

Customs and Excise Department Controlling Officer's Environmental Report 2017

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.

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 97 related licences in 2017.

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, 46 containers were returned to the relevant exporting countries while 37 pieces of seizure information were relayed to RILO A/P and overseas counterparts for follow-up action in 2017.

- *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 23 700 seized rechargeable batteries were sent abroad for recycling in 2017.

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. As at the end of 2017, over 81% of inbound marine cargo pre-arrival information was submitted through the “EMAN Statement I Submission Scheme” and 152 major forwarders had joined the “e-Sea Customs Clearance Scheme” respectively. Continued efforts will be made by our officers to induce users to submit manifests electronically.

- 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 (MSOs) when submitting paper-based applications and returns. The Department's Money Service Supervision Bureau has recorded a significant increase in the number of on-line submissions over the past few years and will continue to encourage the use of electronic means in lieu of paper by MSOs.

- Dutiable Commodities System (DCS)

The e-Licence website of DCS was launched in January 2017 for the electronic application of dutiable commodity licences. Since 27 July 2017, all licence applications have been required to be submitted electronically through the DCS, with a view to 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 measures 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. There was a decrease of about 1.43% in electricity consumption in 2017, due mainly to various energy saving measures carried out by the Department.

- Energy Audit

With an aim to identifying more energy management opportunities (EMOs) for improving energy efficiency, we engaged EMSD to conduct energy audit for CHB, Kwai Chung Customhouse (KCCH), and Customs and Excise Training School (CETS) respectively in 2015 and 2016, and have been actively implementing many audit recommendations. In 2017, with the assistance of EMSD, the Department started taking forward the improvement works of some large scale recommended EMOs, including to upgrade the energy control monitoring system in CHB and improve the efficiency of the air-conditioning systems in KCCH and CETS. It also carried out some recommendations by strengthening the housekeeping measures, including to suspend the service of three passenger lifts during non-peak periods on weekdays in CHB, “de-lamp” the lighting of the corridors and lift lobbies in KCCH, and install timer switch for the lighting at CETS.

- Use of Recycled Paper

Over 50% of the paper currently consumed by the Department is recycled paper. There was a continued increase in their use, maintaining a high usage level of 54.4% out of the total paper consumption in 2017.

- Indoor Air Quality

We have participated in the Indoor Air Quality Certification Scheme launched by EPD and engaged a contractor to inspect office premises with construction floor area exceeding 10,000m². In 2017, CHB was awarded with “Excellent Class” certificate and two of our premises – KCCH and Tsing Chau Street Customs Staff Quarters – were both awarded with “Good Class” certificates.

- 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.

- Food Waste

In support of the Government’s drive to reduce food waste, we signed the Food Wise Charter in October 2015. In 2017, we continued to carry out a number of corresponding measures including the display of posters and publicity materials to arouse staff’s awareness, and at the CHB’s canteen/restaurant, the arrangement of less rice for meals and the option of lesser number of courses in banquet menu.

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. 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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