

Customs and Excise Department

Controlling Officer's Environmental Report 2013

Preface

The Customs and Excise Department (the Department) is a progressive and dynamic law enforcement agency responsible for anti-smuggling, interdiction of drug trafficking, intellectual property rights protection, trade facilitation, import and export control, safeguarding consumer rights as well as collection of excise on dutiable goods.

In discharging its statutory role, the Department strives to promote sustainable development and is committed to making the best use of available resources. We also place due emphasis on projects that could help to bring up broader environmental quality beyond our shores.

Services and Operations Conducive to a Green Planet

We deliver our services and conduct operations in an environmentally friendly and responsible manner.

- *Ozone Layer Protection*

The Department took part in Project Sky-Hole-Patching jointly launched in 2006¹ by the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Customs Organization Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific (RILO A/P) to combat illegal trading activities connected with ozone depleting substances. Even though this initiative concluded in 2007, we continued to perform checking on 121 licences in 2013.

- *Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste*

To fulfill international obligations arising from the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, we kick-started the “Strategic Control Scheme on Hazardous

¹ Phase I of the Project was rolled out on 1 September 2006 to establish a monitoring and notification mechanism on suspicious shipments of ODS, followed by Phase II on 1 March 2007 with an expanded scope to cover hazardous waste.

Waste” with Environmental Protection Department (EPD) under which 45 containers were intercepted and returned to exporting countries while 41 pieces of seizure information were handed to RILO A/P and overseas counterparts in 2013.

- *Recycling of Rechargeable Batteries*

To minimize pollution caused by improper disposal of harmful materials and conserve natural resources, we decided to join the “Rechargeable Battery Recycling Programme” conceived by EPD, conservation groups and battery traders. As a result, 540 000 seized rechargeable batteries were sent abroad for recycling in 2013.

- *Paper Reduction*

With the continuous contributions and efforts of our staff on various green housekeeping measures as well as the ongoing implementation of the Government Office Automation Programme and the Departmental Portal, paper consumption had been reduced from 44 385 reams in 2012 to 41 881 reams in 2013, representing a decrease of 5.6%.

Separately, the Department promotes the use of recycled paper which accounted for about 46% of the paper consumption in 2013.

Green Approach to Trade Facilitation

- *Electronic System for Cargo Manifests (EMAN)*

EMAN enables one-stop electronic submission of manifests by air freight, marine cargo and river trade carriers. Through the “EMAN Statement I Submission Scheme” and the “e-Sea Customs Clearance Scheme”, over 70% of marine cargo in-bound and transshipment traffic as well as 61 major forwarders have been attracted to the system as at the end of 2013. Parallel actions are taken to upgrade our computer systems for automated processing with a view to luring more users away from paper manifests.

- Money Service Operators Licensing System (MSOS)

MSOS went live in 2012 to implement on-line submission of licence application, regular returns and enquiry services. It not only improves productivity and cut down on paper consumption, but also mitigates environment impact caused by running errands by Money Service Operators (MSOs) to submit hard copy of applications / returns. Promotional measures are taken to encourage more MSOs to utilize the system to contribute to a greener environment.

- Dutiable Commodities System (DCS)

Under the proposed DCS, the current electronic mode of operations for dutiable commodities permit applications will be extended to licence applications. With the implementation of DCS, over 2 000 licence applications per annum are expected to be submitted by traders and processed by C&ED electronically. Paper consumption on application forms and supplementary documents are expected to drop considerably. Subject to availability of funds, the project is scheduled to commence in 2014.

Green Customs

- Use of Plastic Waste Bags with Degradable/Recycled Materials

Our building management contractors are regularly reminded to reduce reliance on plastic waste bags for cleansing work and are required under tender conditions to use plastic waste bags made from degradable or recycled materials.

- Staff Training and Housekeeping Measures

Apart from tracking the outcome of different housekeeping measures designed to minimize wastage, encourage recycling and promote energy conservation, we update and re-circulate guidelines to alert colleagues on their environmental responsibilities, solicit support on events hosted by conservation groups and organize seminars to exchange experience with

other stakeholders.

- *Electricity Consumption*

The Department has continued to implement various effective housekeeping measures for energy saving and commissioned the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) to perform proactive maintenance and servicing of air-conditioning systems and chiller plants, yielding a reduction of about 1% on electricity consumption at our non-joint-user premises after discounting new premises completed in 2013.

- *Green New Headquarters*

The Customs Headquarters Building (CHB) boasts an array of advanced environmentally-friendly and energy-efficient installations such as zero ozone depleting refrigerant for chiller units, occupancy sensors switching off lighting and air-conditioning automatically, photovoltaic panels and vehicle battery charging facilities. We have also deployed water-cooled air conditioning system, high-efficacy illuminating devices and podium gardens to speed up heat dissipation.

- *Indoor Air Quality*

We participated in the Indoor Air Quality Certification Scheme launched by EPD and engaged EMSD to inspect offices whose construction floor area exceed 10,000 m². In 2013, CHB and Tsing Chau Street Customs Staff Quarters were awarded with Certificate of Excellent Class and Kwai Chung Customhouse was awarded with Certificate of Good Class respectively.

Conclusion

We will sustain the impetus in advocating a green workplace and inculcating deeper awareness among our staff on the essence of green living.

Comments and Suggestions

This report is accessible on our homepage at www.customs.gov.hk, and we welcome feedback conveyed either in writing to our Green Manager at the Customs Headquarters Building, 222 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong or via e-mail at customsenquiry@customs.gov.hk.

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