



AUDIT COMMISSION CONTROLLING OFFICER'S ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT 2019

INTRODUCTION

Established under Article 58 of the Basic Law, the Audit Commission functions independently and is accountable to the Chief Executive. 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 organisation has discharged its functions. As at 31 December 2019, the Commission had an establishment of 197.

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

2. The Commission is committed to ensuring that our operations are conducted in an environmentally responsible manner and meeting the commitments of the Clean Air Charter. To help promote environmental protection and reduce air emissions, the 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-EFFICIENT MEASURES

3. The 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. Throughout the years, the range of initiatives has expanded. Staff of the Commission are required to follow the green measures below:

Paper saving measures

Reduction of paper and envelope consumption:

- use emails and intranet for communication and dissemination of information;
- disseminate the Audit Reports on the Internet (<https://www.aud.gov.hk>);
- use PC-based faxes;
- use plain paper fax machines;
- avoid using fax leader pages;
- avoid sending original documents after they have been sent by fax or emails;
- 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 mainly through emails 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;
- send greeting cards in festive seasons by electronic means; and
- reduce the number of reference publications acquired from other bureaux/ departments.

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 A/C 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;
- install occupancy sensors in the washrooms where lighting usage is not frequent;
- colour-code the individual lighting switches in multiple-switch circuits to identify lights not in use;
- 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;
- install timer adaptors to turn off office equipment after 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;
- post 'save energy' and 'save water' notices near light switches and water taps;
- place notices near photocopiers to remind staff to make photocopies using reusable paper and to collect waste paper for recycling; and
- encourage staff to attend environmental seminar.

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;
- use recyclable laser printer cartridges;
- collect used printer cartridges for reuse;
- use refillable ball pens and clutch pencils;
- minimise use of products which are not environmental friendly (e.g. correction fluid);
- repair old equipment;
- use hand-dryers in washrooms;
- install timer taps in toilets;
- reuse decorative materials in festive seasons;
- provide recycling bins in the pantry for collecting waste plastic bottles and cans; and
- use of environmental friendly sundries items.

GREEN HOUSEKEEPING PRACTICES AND ENERGY-EFFICIENT MEASURES

PERFORMANCE AND TARGET

PAPER AND ENVELOPE CONSUMPTION

4. In 2019, there was a decrease of 12.9% in paper consumption and a decrease of 18.6% in envelope consumption when compared to 2018. All paper used in 2019 was recycled paper with at least 50% recycled pulp.

5. In 2020, it is the Commission's target to contain paper and envelope consumption.

ENERGY-EFFICIENT MEASURES

6. It was the Government's target to achieve a 5% saving on the total electricity consumption in government buildings from 2015-16 to 2019-20 under comparable operating conditions using 2013-14 as the baseline. With the concerted efforts from all government bureaux and departments, this target had been achieved in 2018-19, one year ahead of the original schedule. Building on the success, a new "Green Energy Target" has been set for the period from 2020-21 to 2024-25 using 2018-19 as the baseline, with a view to further improving the Government's use of energy by 6% under comparable operating conditions. Together with other government bureaux and departments, the Commission will continue to contain the energy consumption to achieve the new saving target.

7. There is one departmental vehicle in the Commission. The total mileage in 2019 was 10,670 km and the unleaded fuel consumption was about 2,000.7 litres. The related emission was about 9.6 kg of NO_x.

8. In 2020, the Commission will make continued efforts to promote energy saving in the office premises.

AUDIT STUDIES ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

PERFORMANCE AND TARGET

9. In 2019, the Commission issued a number of value for money audit reports which covered environmental-related issues including “Management of Greening Master Plans” (Chapter 2 of the Director of Audit’s Report No. 72 of April 2019 - see paras. 10 and 11).

10. A Greening Master Plan (GMP) serves as a guide for all parties involved in planning, design and implementation of greening works. It defines comprehensively the overall greening framework of a district. As of December 2018, the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) had developed 11 GMPs for urban areas and 9 for the New Territories (NT). A total of \$734.7 million had been incurred on development and implementation of GMPs, and about 29,000 trees and 7.8 million shrubs had been planted under GMPs as of December 2018. Greening works under all the 11 GMPs for urban areas (with 3 phases) and 4 of the 9 GMPs for NT had been completed. For GMPs for Phase 3 of urban areas and the 4 GMPs for NT with greening works completed, considerable number of trees (45% and 42%) and shrubs (16% and 26%) had not been planted at potential planting areas under the works contracts. CEDD had analysed the reasons for not planting at such areas for the urban GMPs, but not on the reasons for the NT GMPs. For the 4 GMPs for NT (each covering one district) with greening works completed, the numbers and percentages of theme trees planted were lower than those under the related works contracts. In 3 of the 4 districts, the percentages of theme trees planted (8% to 10%) did not meet the internal reference rates of 20% to 30%, and the numbers and percentages of native trees planted for all the 4 districts and the native shrubs planted for 2 districts were lower than those under the related works contracts. Except for planting of native shrubs in one district, the percentages of native trees and shrubs planted in all 4 districts (ranging from 9% to 23%) were lower than the estimated rate of 35% reported to the Legislative Council. The Commission also noted areas for improvement in handover and maintenance of greening works under GMPs, and overseeing and public engagement on GMPs.

11. The Commission has made a number of recommendations to address the issues.

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

THE WAY FORWARD

13. The Commission will make continued efforts to help promote environmental protection through adopting green housekeeping practices as well as energy-efficient measures, 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:

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