

For discussion on
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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

The Civil Service Outstanding Service Award and other commendation schemes for civil servants

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme 2013 and three other commendation schemes for civil servants.

Background

2. The Administration is committed to upholding high standards of performance and conduct in the civil service. Maintaining a clean, effective and dedicated civil service is essential to ensuring the continued stability and prosperity of Hong Kong. To maintain an environment in which civil servants are motivated to deliver quality service that meets the rising expectations of the general public, we need a fair commendation system that would help motivate proactive and sustain exemplary performance from civil servants.

3. There are four commendation schemes applicable to civil servants. They are the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme which aims to provide recognition on a department/team basis and three other award schemes which are designed to recognise commendable performance of individual civil servants. These schemes are briefly described in the paragraphs below.

The Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme

4. Since 1999, the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) has been organising the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme on a biennial basis. The objectives of the Scheme are to recognise the efforts of bureaux/departments (B/Ds) and teams which provide excellent service, to promote a customer-focused culture in the civil service, and to inspire B/Ds and teams for continuous improvement in the delivery of public services.

5. The 2013 Scheme elicited a positive response with 93 entries from 30 B/Ds, most of them providing direct services to the public. Awards under the Scheme were presented at three levels, namely –

- the inter-departmental Partnership Award for quality services to the public through collaboration among B/Ds ;
- the departmental awards, comprising the Service Enhancement Award and the Best Public Image Award; and
- the team awards, comprising the Specialised Service Award, the Internal Service Award, the General Public Service Award, the Regulatory/Enforcement Service Award and the Crisis/Incident Support Service Award.

6. There were Gold, Silver and Bronze prizes, and up to two Meritorious Awards for each award category (except the Best Public Image Award). In addition, each team award had a Special Citation for Innovation. In the 2013 Scheme, a Special Citation for Integrity Management was also introduced to the General Public Service Award and the Regulatory/Enforcement Service Award to recognise the best integrity management practices in the two team awards.

Public Engagement

7. The 2013 Scheme continues to emphasise the participation of the private sector as well as public and community leaders in the adjudication process.

8. As in previous years, we invited the Hong Kong Management Association to co-organise the Scheme to enhance the interaction between the public and private sectors. A total of 30 seasoned managers from different service industries, including retail, finance, hospitality, transportation, property management, etc. were invited to serve on the boards of examiners. These examiners conducted the first stage assessment, comprising interviews with participating B/Ds and teams and screening of their written submissions. The involvement of private sector practitioners enhanced the objectivity of the assessment process and facilitated benchmarking with the private sector. It also helped promote exchange between the public and the private sectors on quality customer service and related standards. At this first stage assessment, the boards of examiners selected the winners of Meritorious Awards and Special Citations. They also identified two/three finalists under each award category to compete for the Gold, Silver and Bronze prizes in the final adjudication.

9. Four Members of the Legislative Council¹ participated in the adjudication as Chairpersons of four Final Adjudication Panels. The Panels also comprised District Council members, representatives from professional organisations², staff side members of the Central Consultative Councils³ and senior officials from CSB. The Panels received presentations from representatives of the short-listed B/Ds and teams before coming to a view on the winners of the Gold, Silver and Bronze prizes.

10. In addition, a random sample of more than 2 400 members of the public and all Members of the Legislative Council and District Councils were invited to vote in an anonymous survey to select three B/Ds for the Best Public Image Award. The survey was administered by the Public Opinion Programme of the University of Hong Kong.

11. The list of winners of the 2013 Scheme is at the Annex.

Publicity and Dissemination

12. In order to underline the importance of quality service, to give recognition to the outstanding achievements by the winning B/Ds and teams and to inform the public of these achievements, a prize presentation ceremony was held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre on 6 September 2013. The ceremony was attended by over 600 guests and civil servants. To further recognise the commendable efforts of all award winners, a one-hour TV documentary produced by RTHK was broadcast on TVB Jade on 28 September 2013. The event and the award winning services were widely publicized in the media and this helped further enhance the community's understanding of the work of civil servants. In addition, the awards were recorded in the personal files of the civil servants concerned to register their contribution to winning the awards.

13. To inspire other B/Ds and civil servants to emulate good practices of award-winners, a new thematic website on service excellence featuring exemplary government services has been launched. Seminars will also be held in early 2014 for the winners to share with colleagues their experience in providing quality services to the public.

¹ They were the Hon Mrs Regina Ip Lau Suk Yee, the Hon Sin Chung Kai, the Hon Poon Siu Ping and the Hon Tony Tse Wai Chuen.

² These professional organisations included the Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management, the Hong Kong Management Association and the Hong Kong Association of Customer Service Excellence.

³ They are the Disciplined Services Consultative Council, the Model Scale 1 Staff Consultative Council and the Police Force Council.

14. In addition, a video series capturing the lesser-known, behind-the-scene efforts and commitment of civil servants going the extra mile in serving the public is being produced. The videos will be broadcast in over 300 government venues, the website on service excellence (<http://www.servicexcellence.gov.hk>), Youth Portal, Hong Kong Education City website and other social media channels such as the Youtube. We will also launch a School Promotion Programme covering school talks or visits to government facilities for students to understand more about the services provided by the Government.

Review and Way Forward

15. A review of the 2013 Scheme was conducted in October 2013 via a questionnaire survey to all participating B/Ds. The feedback received was very positive. The respondents generally considered that the Scheme had helped raise staff morale, enhanced team spirit, gained public recognition for their outstanding achievements and encouraged continuous improvement in the delivery of public services. They were particularly appreciative of the prize presentation ceremony and highly welcomed the use of multiple channels in promoting their services. The continuation of the Scheme received strong support.

16. CSB plans to organise the Scheme again in 2015. CSB will build on the experience in organising the various schemes over the years and continue to involve the Legislative Council, the business sector and the community in the adjudication process.

HKSAR Honours and Awards System

17. This is a community-wide honours recognition system and is not limited to civil servants only. Each year, members of the public and public officers (including civil servants) are nominated for various honours or awards having regard to their contribution to Hong Kong and their public and community service. The recipients of the different types of awards (e.g. Bauhinia Awards, Bravery Awards, Disciplined Services⁴ and ICAC Awards, Medal of Honour and Chief Executive's Commendation) are decided by the Chief Executive on the recommendation of an Honours Committee comprising government officials, Executive Council members and eminent community leaders. An average of around 140 civil servants received awards under this system annually for the past five years, including around 60 who received the Chief Executive's Commendation for Government/Public Service and around

⁴ The award recipients are officers of the six major disciplined services, namely Hong Kong Police Force, Fire Services Department, Immigration Department, Customs and Excise Department, Correctional Services Department and Government Flying Service.

50 who received various Disciplined Services Awards. The full list of recipients is published every year. The Chief Executive personally presents the award to each recipient, in the presence of guests invited by the recipients, at a ceremony held in Government House each year.

The Commendation Letter Scheme

18. This is a civil service-specific recognition scheme and is administered at the bureau/departmental level. Under the Commendation Letter Scheme, Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments may issue commendation letters to civil servants who have provided consistently outstanding service for at least three consecutive years; or have made significant contribution towards enhancing the efficiency or the image of their B/Ds; or have performed a meritorious or brave act warranting special recognition. Nominations may be made all year round and they are considered by a commendation committee set up by individual B/D under the chairmanship of a directorate officer. The awards are recorded in the personal files of the recipients to show appreciation of their outstanding performance. An average of around 1,800 civil servants received commendation letters annually for the past five years.

Secretary for the Civil Service (SCS)'s Commendation Award Scheme

19. In 2004, we introduced this civil service-specific scheme as a separate tier of award between the HKSAR Honours and Awards System and the bureau/departmental Commendation Letter Scheme. Each year, SCS, on behalf of the Administration, gives recognition to selected civil servants on a service-wide basis for consistently outstanding and exemplary performance. To qualify for an award under the Scheme, a civil servant needs to have provided outstanding performance for at least five consecutive years. The number of recipients per annum is targeted at 80, which may be relaxed for exceptionally deserving cases. Nominations are made by Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments/Grades. The recipients of awards are selected by SCS on the recommendation of an Award Committee, comprising representatives of CSB and other bureaux/grades.

20. The awards are presented by SCS at a ceremony held annually, in the presence of guests invited by the recipients and representatives from their B/Ds. Each award recipient receives a certificate of recognition and a gold pin. For those award recipients who have 20 or more years of service and have not enjoyed government sponsored travel outside Hong Kong before, they will also receive a travel award. If the award recipient is married, the travel award will also cover the spouse, provided that he/she travels with the award recipient. We will organise an award presentation ceremony in late November 2013 to give recognition to the award recipients. Same as the practice of the Commendation

Letter Scheme, the awards are recorded in the personal files of the recipients. In 2013, a total of 77 civil servants from 35 B/Ds received the award.

21. To commend exemplary services of the award recipients, we will invite the media to cover the ceremony and to interview some of the award recipients. In addition, we will publicise the achievements of the award recipients through various internal communication channels such as the Civil Service Newsletter and departmental newsletters.

Conclusion

22. Award schemes are useful management tools to give recognition to good performance, to boost staff morale and to encourage further improvements in the delivery of public service. We will continue to make use of them judiciously.

23. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper.

Civil Service Bureau
November 2013

**Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme 2013
List of Award Winners**

(I) Inter-departmental Partnership Award

Gold Prize	Architectural Services Department, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department Reprovisioning of Wo Hop Shek Crematorium and Provision of Columbarium and Garden of Remembrance at Kiu Tau Road, Wo Hop Shek
Silver Prize	Labour and Welfare Bureau, Architectural Services Department, Highways Department, Housing Department, Transport Department Accessibility in Publicly Accessible Premises
Bronze Prize	Hong Kong Observatory, Government Flying Service Tropical Cyclone Surveillance Flight
Meritorious Awards	Civil Engineering and Development Department, Development Bureau, Architectural Services Department Temporary Building for the Energizing Kowloon East Office
	Hong Kong Fire Services Department, Electrical & Mechanical Services Department Mobile Fire Safety Education Centre

(II) Departmental Awards**(A) Departmental Service Enhancement Award**

	Large Department Category	Small Department Category
Gold Prize	Hong Kong Police Force	Hong Kong Observatory
Silver Prize	Hong Kong Fire Services Department	Companies Registry
Bronze Prize	Water Supplies Department	--
Meritorious Awards	Buildings Department	
	Leisure and Cultural Services Department	

(B) Best Public Image Award

Gold Prize	Hong Kong Fire Services Department
Silver Prize	Hong Kong Police Force
Bronze Prize	Hongkong Post

(III) Team Awards

	General Public Service Award	Regulatory/ Enforcement Service Award
Gold Prize	Leisure and Cultural Services Department The Majesty of All Under Heaven Exhibition	Hong Kong Police Force Police Dog Unit
Silver Prize	Drainage Services Department Lai Chi Kok Drainage Tunnel Project Team	Buildings Department Corporate Services Division
Bronze Prize	Housing Department Nam Shan Carpark Conversion	Electrical & Mechanical Services Department Continuing Improvement Team
Meritorious Awards	Drainage Services Department Image from Sewage	Electrical & Mechanical Services Department Contractors' Performance Rating Team
	Hong Kong Observatory Digital Weather Forecast Team	Hong Kong Fire Services Department Guidelines on Fire Safety Requirements for Railway Infrastructures
Special Citation (Innovation)	Leisure and Cultural Services Department Park Déco	Hong Kong Police Force Police Dog Unit
Special Citation (Integrity Management)	Immigration Department Registration of Persons – Hong Kong Office	Electrical & Mechanical Services Department Continuing Improvement Team

(III) Team Awards (Cont'd)

	Specialised Service Award	Internal Service Award
Gold Prize	Hong Kong Police Force Kwai Ching District	Water Supplies Department Energy Management Unit
Silver Prize	Hong Kong Police Force Yau Tsim Police District - Operation Retriever	Water Supplies Department Biosensing Alert (Water Science Division)
Bronze Prize	Hong Kong Fire Services Department Post-dispatch First-aid Tips	Water Supplies Department Projects Development Unit
Meritorious Awards	Hong Kong Observatory Aviation Safety Safeguarding Team	Hong Kong Police Force Carelinks Cadre
	Hong Kong Police Force PCRO KCDIST (Kowloon City Neighbourhood Veteran)	Housing Department Customer Services Management System Project Team
Special Citation (Innovation)	Hong Kong Fire Services Department Post-dispatch First-aid Tips	Water Supplies Department Energy Management Unit

	Crisis/ Incident Support Service Award
Gold Prize	Hong Kong Fire Services Department High Angle Rescue Team Hong Kong Police Force Disaster Victim Identification Unit
Silver Prize	--
Bronze Prize	Home Affairs Department Emergency Relief Services
Meritorious Awards	Department of Health Radiation Health Unit
	Hong Kong Police Force Emergency Unit New Territories South
Special Citation (Innovation)	Hong Kong Fire Services Department High Angle Rescue Team