BEC Topical Digest

BEC's Submission on the Public Consultation on Hong Kong Smart City Blueprint

Background

In June 2017, the Report of the Consultancy Study on Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong was published. Its objective is to provide recommendations to the HKSAR Government for a blueprint for developing Hong Kong as a smart city. In August 2017, the Government launched a 2 month public consultation, collecting views on the report. This is a summary of BEC's response.

Overview of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Clarity as to goals and vision

- We would like to see the goals and mission of a smart city incorporated into the objectives. Being "smart" is a means to achieving certain goals, not an end in itself. It is this clarity as to the real goals that gives direction to business and civil society.

- With the world approaching various planetary limits, a fundamental goal and aspect of the smart city vision should be the protection and enhancement of our environment and the transition to a low carbon and circular economy.

Recommendation 2: Break down silos and ensure inter-bureaux coordination

- We recommend a greater emphasis on the interconnection of the various components of a smart city to avoid a silo approach where for example policies on smart mobility or smart economy hamper policies on a smart environment.

- To ensure a co-ordinated approach across the Government, better structures and linkages are critical. We recommend:
  o A single high level authority to champion the smart city agenda, and ensure inter-departmental co-ordination and timely implementation.
  o Alignment of the Blueprint with other long term plans and targets.
  o A cross-bureaux forum for regular dialogue with business and other stakeholders.

Recommendation 3: Clear roles for different players

- Clarity of roles is critical. In our view, the Government's role should be in:
  o Giving firm but broad direction, facilitating and enabling change, but leaving the specifics to business and the community.
  o Where "public goods" are involved, ensuring investment and action as required.
  o Developing legal frameworks or supporting the development of essential protocols.
  o Drawing up a plan and set of policies relating to acquiring necessary "human capital".

- As to the role of business, this is in developing ideas and implementing them.

Recommendation 4: Foster a culture of innovation and trialling

- Important to have an overarching framework in place to foster a dynamic and innovative culture. The building blocks we would like to see are:
  o A flexible, goal-oriented framework or blueprint that is permissive rather than prescriptive.
  o A bottom–up and transparent approach, systematically drawing ideas from the community and businesses.
  o Funding for pilots and a policy framework to support scaling up of pilots, as well as arrangements for learning from pilots.
  o Provisions for a healthy start-up ecosystem.

Recommendation 5: Smart mobility

There is considerable potential in this field. The Blueprint in our view should:

- As smart mobility is in part about smart decisions on infrastructure needed, commit to rail as the default means of land-based transport.

- Commit to find the best way to shift to electric & hybrid vehicles as part of the pathway to a carbon neutral economy.

- Aim to manage demand for transportation through a combination of measures such as electronic road pricing and staggered work start times.

- Commit to improve intermodal transport, investing in the necessary infrastructure.

- Support improvements to private vehicle parking systems.

- Encourage the development of the sharing economy.

Recommendation 6: Sustainable behaviour a central part of smart living

▪ Energy efficient living, walking and cycling, and sustainable consumption should be incorporated as goals of "smart living".

▪ Technology and data, as well as flexible working practices should be explicitly recognised as part of "smart living".

Recommendation 7: Enhance the section on smart environment

▪ A clear list of environmental objectives should be set out, including but not limited to mitigating and adapting to climate change, minimizing pollution, protecting nature and biodiversity, resource efficiency and good waste and water management.

▪ We recommend that for the sake of clarity of objective and impactfulness, proposed approaches are set out with reference to the aims that they relate to and prioritised in terms of impact. Initiatives that relate to enhancing existing buildings, resource efficiency or smart waste management, and distributed renewable energy should also be included.

Recommendation 8: A positive approach to big data and open data

▪ Big data and open data are central to a smart city. Hence this section of the Blueprint should set out a positive approach capturing the benefits of open data, and set out steps to encourage and to support businesses to share data on portals (subject to personal privacy and commercial confidentiality concerns).

▪ To make the release of data effective, we would like to see a single data portal and release of datasets in as usable a form as possible.

Read the Full Policy Submission Here

About Business Environment Council Limited 商界環保協會有限公司

Business Environment Council Limited ("BEC") is an independent, charitable membership organisation, established by the business sector in Hong Kong. Since its establishment in 1992, BEC has been at the forefront of promoting environmental excellence by advocating the uptake of clean technologies and practices which reduce waste, conserve resources, prevent pollution and improve corporate environmental and social responsibility. BEC offers sustainable solutions and professional services covering advisory, research, assessment, training and award programs for government, business and the community, thus enabling environmental protection and contributing to the transition to a low carbon economy.

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