



AUDIT COMMISSION CONTROLLING OFFICER'S ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT 2002

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 2002, the Commission had an establishment of 203.

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;
- use photocopiers and printers with double-sided printing function;
- print on both sides of paper;
- minimize 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

- switch off lights, computers and electrical appliances not in use;
- 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; and
- use energy-efficient fluorescent tubes.

Publicity/education measures

- issue internal circular to regularly remind all staff on the economical use of paper;
- 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;
- display plants in 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;
- minimise use of the departmental car;
- 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 furniture and equipment;
- use hand-dryers in washrooms;
- reuse decorative materials in festive seasons; and
- exchange diskettes within and outside of department.

GREEN HOUSEKEEPING PRACTICES: PERFORMANCE AND TARGET

4. In 2002, there was an increase in the level of paper and envelope consumption because of the need to conduct a number of large-scale audit surveys and a major recruitment exercise. Measures have been taken to contain the increase in consumption, for example, by using reusable paper for printing reports for internal reference and minimising the use of new envelopes as far as possible except for sending mails to non-government bodies.

5. In 2003, the Commission aims at containing the growth of paper and envelope consumption.

6. About 91% of the total quantity of paper used in 2002 was recycled paper with at least 50% recycled pulp. In 2003, it is the Commission's target to maintain the proportion of recycled paper at a similar level as that in 2002.

AUDIT STUDIES ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: PERFORMANCE AND TARGET

7. In 2002, the Audit Commission issued three value for money audit reports on environmental-related issues.

“Management of construction and demolition materials”

(Chapter 9 of the Director of Audit’s Report No. 38 of March 2002)

8. It is the Government’s policy to maximise the use of inert construction and demolition (C&D) materials in public filling areas for reclamation purposes so as to conserve the valuable landfill space. Audit carried out a review on the management of C&D materials. The review found that the Administration needs to fully explore the opportunities of using C&D materials in reclamation projects including those entrusted to third parties, decide the way forward on the implementation of landfill charging scheme as quickly as possible, promote wider use of recycled C&D materials and tighten the control over the disposal of C&D materials.

“Sewerage improvement and connection works for southern part of Hong Kong Island”

(Chapter 4 of the Director of Audit’s Report No. 39 of October 2002)

9. The Government has adopted a sewage treatment strategy with the objective of safeguarding public health and protecting the ecosystems and marine environment. The strategy aimed to formulate a comprehensive programme for the construction of new sewerage works. Audit reviewed the implementation of the sewerage construction works for the southern part of Hong Kong Island. The audit review found that there is a need for the Administration to improve the management of the sewerage works project and to resolve the leakage problem of two watermains in order to put them into operation as soon as possible.

“Management of municipal solid waste”

(Chapter 7 of the Director of Audit’s Report No. 39 of October 2002)

10. Municipal solid waste includes waste generated by the domestic, commercial and industrial sectors. In 1998 the Government launched a Waste Reduction Framework Plan (WRFP) which set out a 10-year implementation programme to minimise the amount of waste requiring disposal and to increase the rate of waste recycling. Audit examined the progress made by the Government in achieving the interim waste reduction targets set in the WRFP. The audit revealed that there were areas where improvements could be made in meeting the interim waste reduction targets, improving the waste recovery rate in public housing estates and allocating land for waste recycling industry.

11. Audit has made a number of recommendations in the above value for money audit reports to address the observations. These recommendations, if fully implemented, will result in significant environmental benefits.

12. The Audit Commission will continue to conduct value for money audit studies on issues which have significant environmental impact.

THE WAY FORWARD

13. 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

14. 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 -

Post: Audit Commission
26th floor, Immigration Tower
7 Gloucester Road, Wanchai
Hong Kong
(Attention: Departmental Secretary)

Fax: (852)2824 2087

E-mail: enquiry@aud.gov.hk