YOUR NOMINEE:

Connecting the Globe with Advanced Technology: Next Generation Electronic Passport System (e-Passport-2)

ORGANISATION'S PROFILE

Immigration Department
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
of the People's Republic of China

The Hong Kong Immigration Department (ImmD) was set up in 1961. It is committed to exercising effective immigration control and enforcing the laws. Moreover, ImmD provides a wide range of public services to local residents including the issuance of identity cards, HKSAR passports and other travel documents, visas, the handling of nationality matters and the registration of births, deaths and marriages. Equal emphasis is also placed on providing travel document convenience and facilitation for tourists, business visitors and Hong Kong residents in order to uphold Hong Kong's strength as an international financial and trade centre as well as a tourism hub.

REASONS FOR NOMINATION:

<u>Background</u>

The Next Generation Electronic Passport System (e-Passport-2) was implemented in May 2019 to support the issue of HKSAR travel documents with high quality and security at a higher efficiency. The use of robotics in every element was the key design principle of e-Passport-2 which became the "DNA" of the system and had been adopted extensively in the whole application process from submission, personalisation to collection of the Next Generation HKSAR e-Passport with the introduction of new robotic components including personalisation machines, electronic cabinets and self-service kiosks which enhanced the operational efficiency at a lower cost. In addition, we have achieved manpower and land resources savings with the vast deployment of robotics under e-Passport-2. e-Passport-2 further enhanced the efficiency on its Automatic Case Assessment function, improving the application procedures which in turn shortened the application processing time. There were also new initiatives making the passport application and collection more user-friendly and convenient. Next Generation HKSAR e-Passports are produced under strict control with state-of-the-art security features and sophisticated designs incorporated with a view to better deterring forgeries in the race of today's advancing technologies, providing the public and international communities with greater confidence in the documentation.

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- Recognition from ICT industry and public appreciations
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    - Regional Identity Document Awards of the Year of High Security Printing Asia 2019: the Best New e-Passport
    - Role model of the 'Streamlining of Government Services' (SGS) Programme launched by the Efficiency Office

Promotion of use of online service

a) **Passport application via Immigration Department Mobile Application (ImmD Mobile App)**

Applicants can submit a HKSAR Passport application via ImmD Mobile App using their mobile devices. After filling in all the required information, applicants can take a photo and upload the photo from their mobile devices for an instant quality check. Subsequently, applicants can settle the payment by credit card. With the use of their mobile devices, applicants can complete the entire application process at their convenience anytime and anywhere.

b) **Online form pre-filling service**

Applicants can make appointments for application of HKSAR Passport and fill in the relevant application forms in advance through the GovHK website or Immigration Department Mobile Application, enjoying a faster process of application submission.

c) **Extension of electronic submission of HKSAR Passport applications**

Electronic submission of application for HKSAR Passport was extended to Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card holders aged below 11 for passport replacement, which provides more flexibility and convenience to members of the public.

d) **Connection with iAM Smart with "e-ME" form filling**

With the introduction of iAM Smart in December 2020, online services relating to travel documents have been enhanced for supporting iAM Smart function of "e-ME". "e-ME" form filling function enables e-Passport-2 to retrieve applicants' personal data from iAM Smart platform to facilitate the auto form filling of personal data for the applicant into the online application form.
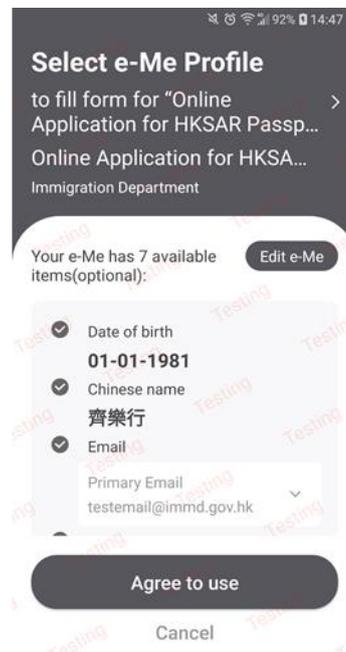
Promotion of use of Self-service kiosks

a) **Self-service Tag Issuing Kiosk (STIK)**

Upon arrival in ImmD offices, the applicant can approach the Self-service Tag Issuing Kiosk to obtain a tag number by scanning the QR code on the appointment letter. The applicant may also scan the identity card or input his/her identity card number on the touch screen monitor at the Kiosk to obtain a tag number. The applicant may also obtain a tag number at reception desk.

b) **Travel Document Submission Kiosk (TDSK)**

Travel Document Submission Kiosk is an upgraded platform for providing multi-services including form filling, self-service photo taking for free and payment service in one-stop. The new kiosk extends self-service to any eligible applicants holding a valid Hong Kong permanent identity card such that they can submit a passport application through the TDSK without prior appointment required. TDSK supports various digital and contactless payment means including Easy Pay System (EPS), Octopus and Faster Payment System (FPS), thus providing more flexibility and options to applicants.

c) **Passport Collection Kiosk (PCK)**

This is the new type of kiosk introduced in e-Passport-2. In addition to the existing collection means, eligible applicants may choose to collect their passports at PCK upon application submission. A Short Message Service (SMS) notification containing collection arrangement will be sent to applicant prior to the collection period. Applicants can approach the Immigration Offices for Travel Document Applications for collection without making appointment during the collection period. Upon collection of passports, applicants are required to verify their identities with their Hong Kong permanent identity cards and fingerprints. After cancellation of their previous passports, if any, the new passports will be issued.

Increased storage of electronic Cabinet (e-Cabinet)

New hardware for e-Cabinets have been introduced to enhance the operation support. e-Cabinets are installed at the back office for storage and retrieval of new HKSAR Travel Documents in order to support issuance by an officer to applicants over the counter. With the introduction of enhanced e-Cabinets, the storage of new HKSAR Travel Documents have been increased by about 30% from 1 000 to 1 300.

Introduction of one-stop services

Members of the public can enjoy the brand new one-stop services, including one-stop registration of birth-cum-travel document services and one-stop application and provision of identity card-cum-travel document services since March 2021.

Passport collection at the Chinese Diplomatic and Consular Missions

Under the new measure launched in Oct 2020, local or overseas applicants who submit applications directly to the ImmD by whichever means may choose to collect their passports at the Chinese Diplomatic and Consular Missions, which further extends our convenient services across the world.

Benefits

Through the implementation of e-Passport-2, the HKSAR Passport application and issuance processes were

enhanced through various improvement initiatives such as extending the electronic submission of HKSAR passport applications to all eligible applicants regardless of their age, from web-based platform to the mobile platform and introducing self-service kiosks to meet the ever increasing demand to the provision of quality public services. The achievements have been listed as follows:

a) **Expedited the passport application process**

With the introduction of form pre-filling service, applicants can complete the required information online before arriving at Immigration Offices for Travel Document Applications rather than filling in the form in person at the relevant offices, thus shortening their processing time at our offices. Furthermore, with the implementation of e-Passport-2, the time required for processing the applications has been greatly shortened from ten to five working days.

b) **Revolutionised public services to self-service mode**

Since the implementation of e-Passport-2 in May 2019, over a million of Next Generation HKSAR e-Passports have been issued by our new system. With the initiative to promote self-service applications, submission through online platform and self-service kiosks accounted for more than half of the total transactions since the roll-out of the new System. In the future, the use of self-service kiosks will be extended to more public services of the ImmD.

c) **Enhancement in provision of quality public service**

With a view to further enhancing the quality of public service, applicants can enjoy the brand new one-stop services, including one-stop registration of birth-cum-travel document services and one-stop application and provision of identity card-cum-travel document services since March 2021.

d) **Highly secure passport with state-of-the-art technologies**

e-Passport-2 has utilised the latest technologies to issue passports with high quality and security at a higher efficiency. The security features of the Next Generation HKSAR e-Passport have been enhanced with up-to-date technologies in the market to uphold the security, integrity and global interoperability of the passport, providing the public and international communities with greater confidence.

e) **Boosted the development of Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong**

ImmD has untiringly strived for excellence, kept abreast with the times and made use of information technology to deliver exemplary service to Hong Kong residents. With the introduction of iAM Smart, e-Passport-2 has made effective use of its platform to develop interface to further facilitate our applicants.

The introduction of "e-ME" aims to provide an easy and convenient means in automatic form filling service. Applicants only need to input their personal information once under iAM Smart platform and select to save the information at "e-ME" account, the information would be passed to e-Passport-2 for filling in the information on the application form, saving much time in the application process. In the future, ImmD plans to implement a Personalised Notification service which will remind applicants to apply for travel document replacement before the expiry of their travel documents.

f) **Social distancing due to the outbreak of COVID-19**
Due to the outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic, it is perceived that online platform and self-service kiosks will gradually become the main submission channels to achieve social distancing and to minimise physical contact. The adoption of robotics to enhance the service quality with a view to providing more convenient service to the public sets a role model to other government departments and commercial organisations.

Recognition from ICT industry and public appreciations

a) **Hong Kong ICT Awards 2021: Award of the Year, Smart Business Grand Award and Smart Business (Solution for Business and Public Sector Enterprise) Gold Award**
e-Passport-2 has won the Award of the Year, Smart Business Grand Award and Smart Business (Solution for Business and Public Sector Enterprise) Gold Award at the Hong Kong ICT Awards 2021. The Hong Kong ICT Awards is steered by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer of the HKSAR Government and organised by the Hong Kong ICT industry associations and professional bodies, aims at recognising outstanding information and communications technology inventions and applications, thereby encouraging innovation and excellence among ICT talent in their constant pursuit of better solutions to meet social needs.

b) **Regional Identity Document Awards of the Year of High Security Printing Asia 2019: the Best New e-Passport**
With the incorporation of state-of-the-art security features and sophisticated designs with a view to better

deterring forgeries in the race of today's advancing technologies, e-Passport-2 has won Regional Identity (ID) Document of the Year 2019 of the High Security Printing Asia (HSPA) Awards for the Best New e-Passport.

c) **Role model of the 'Streamlining of Government Services' (SGS) Programme launched by the Efficiency Office**

Launched in mid-2019, the SGS Programme aims to improve government services involving applications and approvals through streamlining business processes and widening the adoption of technology on a continuous basis with a view to improving their convenience, efficiency and transparency. With the introduction of advance technology to reduce manual efforts, e-Passport-2 has been selected by the Efficiency Office as a successful case of illustration for sharing with other government departments.
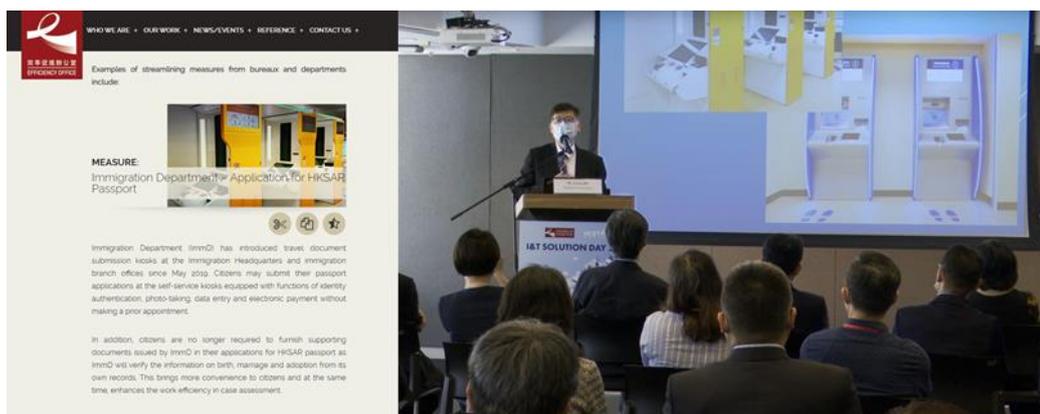
Conclusion

By synergising the advanced technology developed by the private sector and ImmD's excellent public service delivery experience, ImmD is able to implement the state-of-the-art e-Passport-2 system to benefit more than 7 million Hong Kong residents. Looking ahead, ImmD will continue to employ more innovative technologies into its operations with an aim to provide more professional and quality services to members of the public.