



# **AUDIT COMMISSION CONTROLLING OFFICER'S ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT 2020**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Established under Article 58 of the Basic Law, the Audit Commission functions independently and is accountable to the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. 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 government bureau/department, or audited organisation has discharged its functions. As at 31 December 2020, 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 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 email;
- adopt electronic templates of letterhead, memo and forms to avoid pre-printed copies;
- use photocopiers and printers with duplex printing function;
- use 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
- endeavour to acquire electronic instead of hard copies of reference materials from other government 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 air conditioning 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;
- 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; 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 instead of replace;
- 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 2020, there was a decrease of 45.9% (Note 1) in paper consumption and an increase of 66.8% (Note 2) in envelope consumption when compared with 2019. All paper used in 2020 was recycled paper with at least 50% recycled pulp.

5. In 2021, it is the Commission's target to contain the growth of 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 2020 was 7,464 km and the unleaded fuel consumption was about 1568.1 litres. The related emission was about 6.7 kg of NO<sub>x</sub>.

8. In 2021, the Commission will make continued efforts to promote energy saving in the office premises.

---

**Note 1:** *The decrease was mainly due to the increased use of electronic copies during the work-from-home periods.*

**Note 2:** *The increase was mainly due to issue of notifications (e.g. change of written examination date) to candidates during the recruitment exercises held amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The Commission will consider issuing electronic copies only in future recruitment exercises.*

---

## **AUDIT STUDIES ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

### **PERFORMANCE AND TARGET**

9. In 2020, the Commission issued a number of value for money audit reports which covered environmental-related issues, including “Collection and removal of marine refuse by the Marine Department” (Chapter 1 of the Director of Audit’s Report No. 75 of October 2020 - see paras. 10 and 11).

10. Marine Department (MD)’s work in tackling marine refuse includes collecting vessel-generated refuse and scavenging floating refuse, conducting publicity campaigns, performing daily patrols in Hong Kong waters and conducting enforcement against marine littering. In 2020-21, its estimated recurrent expenditure on such work was \$102 million (including \$95 million (93%) for outsourcing marine refuse cleansing and disposal services). In 2019, in 3 of the 12 patrol areas, the required frequency for conducting MD’s daily cleanliness patrols of at least once in a month could not be met. The number of months recording no patrols ranged from 1 to 6. While the contract provides that if the level of cleanliness of any part of Hong Kong waters falls below the “Good” level during the service hours, a “Good” level shall be re-established within the specified time limit, there were instances that the provision could not be met. The contractor deployed 4 Class IV vessels (i.e. pleasure vessels), which should be used exclusively for pleasure purposes according to the legislation, for marine refuse cleansing work. Site inspections of the Commission in July and August 2020 found that, of the 4 marine refuse collection points, there was no daily transportation of marine refuse from 2 collection points to disposal sites and another one was not in operation. The Commission also noted areas for improvement in the administration of marine refuse cleansing and disposal contracts, and other related issues.

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 invaluable for further improving our work on environmental protection 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](mailto:enquiry@aud.gov.hk)