Scheme to expedite the set-up and operation of advanced manufacturing facilities in Hong Kong.
  - ◆ It is anticipated that the NIAS will attract 50 to 100 enterprises engaging in relevant industries to invest no less than \$20 billion in Hong Kong.
- Hong Kong Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park
  - ◆ The first batch of buildings in the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park (HSITP) in the Lok Ma Chau Loop (the Loop) will commence operation progressively by the end of this year, various tasks such as attracting enterprises, investment and talent are

underway.

- ◆ Will continue to support the development of the HSITP, and are drafting the White Paper on the Development of the HSITP in the Loop targeting to be announced this year.
  - ◆ Will set up the InnoLife Healthtech Hub in the HSITP to attract top-notch research teams and talent from around the world, with a focus on life and health disciplines, to conduct research. This will be conducive to the development of international I&T centre in the Loop and the GBA. We will allocate \$2 billion from the \$10 billion earmarked to support the InnoHK research clusters to establish presence in the Loop. We will also allocate \$200 million to provide assistance to start-ups engaging in life and health technology in the form of incubation and acceleration programmes, etc.
- Nurturing Start-ups
- ◆ In the Global Startup Ecosystem Report 2023, Hong Kong ranked second in the world and first in Asia in the Emerging Startup Ecosystems category. The number of start-ups rose to nearly 4 300 last year, about a fourfold increase compared to 2014. Over the same period, the number of people employed by related start-ups increased by about seven times to over 16 000.
  - ◆ Since its inception, the Corporate Venture Fund under the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTPC) has invested a total of nearly \$400 million in 31 start-ups and attracted private investment of about \$12.6 billion. The HKSTPC will soon launch the Co-acceleration Programme to pool the efforts of the I&T industry and provide value-added support services to I&T start-ups with high potential and to nurture them as regional or global enterprises.
- R&D and Transformation in I&T
- ◆ We will launch a Frontier Technology Research Infrastructure Support Scheme to assist the eight University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities, on a matching basis, in procuring facilities and conducting research projects which cover various fields such as AI, quantum information, integrated circuit, clinical medicine and health, and gene and biotechnology. To this end, we will allocate \$3 billion from the sum earmarked in the past.
  - ◆ To enable universities to strengthen technology transfer and marketing services, we will provide subsidies of no more than \$16 million to the Technology Transfer Office of each of the eight UGC-funded

universities from 2024-25 onwards.

- Enhancing I&T Infrastructure
  - ◆ Batch 1 of Stage 2 of the Science Park Expansion Programme, which will provide a gross floor area (GFA) of about 13 000 square metres mainly for wet laboratories, is expected to be completed in the first quarter of next year.
  - ◆ The Cyberport 5 expansion project, which will provide a GFA of about 66 000 square metres for co-working spaces and offices, etc., is expected to be completed by the end of next year at the earliest.
  - ◆ Together with the I&T sites in the Loop to be put into use progressively, there will be more room for the local I&T ecosystem to prosper.
- I&T Talent
  - ◆ Apart from supporting various talent training programmes under new industrialisation development, we have also implemented the STEM Internship Scheme to encourage university students to participate in I&T-related work.
  - ◆ To better prepare for integration into the knowledge-based economy and development of a digital society, the Government has launched a "Knowing More About IT" Programme to enhance primary school students' interests in information technology and its applications. In this connection, I propose to allocate an additional funding of \$134 million for the provision of subsidies of up to \$300,000 for each publicly-funded primary school in the next two academic years.