

Our ref: (2) in ERB/D/CTB/001

Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology  
(Attn: Miss Adeline Wong)  
Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau  
1/F – 2/F., Murray Building,  
Garden Road,  
Central,  
Hong Kong

13 November 2003

Dear Miss Wong,

**Public Consultation on 2004 Digital 21 Strategy**

Thank you for your letter dated 10 October 2003 to Mr S S Kwong, our Executive Director, and for inviting the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) to give our views/comments on the draft consultation paper.

Most, if not all, of the initiatives reported or discussed in the draft consultation paper are outside the ERB's scope of work. We do not therefore have much to offer by way of comments from the point of view of our services. However, we wish to take this opportunity to report briefly on what the Board has been doing to promote IT awareness among the older and lower-educated sectors of the Hong Kong community, and e-service provision.

As you may be aware, the ERB's mission is primarily to provide retraining and placement services to the unemployed people, particularly those who are aged 30 or over and are educated up to Form 3. In 2003/04, we have budgeted to provide 107,000 retraining places, about half of which are full-time and placement-tied, i.e. placement services are provided to the retrainees at the end of the course. Almost as many are 48,000 places on half-day or evening courses on basic computer applications. Many of the full-time skill courses also include instructions on basic computer knowledge and operation. We also offer a small number of full-time places for more advanced computer work for

unemployed people educated up to Form 5 or even higher. Most graduates of these courses are placed into employment in the IT industry. The Board also operates two retraining resource centers at which retrainee graduates can practise on a personal computer by themselves, with guidance from an instructor when necessary. It can be seen that the ERB has been sparing no efforts to equip our retrainees with basic computer knowledge to enable them to cope with the present-day requirements of jobs appropriate to their education background.

On the e-service provision front, the ERB has recently enhanced its computer system to permit members of the public to apply for admission to retraining course through the Internet. We are also exploring on the running of some retraining courses through e-learning.

Yours sincerely,

( P Y Choy )  
for Executive Director  
Employees Retraining Board