

# **Environmental Report of the Treasury for 2001**

## **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) We seek to encourage cost-effectiveness in our operations and we do so having regard to environmental considerations. As we recommend or implement work practices and systems, we emphasize the benefits of electronic transmission and retention of data rather than the use of paper.
- (3) Within our own department, we endeavour to minimise waste, to optimise the consumption of resources and to recover and recycle materials, wherever possible.

## **Policy Objectives of the Treasury**

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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 2001-02 financial year was HK \$313.9 million.
- We had a staff establishment of 654 as at 31 December 2001.
- Our head office is located at Immigration Tower which is a joint-user government building. We had five Sub-Treasuries located at Revenue Tower, Central Government Offices, North Point Government Offices, Kowloon Government Offices and Kai Tak Government Building. The five Sub-Treasuries were closed on 3 October 2001.

**Green measures taken in the Treasury**

Measures taken

Performance

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● With the implementation of the new Government Rent and Premium System in July 2001, officers can process amendments and updating of government rent and premium records through on-line terminals.</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The new initiative helps to reduce paper consumption as batching of source documents for input by Data Processors is no longer required.</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The number of government offices using the on-line General Demand Note System (GDNS), introduced in late 1999, continues to increase. Around 70% of the general demand notes issued by bureaux / departments are processed through on-line operations.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Reduce substantially paper consumption and streamline the flow of documents between bureaux / departments and the Treasury.</li></ul>              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● With the introduction of the GDNS balance enquiry service through the “Treasury Hotline” in October 2001, bureaux / departments which are not on-line offices of GDNS can obtain updated information by means of the automated answering machine.</li></ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Contribute positively to the efficient flow of information and, in turn, reduce the use of paper.</li></ul>  |

- Promote wider use of various types of electronic payment methods for settlement of government bills.
- The number of collections by autopay has continued to increase - from 2.11 million transactions in 2000, by 3%, to over 2.18 million transactions in 2001. With a corresponding decrease of 12% in postal remittances (i.e. from 2.5 million transactions in 2000 to 2.2 million transactions in 2001) 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 19% from 3.7 million transactions in 2000 to 4.4 million transactions in 2001.
- Extend the electronic bill settlement services to accept additional types of government bills.
- More types of bills have been accepted for electronic settlement since the inception of PPS, JET and ATM.
- The popular use of the electronic payment methods for settlement of government bills has considerably saved the resources in handling payments made in-person and by post.
- Develop an on-line system for departments to report on the revenue collected.
- A new computerized system has been developed in October 2001 to enable departments to report revenue collections through on-line facilities, thus saving departments the need to prepare paper input forms (GF37) manually and deliver the forms to the Treasury for receipting.

- Develop simplified procedures for processing payment vouchers in the government.
- With effect from 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 original payment vouchers and supporting documents to the Treasury for pre-payment checking. 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 advice by e-mail.
- With effect from November 2000, the Treasury has commenced sending remittance advice 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 our written replies to the pensioners.

- The number of e-mail received from and issued to pensioners has increased by 33% from about 30 per month in 2000 to about 40 per month in 2001, and the number is expected to further increase with the growing popularity of the use of e-mail on the internet.
  
- 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 four years are as follows :

	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
English Version	82	33	8	7
Chinese Version	10	0	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. Arrangements were made to provide all officers responsible for branch administration, floor managers and floor fire officers with computers equipped with e-mail facilities to facilitate the speedy transmission of information and correspondence by the electronic mode.
- All Treasury grades officers are provided with updated e-mail addresses to facilitate communication through e-mail. Treasury grades management news (e.g. training circulars, seminar notes, monthly staff grade news) are despatched through electronic means. Our publications are issued electronically as far as possible. In late 2001, the Annual Accounts of the Government for the Year Ended 31 March 2001 was posted on our website. The printing of hard copies of this publication will be reduced in future.
- 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. For information disseminated through electronic means, all staff are encouraged to read the information through the on-line screen and avoid printing out the hard copies as far as possible.
- We continue to encourage our colleagues to reduce the consumption of publications within the Treasury through wider sharing of the publications.

- 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 promote the use of on-line authorisation of payments to government's creditors.
- (c) To continue to promote the wider use of the on-line General Demand Notes System within the Government.
- (d) To enrich the content of our homepage in the internet so as to make it more informative to pensioners and the general public, and to continue to promote and encourage the pensioners to access our internet homepage and post their enquiries through e-mail.
- (e) To emphasize electronic processes instead of paper-based processes in the tender specifications for the Government Financial Management Information System project.

### **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](mailto:info@try.gov.hk) or by fax on 2598 9273.