

**Replies to written questions raised by Finance Committee Members
in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2003-04**

**[Controlling Officer : The Ombudsman]
[Session No. : 13 File name : OMB-e2.doc]**

Reply Serial No.	Question Serial No.	Name of Member	Head	Programme
OMB001	0126	HO Sau-lan, Cyd	114	Complaints Administration
OMB002	0768	LAU Wai-hing, Emily	114	Complaints Administration

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2003-04
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

OMB001

Question Serial No.

0126

Head: 114-Office of The Ombudsman

Subhead(No. & title): 000 Operational expenses

Programme: Complaints Administration

Controlling Officer: The Ombudsman

Director of Bureau: ---

Question : Regarding consultancy studies for policy making and assessment (if any) commissioned by the above office, please provide details in the following format:

- (1) Please provide the following details on the consultancy studies for which financial provision has been allocated respectively in 2001-02 and 2002-03:

Name of consultants (if available)	Description	Consultancy fees	Progress on consultancy studies (planning/ in progress / completed)	The Administration's follow-up action on the study reports and the progress made	Reasons for no follow-up action on the study reports and whether other measures are available to deal with the subjects under study

- (2) Please provide the following details on the consultancy studies for which financial provision has not been allocated respectively in 2001-02 and 2002-03, though consultancy studies have been made during the year:

Name of consultants (if available)	Description	Consultancy fees	Progress on consultancy studies (planning/ in progress / completed)	The Administration's follow-up action on the study reports and the progress made	Reasons for no follow-up action on the study reports and whether other measures are available to deal with the subjects under study

(3) Has financial provision been allocated for commissioning consultancy studies in 2003-04? If yes, please provide the following details:

Name of consultants (if available)	Description	Consultancy fees	Status of consultancy studies (planning/ in progress / completed)

Asked by: Hon. HO Sau-lan, Cyd

Reply: This Office has no need to commission this type of consultancies.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Alice Tai

Post Title _____ The Ombudsman

Date _____ 24 March 2003

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2003-04
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

[OMB002](#)

Question Serial No.

0768

Head: 114-Office of The Ombudsman

Subhead(No. & title): 000 Operational expenses

Programme: Complaints Administration

Controlling Officer: The Ombudsman

Director of Bureau: ---

Question : In 2003-04, the matters requiring The Ombudsman's special attention include the enhancement of professionalism and the quality of complaint management in the Office and the public sector. Please provide details and the estimated expenditure to be incurred.

Asked by: Hon. LAU Wai-hing, Emily

Reply: Since delinking from Government in December 2001, we have been recruiting our own staff to release civil servants seconded to my Office as soon as possible while maintaining the level of our service.

As at 20 March 2003, 27 out of the 34 investigation officer posts (79%) have been replaced by contract officers. I anticipate that the remaining civil service investigation officer posts will be phased out within 2003-04.

This will mean considerable efforts to maintain the level of experience and enhance the expertise among my staff. To this end, I have drawn up a training strategy. This envisages induction for new entrants, refresher on recurrent subjects and special sessions on such matters as aspects of our law or certain requisite skills. These programmes will be carried out or coordinated essentially by my administrative team and by the more experienced investigation officers. It may be necessary to "buy" some services from training institutions. For these more formal training programmes, I have reserved \$120,000 which also caters for the training of support staff.

Apart from the above, specific and more informal programmes are organised to enhance professionalism of my investigation staff:

Event	Purpose	Frequency	Estimated Cost
Professional Development Conference	Review working procedures, functions and jurisdiction; develop professional techniques; promote esprit de corps; enable staff to understand his/her strengths and weaknesses.	Annual	\$30,000

As for the public sector, I aim to improve the technique of front-line officers in organisations within my purview who are responsible for complaint handling and to generate greater awareness among the management of the importance of good complaint handling culture. Specific programmes to be organised are:

Event	Purpose	Frequency	Estimated Cost
Complaint Management Workshop (One day)	Share good customer practices of selected public and private organisations; gain insight into complaint investigation techniques; exchange individual working experience. Target participants: Morning session: 370 Afternoon session: 300	Annual	\$160,000
Ombudsman Awards	Raise the awareness of top management and front-line workers on the importance of prompt response to complaint investigations; recognise the efforts of front-line staff in providing good customer service. (This also forms part of our publicity and promotional activities.)	Annual	\$100,000
Talks to new recruits or investigation officers of scheduled organisations	Explain the functions and different types of investigation conducted by the Office.	On request	No specific funding

In addition, I also organise programmes directed at specific target groups or the general public to enhance their understanding of our monitoring role. These are:

Event	Purpose	Frequency	Estimated Cost
JP Assistance Scheme (for JPs enrolled into the scheme): visits to government departments	Provide an opportunity for JPs to share their views on the operation of departments having frequent contacts with the public.	About 3 visits a year	\$6,900
Workshops for target groups, e.g. Councillors and their assistants, and social workers	Explain the functions of The Ombudsman and complaint investigation procedures, to enlist support from participants to help those in the public who want to complain to my Office.	2 or 3 times a year, depend on response	No specific funding

Outreaching talks to university students	Introduce the functions of the Office and various complaint handling mechanism	On request, averaging 5 times a year	No specific funding
Guided visits to the Resource Centre, with talks, to groups from schools, youth centres, elderly centres	Explain complaint investigation and the procedures to lodge complaints to the Office	About 7 times a month	No specific funding

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Alice Tai

Post Title _____ The Ombudsman

Date _____ 24 March 2003