

Customs and Excise Department

Controlling Officer's Environmental Report 2019

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 84 related licences in 2019.

- *Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste*

To fulfill international obligations arising from the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and

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.

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, 93 containers were returned to the relevant exporting countries while 93 pieces of seizure information were relayed to RILO A/P and overseas counterparts for follow-up action in 2019.

- *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 175 600 seized rechargeable batteries were sent abroad for recycling in 2019.

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 2019, over 83% of inbound marine cargo pre-arrival information was submitted through the “EMAN Statement I Submission Scheme” and 179 major forwarders had joined the “e-Sea Customs Clearance Scheme”. 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, support 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 an increase of 19.1% in electricity consumption in 2019 compared with 2018. The full operation of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port in 2019 after its commissioning in October 2018 accounted for almost all the increase while the increase of consumption in other premises of C&ED was below 1.3%. The Department would continue to support Government's objective on electricity saving by maintaining various electricity saving measures.

- Energy Audit

With an aim to identifying more energy management opportunities for improving energy efficiency, we engaged EMSD to conduct energy audit for CHB, Kwai Chung Customhouse (KCCH), and Hong Kong Customs College (HKCC) in 2015 and 2016 respectively, and have been actively implementing the audit recommendations. By 2019, the majority of the recommendations provided in the respective audit reports were carried out; they included housekeeping measures such as raising staff's awareness by attaching energy saving labels on electrical appliances or light switches, "de-lamping" non-essential lightings and suspending passenger lifts during non-peak periods, and modification works of a larger scale such as to replace traditional lamps / fluorescent tubes by LED lights and aged air-conditioning components by higher efficiency units. A few recommended improvement works are still in progress, they include upgrading the energy control monitoring system in CHB and replacing the external floodlights at KCCH.

- Carbon Audit

To echo the need for combating climate change, the Department also assessed the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (carbon performance) for its premises with high energy consumption, i.e. with an annual electricity consumption of more than 500 000 kWh. In 2019, a total

of four buildings and three control points were identified for the audit. Their total GHG emissions which covered a floor area of 147 395 square metres were 21 685 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

- Renewable Energy

We also respond to the government encouragement on the use of Renewable Energy (RE). In this connection, photovoltaic panels for generating solar energy have been installed in some of the C&ED major premises, including CHB and KCCH, and the generated electricity is returning to the electricity supply of those premises. It is expected that this installation will help contribute to and promote the use of RE in energy saving.

- Use of Recycled Paper

Out of the total paper consumption by the Department in 2019, 57.3% was recycled paper.

- Indoor Air Quality

We have participated in the Indoor Air Quality Certification Scheme launched by EPD since 2011 and engaged a contractor to inspect office premises with construction floor area exceeding 10 000 m² every year. In 2019, CHB was awarded with “Excellent Class” certificate for its indoor air quality and two other 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.

- *Reduction of Waste from Catering*

In support of the Government's drive to reduce food waste, we signed the Food Wise Charter in October 2015. Since then, a number of corresponding measures have been carried out including the display of posters and publicity materials at staff canteens to arouse staff's awareness. The staff canteen and Mess at CHB have even been offering the option of "less rice" for meals and "lesser number of courses" in banquet menu since 2018, and from 1 January 2019 onwards, they also complied with the new requirement on "Avoidance of Use of Disposable Tableware" by not providing plastic straws and poly-foam food containers, and using paper-based food containers and wooden tableware for take-away meals instead.

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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December 2020