

For Discussion on
20 December 2004

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

Civil Service Customer Service Award Scheme

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the proposed outline of the 2005 Civil Service Customer Service Award Scheme.

Background

2. Since 1999, the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) has organized the Civil Service Customer Service Award Scheme with the following objectives :

- to recognize the achievements of civil servants in customer service;
- to promote a quality service and customer-focused culture in the civil service; and
- to encourage departments and staff to pursue continuous improvement in the delivery of public services.

3. The Customer Service Award Scheme 2004 has been rolled out in mid-2004. We have briefed Members about the main features of the Scheme in May 2004. The awards given out this year included:

- departmental awards for driving improvements in customer service;
- team awards in a number of areas (namely, hotline, counter, front-line, e-government, and internal support services); and
- best public image awards for departments.

4. We have conducted a review of the customer service award scheme in 2004. The review findings and the proposed approach for launching the award scheme in 2005 are outlined below.

Review findings

5. In conducting the review, we consulted the 29 departments which had participated in the scheme in 2004. The feedback received suggests a good measure of recognition that the scheme serves an important role in motivating and promoting the provision of quality service to the public. It is the general consensus that the Scheme should continue in 2005.

6. On the basis of our review, we have identified several areas where there may be room for further enhancing the efficacy of the scheme:

- (a) to encourage wider participation in the scheme on the part of departments, consideration should be given to expanding its ambit. Apart from customer service, we may consider offering awards for other quality services;
- (b) separate awards may be considered for departments which do not provide direct service to members of the public;
- (c) the extent to which members of the public are involved in the adjudication process could be further enhanced; and
- (d) the promotional activities undertaken in 2004 (which consisted of four short video segments on TV and a newspaper supplement produced to show-case the award-winning departments and teams; as well as an award presentation ceremony broadcast on TV) proved to be reasonably well received. For the 2005 scheme, it is considered that a similar approach with further enhancements should be adopted.

Proposed outline of the 2005 award scheme

7. In the light of the review findings, it is proposed that the Scheme, when launched in 2005, should be expanded to cover both customer service and other quality services.

8. To facilitate wider participation by departments, we will allow more time for departments to make preparation. The award presentation ceremony next year is scheduled to take place in December 2005.

9. In 2004, the adjudication members came from two sources. The adjudicating panels for the service awards comprised Legislative Councillors, District Councillors, as well as representatives of professional bodies, the staff side of the Central Consultative Councils and CSB. Members of the public (selected by random sample) voted for the Best Public Image Award. For the 2005 awards, we propose to invite Legislative Councillors and District Councillors to vote for the Best Public Image Award as well, apart from maintaining the adjudication methods used in 2004.

10. As regards the types of awards, we will consider, on top of awards to individual departments for their achievements in service enhancement, awards that give recognition to partnership between departments that contribute significantly to the provision of better services to the public. We also propose to give out awards for specialized service and innovation/application of technology. The former is for departments which either do not provide direct service to the public or provide specialized service, e.g. air-sea rescue and air traffic control. The latter is designed to recognize success in applying innovative ideas, new management models or technology that help enhance cost-effectiveness and service quality. In assessing the quality of service, we see scope for bringing in new factors for adjudication, such as occupational safety and health as well as sensitivity to environmental protection.

11. Insofar as promotional activities for the 2005 award scheme are concerned, we propose a line-up of two half-hour video segments on TV, radio programmes as well as a newspaper supplement for show-casing the award-winning departments or teams. We also propose to enrich the content of the award-presentation ceremony and related show, so that more civil servants would be able to participate in the event. The show will be broadcast on TV as the grand finale of the 2005 scheme.

Promoting service enhancement through continuous learning

12. As in the past, we will organize post-award experience-sharing seminars so that award winners can share their success with others. In addition, CSB will continue to provide support to departments that would help enhance their service and encourage officers to put in their best to serve the community.