



AUDIT COMMISSION CONTROLLING OFFICER'S ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT 2003

INTRODUCTION

Established under Article 58 of the Basic Law, the Audit Commission functions independently and is accountable to the Chief Executive of the HKSAR. The Commission carries out two types of audit: regularity audits and value-for-money audits. Regularity audits are intended to provide an overall assurance of the general accuracy and propriety of the financial and accounting transactions of the government and other audited bodies. Value for money audits are intended to provide independent information, advice and assurance about the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which any bureau, department, or audited organization has discharged its functions. As at 31 December 2003, the Commission had an establishment of 201.

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

2. The environmental policy of the Audit Commission is that it is committed to ensuring that its operations conform to environmental protection principles and promote environmental protection practices. To help promote environmental protection, the Audit Commission:

- adopts green housekeeping practices; and
- carries out value for money audits on selected government activities which have a significant environmental impact and on related environmental issues, with a view to highlighting areas for improvement in the implementation of Government's environmental improvement policies.

HOUSEKEEPING PRACTICES: GREEN MEASURES

3. The Audit Commission is committed to adopting green housekeeping practices. Since 1993, a Green Manager at the Assistant Director level has been appointed to introduce and review initiatives to improve the Commission's green housekeeping practices. Through the years, the range of initiatives has expanded. Staff of the Audit Commission are required to follow the following green measures:

Paper saving measures

Reduction of paper and envelope consumption:

- use electronic mail and intranet for communication and dissemination of information;
- disseminate the Audit Reports on the Internet (<http://www.info.gov.hk/aud/>);
- use PC-based faxes;
- use plain paper fax machine;
- avoid using fax leader pages;
- avoid sending original documents after they have been sent by fax;
- adopt electronic templates of letterhead, memo and forms to avoid pre-printed copies;
- use photocopiers and printers with double-sided printing function;
- print on both sides of paper;
- minimise photocopies by circulating circulars and other documents instead of issuing personal copies to officers;
- review distribution lists regularly;
- use old sets of documents for re-circulation;
- send unclassified documents without envelopes;
- reuse old envelopes and loose minute jackets/use transit envelopes if required; and
- send greeting cards in festive seasons by electronic means.

Reuse of paper:

- place “reuse green boxes” at designated locations to collect paper used on one side for reuse; and
- use blank side of used paper for drafting, photocopying and printing documents (including fax).

Recycling of paper:

- print Audit Reports using recycled paper or paper made from woodpulp derived from renewable forests; and
- place “recycle green boxes” at designated locations to collect waste paper for recycling.

Energy saving measures

- switch off lights, air conditioning, computers and electrical appliances not in use;
- unplug all hand-held equipment chargers from socket outlets when not in use;
- minimise the use of personal electrical appliances such as heater, fan, lamp and kettle;
- conduct routine checks during lunch hour and after office hours to ensure that any unnecessary lights and air-conditioners are switched off;
- reduce lighting to minimum required for illumination;
- use venetian blinds to adjust room temperature when necessary;

- use staircases instead of lifts for inter-floor traffic;
- use computer workstations and printers with automatic energy saving function;
- use LCD monitors instead of CRT monitors when replacement is required; and
- use energy-efficient fluorescent tubes.

Publicity/education measures

- issue internal circular to regularly remind all staff on the economical use of paper;
- display posters which remind drivers to switch off vehicle engine while waiting;
- post 'save energy' and 'save water' notices near light switches and water taps; and
- place notices near photocopiers to remind staff to make photocopies using reusable paper and to collect waste paper for recycling.

Other green measures

- enforce non-smoking policy in all offices;
- arrange regular cleaning of carpet;
- clean air ducts regularly with a view to maintaining good air ventilation;
- conduct regular indoor air quality checking;
- place air purifiers near photocopiers;
- switch off the engine of the departmental vehicle while waiting;
- use unleaded fuel;
- collect used printer cartridges for reuse;
- use refillable ball pens and clutch pencils;
- minimise use of products which are not environmentally friendly (e.g. correction fluid);
- repair old equipment;
- use hand-dryers in washrooms;
- reuse decorative materials in festive seasons; and
- exchange diskettes within and outside of department.

GREEN HOUSEKEEPING PRACTICES: PERFORMANCE AND TARGET

4. In 2003, the Commission had stepped up measures to reduce paper consumption. An internal circular was issued to enhance staff awareness of green management practices and provide guidelines and measures for reducing paper consumption. Through the efforts made by each of the staff members, the Commission achieved a marked decrease of 13.54% in paper consumption and 65.40% in envelope consumption in 2003.

5. In 2004, the Commission aims at further reducing paper and envelope consumption.

6. About 99.27% of the total quantity of paper used in 2003 was recycled paper with at least 50% recycled pulp. In 2004, it is the Commission's target to maintain the proportion of recycled paper at a similar level as that in 2003.

AUDIT STUDIES ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: PERFORMANCE AND TARGET

7. In 2003, the Audit Commission issued a value for money audit report on environmental-related issues.

“Provision of noise barriers for mitigating road traffic noise” (Chapter 5 of the Director of Audit’s Report No. 41 of October 2003)

8. According to the Government’s estimate, road traffic noise affects more than one million people in Hong Kong. In planning development projects, a policy objective of the Government for noise control is to have due regard to the potential noise problem. The use of noise barriers to screen off traffic noise is an established international practice. Audit conducted a review on the implementation of noise barriers projects for mitigating road traffic noise. The audit revealed that there is room for improvement in providing noise barriers for planned developments and in monitoring the effectiveness of installed noise barriers. Audit has made a number of recommendations to address the observations.

9. The Audit Commission will continue to conduct value for money audit studies on issues which have significant environmental impact.

THE WAY FORWARD

10. The Audit Commission will make continued efforts to help promote environmental protection through adopting green housekeeping practices and carrying out value for money audits on environmental issues.

FEEDBACK

11. We value very much your feedback, which would be useful for further improving our report in the coming years. If you have any comments or suggestions, please let us know by any of the following means -

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