



AUDIT COMMISSION CONTROLLING OFFICER'S ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT 2006

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 2006, the Commission had an establishment of 180.

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 energy-efficient measures; 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 AND ENERGY-EFFICIENCY MEASURES:

3. The Audit Commission is committed to adopting green housekeeping practices and energy-efficient measures. Since 1993, a Green Manager at Directorate level has been appointed to introduce and review initiatives to improve the Commission's green housekeeping practices and energy-efficient measures. 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.aud.gov.hk>);
- 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;
- adopt electronic templates of letterhead, memo and forms to avoid pre-printed copies;
- use photocopiers and printers with double-sided printing function;
- print on both sides of paper;
- minimise 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

- set AC temperature at 25.5 °C ;
- use venetian blinds to adjust room temperature when necessary;
- reduce lighting to minimum required for illumination;
- use energy-efficient fluorescent tubes;
- switch off lights, air conditioning, computers and electrical appliances not in use;

- unplug all hand-held equipment chargers from socket outlets when not in use;
- minimise the use of personal electrical appliances such as heater, fan, lamp and kettle;
- set office equipment to energy saving mode during office hours;
- use computer workstations and printers with automatic energy saving function;
- turn off the monitor when leaving the office, even for a short period ;
- turn off non-essential servers at night, on Saturdays and public holidays;
- use LCD monitors instead of CRT monitors when replacement is required; and
- conduct routine checks during lunch hour and after office hours to ensure that any unnecessary lights and air-conditioners are switched off.

Publicity/education measures

- issue internal circular to regularly remind all staff on the economical use of paper and energy saving;
- 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 smoke-free work place policy in all 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;
- 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 equipment;
- use hand-dryers in washrooms;
- reuse decorative materials in festive seasons;
- exchange diskettes within and outside of department; and
- collect used CDs for recycling.

GREEN HOUSEKEEPING PRACTICES AND ENERGY-EFFICIENCY MEASURES: PERFORMANCE AND TARGET

4. In 2006, there was an increase of 11.21% in paper consumption as compared with 2005 arising from the recruitment exercises and large-scale audit surveys. Envelope consumption also increased by more than one fold. Measures had been taken during the past one year to contain the increase in both paper and envelope consumption despite the increase in activities, for instance, 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. Through the concerted effort of staff members, the Commission exceeded the target of 10% cut in paper consumption in four years as set by the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau Circular Memorandum of 31 March 2003.

5. About 99% of the total quantity of paper used in 2006 was recycled paper with at least 50% recycled pulp.

6. In 2007, it is the Commission's target to contain the growth of paper and envelope consumption.

7. To improve energy efficiency, the Commission plans to conduct a review on energy consumption in our office premises on 25/F and 26/F, Immigration Tower, in 2007 to identify opportunities where savings of energy can be made.

AUDIT STUDIES ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: PERFORMANCE AND TARGET

8. As staff resources were allocated to other higher priority audits, the Audit Commission did not conduct value for money audit on environmental-related issues in 2006. Nevertheless, the Audit Commission will continue to look for opportunities for conducting value for money audits on issues which have significant environmental impact.

THE WAY FORWARD

9. 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

10. 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 -

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