

LegCo Panel on Commerce and Industry

Helping Business Awards Scheme 2001

Introduction

At the Special Finance Committee Meeting to discuss the Draft Estimates of Expenditure for 2002-03 for Commerce and Industry Bureau, we undertook to provide an information paper to this Panel on the details of the Helping Business Awards Scheme 2001 (“the Scheme”).

Objective of the Scheme

2. Following the success of a similar scheme organised in 1999, we launched the Scheme in April 2001 with the following objectives -

- (a) to encourage Government agencies to help business and be a business facilitator rather than a business obstacle;
- (b) instill a helping business culture within the civil service; and
- (c) raise the awareness of the business sector, and promote its appreciation, of the Government’s helping business initiatives.

Awards under the Scheme

3. The main categories of award are as follows:

- (a) A helping business slogan competition for individual civil servants;
- (b) Outstanding awards for helping business measures initiated by government bureaux and departments, under the following two sub-categories –
 - ‘Today’ Category : initiatives that were introduced and implemented within 16 months of the launch of the Scheme.
 - ‘Tomorrow’ Category : initiatives that are being planned

for implementation at the time of the launch of the Scheme.

- (c) Award for the Government department which has achieved the most significant reduction in public forms in 2000-01.

The prizes for the awards were sponsored by the business sector.

4. We invited all bureaux, departments and individual civil servants to participate in the Scheme. We also invited chambers of commerce and trade associations to nominate Government helping business initiatives for awards under the 'Today' Category.

The Results

5. The responses from civil servants, departments and the business community to the Scheme were good. We received 565 entries for the slogan competition, 29 entries for the 'Today' category and 26 entries for the 'Tomorrow' Category from within the Government. We also received 15 nominations from the business community. The award for the best achievement in reducing public forms was based on an objective survey of all Government departments.

6. The entries to the 'Slogan', 'Today' and 'Tomorrow' categories were adjudicated respectively by three independent judging panels comprising members of the Financial Secretary's Business Advisory Group and representatives from business sector sponsors. The results were announced at a Gala Ceremony in September 2001.

..... 7. The winning entries are set out at the *Appendix*.

Way Forward

8. We are following up with bureaux and departments concerned the implementation of entries under the 'Tomorrow' Category. We intend to organise similar schemes periodically in the future.

Business and Services Promotion Unit
Commerce and Industry Bureau
April 2002

Winning entries in the Helping Business Awards Scheme 2001

I. Slogan Competition

齊建營商好環境 共創香港新里程

方便營商創明天 政府市民齊向前

公僕業界相攜手 共創商機滿香江

方便營商為己務 互創新猷助工商

創造營商好環境 公僕率先齊嚮應

Helping Business is Our Business

II. “Today” Category

Initiative/Department	Brief Description of Entry
<p>Improvements to restaurant licensing</p> <p><i>Food and Environmental Hygiene Department</i></p> <p><i>Fire Services Department</i></p> <p><i>Buildings Department</i></p>	<p>Faced with the need to process some 2 600 new applications for food business licences each year and a system of lengthy inter-departmental processes, the three departments jointly worked out and implemented a three-pronged solution. A Case Manager was assigned to each application to provide one-stop service. Issuing time for provisional licences was reduced from seven working days to within one hour, on production of requisite certificates of compliance. A Restaurant Licensing Resource Centre was established to give ready assistance and information.</p>
<p>Establishment of Building Innovation Unit in Buildings Department</p> <p><i>Buildings Department</i></p>	<p>The Department set up a Building Innovation Unit for promoting better design, use of technologies and materials to achieve innovation and excellence in the construction and environmental performance of new buildings. The Unit motivates local and international businesses to provide better quality buildings, opens the market further for international industries and introduces a more business-friendly regulatory environment for the real estate, construction and associated industries.</p>

Initiative/Department	Brief Description of Entry
<p>Improved customs clearance for air cargo</p> <p><i>Customs and Excise Department</i></p>	<p>The Department launched a series of initiatives to streamline clearance of air cargoes, including an Air Cargo Clearance System to provide a direct electronic interface with cargo operators, simplified cargo clearance procedures, relaxed legislation on transshipments and around-the-clock customs clearance services at the Marine Cargo Terminal at the airport.</p>
<p>More efficient Business Registration Office</p> <p><i>Inland Revenue Department</i></p>	<p>The Department streamlined its Business Registration Office, resulting in significant reduction in the time taken for processing new business registration and amendments to business registration from 4 and 10 working days to within 30 minutes. In addition, application for business registration and public enquiry on business registration information can now be done electronically.</p>

III. "Tomorrow" Category

Proposal/Department	Brief Description of Entry
<p>i-Permit for Taiwan Visitors</p> <p><i>Immigration Department</i></p>	<p>Processing of permits for Taiwan residents to visit Hong Kong requires physical transportation of documents and normally takes about five working days. The Department will introduce an i-Permit system whereby applications can be made via the Internet and airlines' workstations and approval can be given within minutes. The permit can be collected by the visitor upon arrival at the Hong Kong International Airport. The increase in Taiwan visitors to Hong Kong because of the convenience afforded by the new arrangement is expected to generate substantial tourist income annually.</p>
<p>Open Bond System</p> <p><i>Customs and Excise Department</i></p>	<p>Under the proposed Open Bond System, responsibility for safekeeping and reporting of dutiable goods in bonded warehouses will pass to warehouse operators and traders, thus significantly reducing the regulatory and compliance costs and permitting longer and more flexible operating hours for the benefit of the trade. The Department will ensure compliance through employment of risk-management techniques.</p>

Proposal/Department	Brief Description of Entry
Transport Information System <i>Transport Department</i>	The Department will introduce a Transport Information System to provide traffic and transport information to both internal and external users. Possible applications include fleet management, car navigation service, and real-time traffic flow information.
Web-based buildings record retrieval service <i>Buildings Department</i>	The Department keeps bulky and voluminous building records, which are useful to building professionals, estate agents and property buyers. However, physical retrieval of these records may take weeks. Following a successful pilot, the Department plans to convert all building records into electronic images and has commissioned a study on Internet delivery options. Once the web-based system is implemented, retrieval can be done conveniently in a matter of minutes.

IV. Winner of the award for best achievement in reducing public forms : Housing Department