CONTROLLING   OFFICER'S   REPLY

(Question Serial No. 3340)

Head: (26) Census and Statistics Department

Subhead (No. & title):   (-) Not Specified

Programme: (-) Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Commissioner for Census and Statistics (Leo YU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury

Question:

The total provision for Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) in 2025-2026 is HK$92,480 million (an increase of 10.8%).   Of this amount, provision is allocated to Social Statistics in view of the increase in operating expenses for the 2026 Population Census, while the remaining five provisions are mainly for filling vacancies rather than increasing headcount.

The main duty of C&SD is to compile and analyse trade statistics. Taking this into account, is it possible to enhance efficiency and reduce the need for manpower by introducing technology, thereby lowering the cost of expenditure and reducing the provision?

Asked by: Hon HO Kwan-yiu, Junius (LegCo internal reference no.: 43)

Reply:

In recent years, the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) has been actively exploring the application of artificial intelligence (AI) and data science in official statistical work to drive digital transformation.   For example, in the compilation of external merchandise trade statistics, C&SD has to process a vast number of import/export declarations. C&SD has, in recent years, utilised deep learning algorithms to detect anomalies in the information contained in the trade declarations, thereby enhancing data quality and reducing the manpower required by about 40%.   The resources freed up were re-allocated to establish the new Data Science Branch and the Social Data Development Branch to conduct further research and drive the application of data science in other statistical services.

C&SD will continue to apply innovation technology to enhance operational efficiency and quality of its statistical services, and also with a view to reducing manpower needs in the long run.

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