

LegCo Panel on Planning, Lands and Works
Policy Initiatives of the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

Introduction

This note elaborates on those new initiatives in the 2005 Policy Agenda relevant to the works portfolio of the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau as well as progress of on-going initiatives in the 2004 Policy Agenda.

2005 Policy Agenda – New Initiatives

Effective Governance

Develop a Works Project Information Standard to facilitate the electronic exchange of public works project data and the reliability of electronic communications among stakeholders

A descriptive account of the initiative

2. It is our established policy to improve the productivity and quality of public works project delivery through making better use of information technologies. In this context, the proposed Works Project Information Standard (WPIS) aims at facilitating efficient exchange of project data and reliable communication.

3. The proposed WPIS will forge a common project data standard covering most common types of information and documents exchanged among project participants. Conforming electronic data may then be correctly interpreted, easily transformed and readily reused across different systems. A protocol will also be available to allow reliable communication between project participants and data dissemination to the recipients' own information systems and users for processing.

4. In order to accurately gauge the needs and aspirations of key stakeholders, we will invite them to participate in formulating the proposed WPIS. This project is scheduled to commence in mid-2005 for completion in mid-2007.

Vibrant Economy

Establish a Construction Industry Council as an umbrella organization with self-regulatory powers to pursue continuous quality improvements and to take ownership of a reform programme mapped out by the Construction Industry Review Committee

A descriptive account of the initiative

5. The Construction Industry Review Committee (CIRC) put forward in January 2001 a total of 109 recommendations to uplift built quality and cost-effectiveness. Featuring prominently among these recommendations is the setting up of a new statutory co-ordinating body funded by construction levies to sustain the impetus of reforms and to foster a culture of self-regulation.

6. Based on the core principles laid down by CIRC, a legal framework of the Construction Industry Council (CIC) was drawn up in consultation with key stakeholders and presented to this Panel, followed by the subsequent introduction of the CIC (No.2) Bill into the Legislative Council in October 2004.

7. We will consider suggestions made by the Bills Committee on the composition and appointment mechanism of CIC, measures to ensure its transparency, as well as the need to achieve a smooth amalgamation with the Construction Industry Training Authority.

2005 Policy Agenda – On-going initiatives

Effective Governance

Examining the feasibility of adopting Public-Private-Partnership for the in-situ reprovisioning of the Sha Tin Water Treatment Works and related services

Progress Made/Present Position

8. We briefed this Panel in May 2004 on the outcome of a feasibility study on in-situ reprovisioning of the Sha Tin Water Treatment Works using Public-Private-Partnership and took note of the views expressed by Members.

9. The Government is engaging in an active dialogue with the staff side through a special consultative committee set up by the Water Supplies Department. We will consult this Panel on this matter again as soon as possible.

Enhancing the efficiency and service quality of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund by using its investment in information technology, installing an Enterprise Resource Planning corporate computer system, and setting up e-portals for major clients

Progress Made/Present Position

Enterprise Resource Planning Corporate Computer System

10. The Corporate Computer System project was kicked off on 22 November 2004 and is scheduled to go live in May 2006. This system will allow the Electrical and Mechanical Trading Fund to upgrade its productivity and develop effective strategies to cope with prevailing market conditions.

e-Document Management Systems and Procedures

11. The e-document management systems and procedures launched in end-2004 are currently on trial run before full implementation in February 2005. Their main advantages include electronic processing by desktop computers with powerful tools capable of establishing audit trails as well as registering, searching and displaying documents.

e-Portals for Major Clients

12. A total of 11 e-portal sites were completed in February 2004 for major clients to access on-line information about their equipment.

Targetting the Architectural Services Department to achieve the overall outsourcing to 68% for the delivery of new projects in the coming year under its re-engineering programme

Progress Made/Present Position

13. Outsourcing is part and parcel of the Architectural Services Department's re-engineering programme to re-align itself for strategic roles as the corporate adviser of the Government on public building development/maintenance matters and an advocate of high standards in construction, site management and safety. To reach the final outsourcing goal of 90% as from September 2001, outsourcing of new projects has increased from 35% in January 2002 to 65% by the end of 2003-04, and will be raised to 68% by the end of 2005-06. Under an evolving mode of operation, the department will re-deploy staff to enhance the professional advisory and support services to its clients. Meanwhile, a dedicated checking unit for government building projects has been formed to ensure that the quality of works outsourced is not compromised.

Monitoring the performance of the new Customer Care and Billing System for over 2.6 million customers of the Water Supplies Department in improving operational efficiency and customer service

Progress Made/Present Position

14. The Customer Care and Billing System (CCBS) will provide "one-stop shop" and on-line customer services through the Internet to bring on par with other public utilities. It also provides useful and timely information for service planning and management decision-making, and will be able to interface with other existing systems.

15. Phase I of CCBS was completed in December 2003 to convert paper-based documentation into electronic form, thus greatly enhancing information transmission/sharing and reducing the use of storage space. Main features of Phase II was rolled out in end-2004 for full operation in January 2005, by which time the system will be able to integrate customer services and billing. The remaining features of Phase II will be launched later in 2005, while the Customer Telephone Enquiry Centre will be upgraded to respond to account matters on a 24-hour basis.

16. Upon completion of Phase III in early-2005 to enhance data management and prioritizing of customer services delivery, we envisage that CCBS will give rise to an annual cost saving of over \$100 million from 2006-07.

Achieving effective communication with the general public and the media by publicising on the web-site of the Water Supplies Department updated information on the Water Mains Replacement and Rehabilitation projects

Progress Made/Present Position

17. Details of the Water Mains Replacement and Rehabilitation projects, including works staging and drawings, have been uploaded by WSD to its website for public access. In doing so, the opportunity is taken to introduce the construction methods and techniques involved, as well as the benefits conferred by these projects.

18. WSD will carefully assess the traffic, environmental and service impact of the water mains replacement and rehabilitation works so that all necessary mitigation measures could be put in place.

Vibrant Economy

Making preparations for launching the Construction Workers Registration System

Progress Made/Present Position

19. Certain sections of the Construction Workers Registration Ordinance providing for the establishment of the Construction Workers Registration Authority (the Authority) and empowerment of SETW to prescribe the rate of levy commenced operation on 18 September 2004.

20. Appointment of the Authority members took effect from 18 October 2004, and two meetings have been held to discuss issues including designation of the Registrar, imposition of the levy, regulation on registration fees and charging arrangements, Computerized Registration Management System (CRMS), the loan agreement with the Government and preparations for Specified Training Courses.

21. The agreement for the Government to provide a start-up loan to the Authority was signed on 30 November 2004. Notices were gazetted on 3 December 2004 to prescribe the rate of levy, the upper limit of total value of construction operations not liable to the levy and the effective date, as well as commencement of other sections related to the imposition of the levy. Tenders for CRMS were closed on 31 December 2004 and a panel has been formed to assess the returns.

Re-engineering the methodology for planning and implementing infrastructural projects with a view to deriving better efficiency and cost-effectiveness by various means, including the wider adoption of a partnering approach, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, alternative designs and procurement methods, as well as systematic risk management techniques

Progress Made/Present Position

Partnering Approach

22. We are promoting non-contractual partnering by adopting this practice in over 30 public works contracts. The next step is to consider contractual partnering using the New Engineering Contract, a new and less adversarial contract form developed in the UK.

Alternative design/Procurement method

23. We have introduced special contractual provisions to deal with alternative designs and arrangements to share cost savings, if any, with the contractor as an incentive. We have asked the works departments to consider inviting alternative designs during the tender stage and issued a reference guide on alternative procurement approaches.

Systematic Risk Management

24. A set of draft requirements and guidelines are available to facilitate the application of systematic risk management in public works projects. To further assist the works departments, we will engage a consultant to conduct training courses for their responsible project staff.

Environmentally Responsible Development

Implementing a comprehensive greening policy for Hong Kong through the collaboration of different departments and with the input of experts and specialists in the field, and aiming to develop a sustainable greening programme for the urban areas. We have set up a high level Steering Committee on Greening, completed the planting of 16 million trees, shrubs and annuals in 2003-04, and will complete the planting of another 10 million in 2004-05. We also aim to produce greening master plans for Tsim Sha Tsui and Central by around mid 2005 so that works can start. *[Note: This is followed by HAB's initiative – Six community gardens in different districts have been established in 2004. The programme will be extended to cover all districts in 2005-06. We are also organising various greening and horticulture activities to promote public support for a green environment.]*

Progress Made/Present Position

25. We continue to pursue a comprehensive greening programme, focusing on enhanced visual quality and streetscape improvement in the urban areas. Four working committees under the Steering Committee on Greening are functioning to provide technical/administrative support as well as to collate inputs from the community and expert advisers.

Greening Master Plan

26. Supported by a new Greening Master Plan Committee, we are drawing up an overall greening framework and broad strategy including planting themes and green corridors for individual districts. It has taken up overall planning on the greening of commercial districts such as Central and Tsim Sha Tsui. The plans for these two districts will be implemented in phases from the middle of this year for completion next year. In parallel, we will also start planning for other districts.

Greening Programme

27. Satisfactory progress is being made in implementing the greening programme for 2004-05. Up to the end of October 2004, about 8.4 million plants were provided with the following breakdown -

Trees	Shrubs	Annuals	Total
1.04 million	6.82 million	0.56 million	8.42 million

We intend to provide 10 million plants (including trees, shrubs and annuals) in 2005-06, about 60% of which will be in urban areas.

Register of Old and Valuable Trees

28. A register of old and valuable trees situated on government land in built-up areas containing some 530 trees (e.g. those of at least 100 years old or with a trunk diameter over one metre) has been posted on the Internet for public access since September 2004. We will identify additional trees for inclusion in this register and prevent felling of registered trees unless under exceptional circumstances and with prior agreement of both the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau and Lands Department.

Decking of Nullahs

29. Some nullahs in urban areas have long been a source of nuisance to nearby residents. After an initial study, the Government has identified 16 sections of nullahs that can be improved and formulated a long-term plan to deck over them in phases. Of the 16 projects, eight will be completed in three years, four in six years and the remaining four in 10 years.

Rolling out the Total Water Management programme to promote water conservation and water resource protection through education and publicity by commissioning a pilot desalination plant in Tuen Mun to collect test data and canvass public acceptance, and by planning two pilot schemes at the Ngong Ping Sewage Treatment Plant and the Shek Wu Hui Sewage Treatment Plant to explore alternative use of reclaimed water

Progress Made/Present Position

30. Water is an important and irreplaceable resource. We will therefore implement a Total Water Management policy. The Government has started to conduct research using the latest technologies to desalinate sea water and reuse domestic effluent, with a view to increasing local water resources as a long-term goal. We will extensively promote water conservation within the community. Heavy users of water will continue to pay higher charges.

31. To help reduce leakage of fresh water, the water mains replacement and rehabilitation programme has been substantially compressed from 20 years to about 15 years. Two pilot schemes for use of reclaimed water are being pursued actively: the scheme at Ngong Ping Sewage Treatment Plant for operation in late-2005 and the scheme at Shek Wu Hui Sewage Treatment Plant for commissioning in early-2007. The experience so gained will pave the way for wider application of such schemes in the territory. Similarly, the pilot plant that commenced operation at Tuen Mun in November 2004 will provide useful first-hand data for the formulation of a long-term strategy on desalination.

Sustaining our efforts to encourage the wider use of recycled construction and demolition materials in public works projects

Progress Made/Present Position

32. A recycling facility at Tuen Mun Area 38 run by the Government since July 2002 has produced some 400,000 tonnes of recycled aggregates from construction and demolition materials for use in public works projects. We also promulgated in October 2004 a set of specifications governing the use of concrete paving blocks made of recycled aggregates in public works projects.

Implementing the flood prevention programme by completing 26 major flood prevention projects since 1997, carrying out 17 and putting 19 under planning and design. We will have substantially minimised the risk of regional flooding in the northern New Territories by 2006 upon the completion of Regulation of Shenzhen River Stage III and Drainage Rehabilitation Works at Ping Yuen River

Progress Made/Present Position

33. Through a series of major projects, the risk of extensive regional flooding in the northern and north-western New Territories has largely been eliminated, with the last area being Ta Kwu Ling to be completed by 2006.

34. Flooding in north-western New Territories near Shan Pui River and the upstream areas in Yuen Long and Kam Tin has been alleviated by 14 major projects implemented since 1997. This is complemented by flood pumping schemes in Tin Shui Wai, Yuen Long, Kam Tin and San Tin, bringing relief to low-lying villages. Another 10 flood prevention projects, including the Yuen Long By-pass Floodway and San Tin Eastern Main Drainage Channel, are still in progress.

35. In northern New Territories, 10 major flood prevention projects have been completed since 1997. Stage III of the Shenzhen River Regulation Project is due for completion in 2006; training of 18 km of the primary river network near Fanling and Sheung Shui, comprising River Indus and River Beas, has been done; the drainage rehabilitation scheme for Ping Yuen River in Ta Kwu Ling is under construction.

36. For urban areas, Stages 1 and 2 of the West Kowloon Drainage Improvement Scheme, the Tai Hang Tung Storage Scheme and the Kai Tak Transfer Scheme have obviated flooding problems in Mong Kok.

37. Having completed seven out of the eight Drainage Master Plan studies, our attention is shifting away from the primary drainage networks, with planning and design currently proceeding on 19 projects to upgrade the secondary drainage networks.

Continuing with the Landslip Preventive Measures Programme which has greatly improved slope safety and visual impact of the built environment. We will upgrade and landscape 250 substandard government slopes as well as conduct safety-screening for 300 private slopes in the coming year

Progress Made/Present Position

38. Under the Landslip Preventive Measures (LPM) Programme in 2004, we upgraded and landscaped 250 substandard government slopes selected through systematic screening in accordance with a risk-based priority system. Safety-screening was carried out for 300 man-made private slopes which led to Dangerous Hillside Orders being served by the Buildings Department on the owners of 110 such slopes. In addition, we completed two studies in 2004 to assess the performance of different greening techniques and vegetation species for planting on slopes for adoption in landscaping works.

Reviewing the Landslip Preventive Measures Programme to identify possible scope for improved cost-effectiveness of the slope upgrading works

Progress Made/Present Position

39. We have reviewed the design of slope upgrading works to improve the long-term economy of soil nailing and incorporated initial findings in the standard designs of LPM works. We are also exploring the scope to optimize cost-effectiveness by attracting more large firms to register under the approved list of specialist LPM contractors, thereby promoting competition and improving the built quality.

2004 Policy Agenda – New Initiatives

Effective Governance

Take forward the merging of the Civil Engineering Department and the Territory Development Department

Progress Made/Present Position

40. The former Civil Engineering Department and the former Territory Development Department were merged into a new department called Civil Engineering and Development Department on 1 July 2004. As a result, 66 posts have been deleted, resulting in an overall savings of about \$26 million in terms of notional annual mid-point salary.

Partnership in the delivery of large scale projects under the Public Works Programme

Progress Made/Present Position

41. It becomes an on-going initiative in the 2005 Policy Agenda. Please refer to paragraphs 8 – 9 above.

Vibrant Economy

Implement a Mandatory Construction Workers Registration System

Progress Made/Present Position

42. It becomes an on-going initiative in the 2005 Policy Agenda. Please refer to paragraphs 19 – 21 above.

2004 Policy Agenda – On-going initiatives

Effective Governance

Enhancing the efficiency and service quality of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund by encouraging greater use of its investment in information technology, the installation of an Enterprise Resource Planning corporate computer system, setting up of e-Portals for major clients, and establishing e-document management systems and procedures

Progress Made/Present Position

43. It continues to be an on-going initiative in the 2005 Policy Agenda. Please refer to paragraphs 10 – 12 above.

Targetting the Architectural Services Department to achieve the overall outsourcing to 65% for the delivering of new projects in the coming year under its re-engineering programme

Progress Made/Present Position

44. It continues to be an on-going initiative in the 2005 Policy Agenda. Please refer to paragraph 13 above.

Implementing a Customer Care and Billing System for some 2.5 million customers of the Water Supplies Department to improve operational efficiency and customer service

Progress Made/Present Position

45. It continues to be an on-going initiative in the 2005 Policy Address. Please refer to paragraphs 14 – 16 above.

Achieving effective communication with the general public and the media by publicizing on WSD's web-site the updated information on the Water Mains Replacement and Rehabilitation projects

Progress Made/Present Position

46. It continues to be an on-going initiative in the 2005 Policy Agenda. Please refer to paragraphs 17 – 18 above.

Vibrant Economy

Re-engineering the methodology for the planning and implementation of infrastructural projects with a view to improving efficiency and cost effectiveness

Progress Made/Present Position

47. It continues to be an on-going initiative in the 2005 Policy Agenda. Please refer to paragraphs 22 – 24 above.

Environmentally Responsible Development

Implementing the Total Water Management programme in which water conservation and water resource protection are enhanced through education and promotion, while examining technologies for recycling and desalination through pilot schemes

Progress Made/Present Position

48. It continues to be an on-going initiative in the 2005 Policy Agenda. Please refer to paragraphs 30 – 31 above.

Encouraging the use of recycled construction and demolition (C&D) materials in public works projects

Progress Made/Present Position

49. It continues to be an on-going initiative in the 2005 Policy Agenda. Please refer to paragraph 32 above.

Implementing a comprehensive greening policy for Hong Kong through the collaboration of different departments and with the input of experts and specialists in the field, and aiming to develop a sustainable greening programme for the urban areas. We have set up a high level Steering Committee on Greening and will complete the planting of 15 million trees, shrubs and annuals 2003-2004. We aim to plant another 10 million in 2004-2005

Progress Made/Present Position

50. It continues to be an on-going initiative in the 2005 Policy Agenda. Please refer to paragraphs 25 – 29 above.

Implementing the flood prevention programme. We have completed 23 major flood prevention projects since 1997 and another 14 are on-going. Furthermore, another 24 projects are under various stages of planning and design. We will have substantially minimized the risk of regional flooding in the northern New Territories by 2006 upon the completion of Regulation of Shenzhen River Stage III and Drainage Rehabilitation Works at Ping Yuen River

Progress Made/Present Position

51. It continues to be an on-going initiative in the 2005 Policy Agenda. Please refer to paragraphs 33 – 37 above.

Continuing with the Landslip Prevention Programme which has greatly improved slope safety. We will upgrade 250 substandard government slopes and conduct safety-screening for 300 private slopes in the coming year

Progress Made/Present Position

52. It continues to be an on-going initiative in the 2005 Policy Agenda. Please refer to paragraphs 38 – 39 above.

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

January 2005