



AUDIT COMMISSION CONTROLLING OFFICER'S ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT 2004

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 2004, the Commission had an establishment of 184.

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

- set AC temperature at 25.5°C;
- 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;
- turn off non-essential servers at night, on Saturday afternoons and public holidays;
- and
- use energy-efficient fluorescent tubes.

Publicity/education measures

- issue internal circular to regularly remind all staff on the economical use of paper and energy saving;
- 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;
- exchange diskettes within and outside of department; and
- collect used CDs for recycling.

GREEN HOUSEKEEPING PRACTICES: PERFORMANCE AND TARGET

4. Through the continued efforts of our staff members, the Commission achieved a marked decrease of 9.36% in paper consumption in 2004. There was however an increase in envelope consumption by 14.57% arising from ad hoc audit assignments and recruitment exercise.

5. About 99% of the total quantity of paper used in 2004 was recycled paper with at least 50% recycled pulp.

6. In 2005, it is the Commission's target to maintain the consumption of paper and envelope as well as the proportion of recycled paper at similar levels as those in 2004.

AUDIT STUDIES ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: PERFORMANCE AND TARGET

7. In 2004, the Audit Commission issued a value for money audit report on environmental-related issues.

“Harbour Area Treatment Scheme Stage I”

(Chapter 3 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 42 of March 2004)

8. The Harbour Area Treatment Scheme (HATS) is an overall sewage collection, treatment and disposal strategy to deal with water pollution of Victoria Harbour. Implementation of HATS was divided into four stages. HATS Stage I was designed to collect and transfer 75% of the harbour sewage from the urban areas in Kowloon and Northeast Hong Kong Island via a sewage tunnel system to the Stonecutters Island Sewage Treatment Works for treatment. The remaining stages of HATS are currently under planning. Audit conducted a review on the implementation of HATS Stage I. Audit noted that there were delay in works, increase in costs and problems encountered in the tunnel contracts. Audit also noted that while there had been a significant improvement in the water quality in Victoria Harbour, especially in the eastern and central harbour areas, and at beaches on the eastern side of Hong Kong Island, there was a substantial increase in the level of E. coli bacteria in the western harbour area and in the Tsuen Wan beaches. Audit had 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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