

C&SD Environmental Report 2007

Introduction

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) was set up in December 1967. Together with the statistical units established in various government departments and bureaux, it forms the Government Statistical Service.

2. The work of C&SD can be classified into three main categories:
 - (a) Conducting statistical surveys and operating statistical systems for the production of social and economic statistics including data series on such areas as population, trade, industry, employment, prices, national income and balance of payments, etc.;
 - (b) Performing statistical analysis and disseminating statistical data and analytical results; and
 - (c) Providing consultation and support services on statistical matters to various government departments/bureaux.

3. The Commissioner for Census and Statistics is the head of C&SD. He is assisted by a Deputy Commissioner and five Assistant Commissioners, each of whom is in charge of one division. As at 1 January 2007, the establishment of C&SD was 1 212.

4. Being the leading department in the provision of official statistical services, the work of C&SD interacts with the environment mainly in the aspects of paper and material usage, waste management and energy consumption. Hence, a reporting system has been set up and various initiatives have been implemented to facilitate the monitoring and improvement of these significant aspects within the department.

5. Enhancement in C&SD's environmental performance can be achieved only through the dedication and support of its stakeholders, which include users of official statistical services, its staff, its material suppliers and contractors, and other government departments/bureaux. It is hoped that, through this environmental report, these stakeholders can better understand C&SD's environmental concern and will join the department in environmental protection.

6. Unless otherwise stated, figures quoted in this report refer to the calendar year 2007.

Environmental policy

7. C&SD is committed to ensuring that all statistical activities it undertakes will be conducted in an environmentally responsible manner, and meeting the commitments of the Clean Air Charter signed by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government in November 2006. To this end, C&SD has adopted the following policies in pursuance of its environmental concern:

(a) Consumption minimisation

C&SD adheres to the principle of “Avoid, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle” in the consumption of paper, materials and energy. The usage of information technology will be promoted in enhancing the performance in this aspect wherever applicable.

(b) Staff training and education

C&SD ensures through appropriate measures such as provision of training and guidelines that all staff are aware of various environmental issues.

(c) Procurement management

C&SD demands its suppliers and contractors to provide, wherever possible, products and services that can meet high environmental standards.

(d) Communication

C&SD makes its environmental policy known to the community through the Internet.

Environmental objectives

8. The environmental objectives of C&SD are:

- (a) To reduce consumption of paper and materials hazardous to the environment;
- (b) To reduce electricity consumption; and
- (c) To increase the environmental awareness of staff and instill amongst them a sense of responsibility for the environment.

9. The green measures and environmental performance achieved by C&SD to meet the above objectives and fulfill the commitments of the Clean Air Charter are

highlighted in the following sections.

Environmental management

10. C&SD is committed to promoting green management. It set up an Environmental Management Committee (EMC) in 1995, which is chaired by an Assistant Commissioner. Members of the EMC include the Departmental Secretary, a Senior Statistician from each of the five divisions, a Statistician and a Senior Clerical Officer.

11. Since its establishment, the EMC has explored various green initiatives, introduced a series of green office guidelines and set the directions in implementing various environmental programmes in the department.

12. To implement environmental programmes effectively, the EMC has initiated the setting up of a network of Green Ambassadors since 1999. Under the programme of Green Ambassadors, an officer (at Section Head level) on each floor of C&SD's offices is appointed as Green Ambassador who is responsible for promulgating various measures of environmental protection to other colleagues located on the same floor. Specifically, the Green Ambassadors have the roles of:

- (a) facilitating prompt actions on environmental measures formulated by the EMC to be carried out in different offices of C&SD;
- (b) carrying out a monitoring role when the green measures are implemented;
- (c) enhancing communication between staff and the EMC on environmental issues; and
- (d) serving as site facilitators in environmental audit.

As at 1 April 2007, there were a total of 23 Green Ambassadors in C&SD.

13. C&SD has put in force an environmental audit programme since December 1999. The aims of the audit programme are to verify if the day-to-day office operation and activities comply with the department's environmental policy and objectives and to explore new green initiatives through on-site visit for continual improvement in environmental performance. The focus of the programme is on energy conservation, consumption minimisation, waste recovery and enhancing green awareness of staff and quality of environmental management. Ad hoc audit teams are formed each year to conduct environmental audits in selected offices and the Green Ambassadors of the audited offices will take follow-up actions if required in accordance with the

recommendations stated in the environmental audit reports.

14. Given that smoking is a principal source of indoor air pollution, a smoke-free workplace policy has been implemented in C&SD since 1 April 2005. Smoking is prohibited in the workplace of C&SD so as to maintain a healthy workplace for all C&SD staff. Starting from 1 January 2007, it is a requirement by law that smoking in all Government buildings is prohibited.

Environmental performance

Reduction of paper consumption

15. Information technology has been widely used in achieving paper saving. A number of office automation applications (e.g. Online Inventory System for Software Asset Management, and the Personnel, Training and Staff Reporting System) have been developed. Besides, most of the departmental information is accessible and maintained via some 70 electronic bulletin boards, which are organised systematically into such topics as statistical management, administrative and general matters, and IT user resources and information centre.

16. In line with the e-government policy, e-options have been provided for major services of C&SD. For example, e-questionnaire templates are available for all surveys amenable to e-submissions; e-forms are also available at the C&SD Website to facilitate users' applications for various statistical services.

17. Regarding the dissemination of statistical publications, data users can download these publications free of charge at the C&SD Website. Besides the latest issues, back issues of publications starting from October 2001 are also available for free download.

18. On distribution of statistical information, many publicity/educational leaflets, pamphlets and frequently asked statistics of C&SD are available for free access at the department's Website.

19. Following the implementation of the free download policy, C&SD has reduced the distribution of complimentary copies of statistical publications since 2007. This has resulted in a saving of a considerable amount of paper for publication printing purpose compared with 2006.

20. On the same basis of comparison by not including the paper consumption relating to the activities of C&SD's 40th Anniversary Commemoration Exhibition and Public Seminar in 2007, the amount of A4 paper consumed by C&SD in photocopying/office printing in 2007 was 15 400 reams, down by 1.6% as compared with 15 650 reams in 2006, or by 4.2% per annum on average as compared with 18 282 reams in 2003.

21. In support of the Government's call for reduction in paper consumption, C&SD will continue to contain the consumption of paper in photocopying/office printing in 2008.

Waste recovery for recycling/re-use

22. C&SD continues its efforts in recycling the waste paper it generated. Each section of C&SD is provided with waste paper recycling bags for collecting waste paper. In 2007, 60 tonnes of waste paper were collected for recycling.

23. Since 2001, C&SD's effort on waste separation and recycling has extended to aluminum cans and plastic bottles. Collection bins are placed on each floor of the Wanchai Tower headquarters for collecting aluminum cans and plastic bottles separately.

24. Since 1995, C&SD has joined the HP Printer Cartridge Recycling Programme under which used cartridges are collected and passed to HP for recycling. In 2007, 816 printer cartridges were recycled.

Energy conservation

25. C&SD recognises the importance of energy conservation and efficiency. It has carried out a good amount of energy saving retrofit works since 1998, including installation of energy-saving fluorescent tubes and compact fluorescent lamps, and replacing magnetic ballasts with electronic ballasts.

26. Apart from the modification of engineering installations, C&SD emphasises good housekeeping practices in achieving energy conservation. Green energy management practices are widely adopted in the offices. Such practices include switching off lights, air-conditioners and electric equipment when not in use, lowering venetian blinds when sunlight is strong, and setting air-conditioning at appropriate room temperature, etc.

27. To assess the performance in energy saving, figures on the total amount of electricity consumption in 4 C&SD office locations¹ in 2006 and 2007 are compared on the same basis of not including consumption relating to ad hoc statistical surveys. In 2007, the 4 selected locations consumed 1 090 644 kWh of electricity. The corresponding emission of sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and respirable suspended particulates (RSP) was 2 083 kg, 1 265 kg and 65 kg respectively. The amount of electricity consumption in 2007 was similar to that in 2006 (1 085 508 kWh). As compared with the figure of 1 129 954 kWh in 2005, a saving of 1.8% per annum on average was achieved.

28. There are three departmental vehicles in C&SD. The total mileage in 2007 was 36 704 km, and the fuel consumption was about 5 792 litres. The corresponding emission of NO_x and RSP was about 41 kg and 3 kg respectively.

Reduction of plastic bag consumption

29. C&SD has reminded its staff to be economical in paper consumption at all times with a view to reducing the rubbish generated and minimising the usage of plastic garbage bags. To further promote the use of “degradable” plastics bags, C&SD has included a provision in the new cleansing services contract for its offices requesting the cleansing contractors to use “degradable” plastic bags or bags made of “recycled plastics” for storing rubbish.

Building an environmental culture

30. To keep staff informed of C&SD’s latest initiatives on environmental protection and to foster their awareness of green office practices, a permanent column entitled “Environmental Protection and You” has been established in the bi-monthly Departmental Newsletter since March 2002. Articles on environmental issues covering such topics as waste recovery, energy conservation, green pledge, environmental procurement were contributed by Green Ambassadors and released therein.

31. An environmental seminar on green office practices was held in May 2007 with the assistance of the Environmental Protection Department. Some 30 staff members of C&SD attended the seminar.

¹ 4 office locations, out of a total of 6, were selected for quantitative assessment of performance in energy saving. This was because separately metered figures comparable over the two years 2006 and 2007 were only available for those 4 office locations.

The way ahead

32. C&SD will continue to work towards its environmental goal and improve its environmental performance. Specific targets that C&SD aims to achieve in the coming year are set out below:

- (a) To sustain efforts in consumption minimisation, waste recovery and energy conservation;
- (b) To continue organising training sessions and green activities to raise staff's awareness of and participation in environmental protection; and
- (c) To explore more green initiatives which could be implemented in daily operation and activities (e.g. arrangement of more green purchases).