

Customs and Excise Department

Controlling Officer's Environmental Report 2014

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 Greening

We consider it necessary to be environmentally responsible in delivering our services and operations, and are actively participating in the following international and community-wide environmental programmes:

- *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 Organisation Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific (RILO A/P) to combat illegal trading activities connected with Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS). Even though this initiative was concluded in 2007, we continued to perform checking on 113 related licences in 2014.

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.

- *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 continued to work with the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) on implementation of the “Strategic Control Scheme on Hazardous Waste”. In this regard, 34 containers were returned to the relevant exporting countries while 35 pieces of seizure information were transferred to RILO A/P and overseas counterparts in 2014.

- *Recycling of Rechargeable Batteries*

To minimise pollution caused by improper disposal of harmful materials and conserve natural resources, we also joined the “Rechargeable Battery Recycling Programme” conceived by EPD, conservation groups and battery traders, under which 45 000 seized rechargeable batteries were sent abroad for recycling in 2014.

Green Approach to Facilitate Trade Activities

We have adopted a green approach to improve our services and developed the following systems to facilitate trading activities:

- *Electronic System for Cargo Manifests (EMAN)*

EMAN enables a 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 75% of marine cargo traffic as well as 64 major forwarders have been attracted to the system as at end of 2014. Continued efforts will be made by our officers to lure users away from paper manifests.

- Money Service Operators Licensing System (MSOS)

MSOS was implemented in 2012 to process on-line submission of licence applications, regular returns and public enquiries. The system not only reduces paper consumption, but also mitigates environmental impact of errands run by Money Service Operators when submitting paper-based applications and returns.

- Dutiable Commodities System (DCS)

DCS is scheduled for rollout in 2017 which will extend electronic application to dutiable commodity licences, achieving better efficiency and cutting down paper consumption.

Green Office Environment

We make every effort to cultivate a green office environment through the following measures:

- Headquarters Building

The Customs Headquarters Building (CHB) contains a diverse array of environmentally-friendly and energy-efficient installations including zero ozone depleting refrigerant for chiller units, occupancy sensors for lighting and air-conditioning as well as photovoltaic panels and vehicle battery charging facilities. Meanwhile, water-cooled air conditioning system, high-efficacy illuminating devices and podium gardens are deployed to speed up heat dissipation.

- Housekeeping Measures and Staff Training

We monitor closely the outcome of different housekeeping measures aimed at minimising wastage, encouraging recycling and promoting energy conservation. In addition, we regularly update and re-circulate guidelines to alert colleagues on their environmental responsibilities, solicit support on events hosted by conservation

groups and organise seminars to exchange experience with relevant stakeholders.

- Electricity Consumption

The Department has implemented various schemes to save energy and invited the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) to perform proactive maintenance and servicing of the air-conditioning systems and chiller plants, thereby containing the impact of increased services on electricity consumption. Only a mild increase of about 0.15% was recorded in 2014, attributable mainly to the commissioning of Kai Tak Cruise Terminal in mid-2013.

- Paper Reduction

With contribution made by all staff and extensive application of office automation, paper consumption was reduced by 5.7% from 41 881 reams in 2013 to 39 489 reams in 2014. Moreover, usage of recycled paper remained at a high level of 51% in 2014.

- Indoor Air Quality

We have participated in the Indoor Air Quality Certification Scheme launched by EPD and engaged EMSD to inspect office premises with construction floor area exceeding 10,000m². In 2014, two of our premises – CHB and Kwai Chung Customhouse – were awarded with “Excellent Class” and “Good Class” certificates respectively.

- Use of Plastic Waste Bags

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

Looking Forward

We will uphold the impetus in advocating a green workplace and continue to inculcate 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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