

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

AUD005

(Question Serial No. 2001)

Head: (24) Audit Commission

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Regularity Audit

Controlling Officer: Director of Audit (Prof. LAM Chi-yuen, Nelson)

Director of Bureau: -

Question:

The aim of the Audit Commission is to provide the Legislative Council with an overall assurance that the Government's financial and accounting transactions and those of funds of a public or quasi-public nature are proper and conforming to the accepted accounting standards. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- a) Referring to the indicators set for Programme 1, the numbers of "accounts certified" in 2023/24 to 2025/26 are all 86, while the numbers of "man-hours spent" are 98 019, 104 764 and 109 827 respectively, showing a year-on-year increase. The number in 2024/25 even increases by nearly 7% as compared with that in 2023/24. What are the specific reasons for the increase?
- b) Referring to the indicators set for Programme 2, why does the number of "man-hours spent" increase year by year when the number of reports and audit reports to be submitted stays the same? In particular, the estimate of 160 153 in 2024/25 represents a 12% increase as compared with the actual number of 142 690 in 2023/24. What are the reasons for the increase?
- c) According to paragraph 234 of the Budget Speech, the Audit Commission will organise workshops for the senior management of Government departments and public bodies. Through sharing experience and case studies on its value for money audits, the Commission seeks to foster the management's understanding and adoption of principles and best practices in fiscal prudence and optimal use of public money. Please tabulate the cases to be presented and the key takeaways from them in terms of saving public money.

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 25)

Reply:

The mission of the Audit Commission is to provide independent, professional and quality audit services in order to help the Government and public sector organisations enhance their performance and accountability.

Questions (a) and (b)

The number of man-hours spent for regularity audit work in Programme (1) increases from 98 019 in 2023-24 to 104 764 in 2024-25 and then to 109 827 in 2025-26, while that for value for money audit work in Programme (2) increases from 142 690 in 2023-24 to 160 153 in 2024-25 and then to 165 969 in 2025-26. As it takes time for the vacancies arising from natural wastage to be filled, the actual numbers of man-hours spent for the work in the two programmes in 2023-24 are lower than estimated. With the vacancies expected to be filled gradually, the numbers of man-hours spent in 2024-25 and 2025-26 will both increase. We will monitor our resources requirements closely, and redeploy manpower and review our work flow timely so as to ensure efficient performance of duties.

Question (c)

The Audit Commission will be hosting workshops with an aim to share its audit experience with staff of Government departments and public bodies so as to help them enhance the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which they discharge their duties. The Commission plans to, in the form of workshops, share case studies and lessons that can be learnt from our findings in previous audit reports, as a way to help participants enhance the cost-effectiveness in public spending. The details of the workshops, such as the specific content and cases to be shared, are yet to be disclosed at this point.

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