

Environmental Report of the Treasury for 2000

Our Environmental Policy Statement

Our environmental policy is summarized as follows :-

- (1) The Treasury is conscious of the need to remain environmentally alert, to ensure that our scarce resources are used as efficiently as possible.
- (2) Although we seek to encourage cost-effectiveness in our operations, we will do so having regard to environmental considerations. As we recommend or implement work practices and systems, we will, as far as possible, emphasize the benefits of electronic transmission of data rather than the use of paper.
- (3) Within our own department, we will endeavour to minimise waste, to optimise the consumption of resources and to recover and recycle materials, wherever possible.

Policy Objectives of the Treasury

- **Policy Objectives**

The Treasury is headed by the Director of Accounting Services, who is responsible for the compilation and supervision of the accounts of the government, for the management of accounting operations and procedures, and for ensuring that all regulations, directions or instructions made or given under the Public Finance Ordinance (Cap. 2) are complied with.

- **Key Result Areas**

To ensure that our policy objectives can be achieved, we must deliver results in the following key areas; that is, we must-

- (1) produce the accounts of the government and provide centralised collection and payment services.
- (2) pay salaries, pensions, allowances and housing and certain other benefits to civil servants.
- (3) provide secure and effective accounting and financial information systems and procedures throughout the government.
- (4) invest funds in accordance with approved guidelines and achieve a reasonable return.

- **Size of Expenditure and Establishment**

- The expenditure of the Treasury in the 2000-01 financial year was HK\$ 301.2 million.
- We had a staff establishment of 720 as at 31 December 2000.
- Our head office is located at Immigration Tower. We have five Sub-Treasuries located at Revenue Tower, Central Government Offices, North Point Government Offices, Kowloon Government Offices and Kai Tak Government Building. All our offices are located in joint-user government buildings.

Green measures taken in the Treasury

Measures taken

- With the introduction of the new General Demand Notes System (GDNS) in late 1999, certain general demand notes can now be settled by autopay. Also, bureaux / departments can input data to the GDNS through on-line terminals or by file transfer.
- Promote wider use of various types of electronic payment methods for settlement of government bills.

Performance

- Reduce substantially paper consumption and streamline the flow of documents between bureaux / departments and the Treasury.
- The number of collections by autopay increased by 3% from 2.05 million transactions in 1999 to over 2.11 million transactions in 2000. With a corresponding decrease of 11% in postal remittances (i.e. from 2.8 million transactions in 1999 to 2.5 million transactions in 2000) and the cessation of issuing receipts for regular payments made by postal remittances, substantial savings in postage and resources for enveloping, etc. have been achieved.

- Collections by electronic methods, namely, Payment by Phone Service (PPS), JET Payment Service (JET), and HSBC / Hang Seng Bank ATM Service (ATM), increased by 32% from 2.8 million transactions in 1999 to 3.7 million transactions in 2000.
- PPS was extended to the internet in October 1999, while JET, ATM and the Electronic Service Delivery scheme were extended to the internet in 2000, such that the general public can settle government bills through the internet service.
- More bill types have been accepted since the inception of PPS, JET and ATM.
- The popular use of the electronic payment methods for settlement of government bills has directly relieved the pressure to open additional collection offices and employ more staff to process postal remittances which, in a way, has saved the resources for other more meaningful tasks.
- Extend the electronic bill settlement services to accept additional types of government bills.

- Develop simplified procedures for processing payment vouchers in the government.
- Bureaux / departments were previously required to forward the original payment vouchers and supporting documents (e.g. invoices) to the Treasury for prepayment checking and processing. Normally, they also kept a set of the photocopies of these documents. Since 1.1.2000, bureaux / departments have been allowed to authorise payments electronically through the Treasury's on-line terminals, without the need to forward the above-mentioned original documents to the Treasury. This has saved a lot of paper and the resources/costs associated with photocopying as well as delivering such documents to the Treasury.
- Send remittance advices by e-mail.
- With effect from November 2000, the Treasury has commenced sending remittance advices by e-mail to those creditors who elected this delivery method. This has speeded up the delivery process and reduced the use of paper.

- Encourage correspondence with pensioners through e-mail on the internet.
- This was first implemented in May 2000 to reduce the use of paper through the following measures:
 - (i) to publicise our website address and e-mail address in the letter on 'Treasury Performance Pledge' sent to pensioners in May 2000;
 - (ii) to inform the pensioners over the telephone that they may address their enquiries to us by e-mail instead of by post; and
 - (iii) to quote our e-mail address in some of our written replies to the pensioners.
- At present, the number of e-mail received and issued is about 30 per month, and the number is expected to increase with the growing popularity of the use of e-mail on the internet.
- Cease the production of some computer reports.
- As a result of changes in rules and regulations, the production of some massive computer reports which were identified to be no longer required was ceased. For example, we had ceased to produce computer report PAY 158-01 - Monthly Salary Statement Index Report and 12 boxes of A3 sized computer paper were saved annually.
- Use compact diskettes (CD) to store information of salary statements.
- Previously, about 130 boxes of microfilm were required to store the details of salary statements annually. Several years ago, we had started to use CD Rom for the purpose and in 2000, only 12 discs were needed. Thus, considerable storage space was saved.

- Issue of Financial and Accounting Regulations.

- As the controlling authority for the issue of the Financial and Accounting Regulations, we are committed to reducing the issue of hard copies to the minimum. In this connection, soft copies of the Financial and Accounting Regulations have been installed in the Government Office Automation network for easy and wide access throughout the government. We have continued to require government departments which request additional hard copies to justify their requests and to examine the possibility of wider sharing of the use of existing hard copies among their users. Hard copies will only be issued upon sound justifications.

- The numbers of hard copies issued in the past three years are as follows :

	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
English Version	82	33	8
Chinese Version	10	0	0

- Internal administration.

- Green housekeeping measures have continued to be adopted and practised in the Treasury. Internal communication by e-mail has been encouraged. All Treasury grades officers were provided in 2000 with updated e-mail addresses to facilitate communication through e-mail. Seminar notes were despatched through electronic means. Our publications were issued electronically as far as possible.

- Duplication of paper has been kept to the minimum. The keeping of individual copies of paper has been discouraged and even the circulation copies have been kept to the minimum. The following statistics on the consumption of paper and envelopes in 1999 and 2000 show general economy in these areas :

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
paper (reams)	12,679	9,610
computer paper (boxes)	10,996	10,223
envelopes (nos)	99,549	81,517

- The consumption of publications within the Treasury was effectively reduced in 2000 through wider sharing of the publications among our colleagues. For example, the number of copies of the Government Telephone Directory used by the Treasury was reduced from 360 in 1999 to 223 in 2000 (i.e. a reduction of 38.1%).
- To reduce the consumption of electricity, staff have been designated to monitor the switching off of the lighting and / or air-conditioning supply during lunch hours and after office hours.

Environmental Actions Requiring Special Attention

Looking ahead, we will continue our efforts in improving our environmental actions and practices. Specifically, we will look into our environmental performance in the following areas:

- (a) To continue to enhance the electronic bill settlement service by extending the service to more networks and to accept additional types of government fees and charges.

- (b) To redevelop the Government Rent and Premium System in 2001 to accept on-line input for amendment / updating of the Government rent and premium records.
- (c) To continue to promote the wider use of the on-line General Demand Notes System within the Government.

Views and Suggestions

If you have any views and suggestions, please write to our Green Manager at the Treasury, 27/F, Immigration Tower, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong. You may also get in touch with us by-email at info@try.gov.hk or by fax on 2598 9273.

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