

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

Introduction

The 2004 Policy Agenda just issued sets out the Government's new and on-going initiatives over the next three and a half years. This note elaborates on the initiatives affecting the works portfolio of the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau in the 2004 Policy Agenda. It also gives an account of the position reached on initiatives in the works portfolio in the 2003 Policy Agenda.

2004 Policy Agenda--New Initiatives

Effective Governance

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

A descriptive account of the initiative

2. It is Government's policy to achieve greater efficiency and productivity improvements through re-prioritizing, re-structuring and re-organizing. Having reviewed the expertise, duties, functions and workload of the Works Departments, Government considers it appropriate to merge the Civil Engineering Department (CED) and the Territory Development Department (TDD) into one department to meet the future pattern of development of Hong Kong.

3. The merger will bring synergetic effect of the expertise of CED and TDD. Moreover, it offers opportunities for significant savings, particularly at senior and managerial levels, to be achieved as a result of the integration of the administrative and support functions of the two Departments.

4. Detailed implementation programmes for the amalgamation are being drawn up. We will brief the Legislative Council of the organization and establishment of the new Department in due course. The new Department is expected to be set up in mid-2004.

Make wider use of alternative approaches such as Public-Private-Partnership in the delivery of large scale projects under the Public Works Programme

A descriptive account of the initiative

5. It is Government's firm policy that consideration should always be given to involving the private sector in the provision of services and facilities in order to enhance the efficiency and productivity of the public sector.

6. Government is actively reviewing and exploring possibilities to deliver the public works projects managed by the Works Departments through alternative approaches, such as Public-Private-Partnership (PPP), with a view to bringing about more benefits to both Government and the public.

7. In particular, Government is exploring various possibilities of delivering the proposed in-situ reprovisioning of Sha Tin Water

Treatment Works (STWTW), including PPP. A feasibility study is being conducted. Subject to the consultants' findings and recommendations, Government will make a decision on the way forward for STWTW.

Vibrant Economy

Implement a Mandatory Construction Workers Registration System

A descriptive account of the initiative

8. The Construction Workers Registration Bill provides the legal framework for the establishment of a mandatory registration system for construction workers to regulate their delivery of work on construction site. The Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council on 19 March 2003 and was under scrutiny by a Bills Committee. The implementation of the registration system is expected to start one year after passage of the Bill.

9. All construction workers who carry out construction work on construction sites are required to register under the proposed registration system according to their skill levels. The main objectives are to improve the quality of construction works through certification of the skill levels of workers and provide more reliable labour supply data. Other merits include raising the status of construction workers by recognizing their skill levels; fostering a quality culture in the construction industry; and helping the combat against the employment of illegal workers on construction sites.

10. The Bill covers the setting up of a statutory registration authority to administer the Ordinance. In addition, a levy to be paid by

contractors carrying out construction works will be imposed to fund the registration system.

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

11. In order to improve efficiency, the existing computer systems which support the delivery of engineering services of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund (EMSTF) will be replaced by a Corporate Computer System (CCS) to integrate all the business processes and data. The new CCS will be developed based on an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platform and will incorporate the latest state-of-the-art technology such as Geographic Information System, Personal Digital Assistant and mobile computing. This CCS implementation project is in the tendering stage and the tender will be closed on 16 January 2004. The whole system is scheduled to go live in January 2006.

12. To further enhance its quality of service, EMSTF has launched e-Portals to its major clients. The e-Portals are established through the Government data network (GNET) and provide tailor-made web-sites

with password protected access to on-line information such as work progress, equipment records, maintenance plan, and many other updated information designed specifically to satisfy each client's specific needs and requirements. Clients can also provide valuable feedbacks or request for services via the e-Portals. The pilot e-Portal site for FEHD was first launched in September 2003. Another batch of ten client e-Portal sites will be ready by February 2004.

13. In pursuit of a paperless office environment, EMSTF is setting up an Electronic Document Management System (eDMS). The eDMS converts paper documents into electronic formats and provides an efficient and effective storage, retrieval and handling of documents. All documents are handled by eDMS in softcopy in an easy retrieval indexing and editing system. The eDMS is operated based on the Internet technologies. Users are only required to use a common Internet Browser (e.g. Internet Explorer) to access the system. The pilot implementation of the eDMS has been carried out in one of our Divisions with over 100 users in November 2003. It is scheduled to deploy the system to other Divisions by phases in 2004.

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

14. The planned increase in outsourcing is part of the Architectural Services Department's (ArchSD) re-engineering programme. With more projects outsourced to the private sector, the Department can assume more strategic roles, including strengthening its professional role as

Government's corporate adviser on public building development and maintenance matters, working with the industry to improve the design and maintenance of public buildings and promoting higher standards in construction, site management and safety. ArchSD's ultimate target is to outsource 90% of the approved building projects as from September 2001. The overall outsourcing for the delivery of new projects has been increased from 35% in January 2002 to 56% in December 2003. The Department is planning to increase the overall outsourcing to 65% by the end of 2004/05. Under the new mode of operation, ArchSD can re-deploy staff originally handling new building projects to enhance the professional advisory and support services to Government and subvented organizations. The Department has set up a dedicated checking unit for government building projects to ensure that the quality of works outsourced is not compromised.

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

15. The Customer Care and Billing System (CCBS) will provide "one-stop shop" service to customers and on-line service through the Internet so that customer service provided by the Water Supplies Department (WSD) is comparable to those of other utilities. It will also provide useful and timely information to the management for planning and decision-making, and will be able to interface with future computer systems of the Department. The CCBS will give rise to an annual saving of approximately \$100.6 million from 2006-07, of which \$87.7 million will be realizable saving resulting from the deletion of 261 posts upon the

full implementation of the System.

16. Phase I of the CCBS was completed in December 2003 to turn customer services related paper based information into electronic document based information. This has enhanced the efficiency of information transmission and improved the sharing of information in the provision of services to meet customers' needs.

17. When completed in 2004, the System will provide an integrated system for handling customer services and billing to further enhance efficiency and quality of customer services.

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

18. This is a 20-year project comprising the replacement or rehabilitation of about 3,000 kilometres of old water mains throughout the territory. Works for Stage 1 Phase 1 of the project, at an estimated cost of \$2,200M commenced in 2000 and are being carried out in various districts of the territory.

19. In view of its effects on traffic, environment and water supply to consumers, we would carry out thorough public consultation prior to implementation of each major section of watermain replacement and rehabilitation works. We would post the updated information, including location of works, implementation programme of the contracts and technical details on the replacement and rehabilitation methods, so as to

keep the general public and media informed of the latest situation of the project.

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

Control of changes for projects

20. We issued on 29 October 2003 an ETWB Technical Circular to enhance the control of client-initiated changes on user and programme requirements of projects. Containing changes to those that are absolutely necessary and essential will help minimize disruptions and delay to projects.

Shortening the periods for raising and resolving objections

21. To speed up the administrative procedures in project delivery, we promulgated on 30 April 2003 a set of administrative procedures requiring the Works Departments to enhance the consultation and notification of projects and to expedite the resolution of objections. Since 30 May 2003, we have also started including the information on projects under gazettal in the ETWB's Internet web page.

Achieving cost-effective design

22. Design assumptions and adoption of different methods of construction can have a significant impact on the cost of projects. We issued an ETWB Technical Circular on 16 July 2003, requiring the

Works Departments to vet and agree the preliminary design of major projects by a forum of senior staff to ensure the cost-effectiveness of projects before detailed design can proceed.

Tender evaluation

23. Since November 2002, we have used the contractors' performance index system to derive the performance rating of contractors for tender evaluation. This would ensure that contractors with proven track records are given an edge and more likely to win the jobs.

Dispute avoidance

24. In the past year, we have made wider use of the partnering approach to promote a dispute avoidance culture in our public works contracts in order to reduce the amount of resources engaged in resolving disputes. By end 2003, we have selected 22 works contracts for adopting project partnering. Most of these contracts are now in the construction stage. We are currently conducting an interim review to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach. As an effort towards conflict avoidance, we have also completed drafting a set of rules and conditions of contract for the use of voluntary adjudication and Dispute Resolution Adviser system in works contracts. We are currently consulting the construction industry on these proposals.

Alternative methods of procurement

25. We completed in 2003 a study on alternative methods of procurement for public works by reference to local and overseas experience. We are drawing up a reference guide to assist the Works Departments in the selection of appropriate procurement methods for construction works projects.

Project monitoring tool

26. We commenced a contract in September 2003 to replace our existing Public Works Management System (in use since 1994) with a new Public Works Programme Information System. The latter system will provide ready updated information of projects to Bureaux/Works Departments so that timely actions could be taken to mitigate potential delays to the programme of projects.

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

27. We have started a series of publicity programmes, including exhibitions and visits to water treatment works, for the promotion of water conservation and protection of water resource. We will also continue the pollution control measures in water gathering grounds for the protection of our local water resources. The replacement and rehabilitation of aged water mains, as well as the implementation of leakage detection and reduction measures, will also help reduce leakage of fresh water.

28. We are also implementing a pilot water recycling scheme at Ngong Ping for commission in 2005. The information collected from this pilot scheme will form the basis for considering the wider implementation of water recycling schemes in Hong Kong.

29. A consultant has been commissioned for a pilot plant study to investigate the latest desalination technology for applications in Hong Kong. The exercise will examine the technical feasibility and cost effectiveness of the pilot plants, which adopt reverse osmosis technology, for mapping out the long term development of alternative water resources. The study findings will be available by end 2004.

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

Progress Made/Present Position

30. To promote the wider use of recycled C&D materials, we have revised the material specification to facilitate their use in public works projects since March 2002. We also reviewed the waste management procedures and introduced an enhanced Waste Management Plan in May 2003 for public works projects to promote on-site sorting of C&D materials for recycling.

31. In collaboration with a local university, we have successfully completed field trials to assess the performance of concrete paving blocks made of recycled C&D materials. We are now reviewing the results with a view to issuing further guidelines to promote the wider use of such paving blocks in public works projects.

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

32. To further promote greening, we have set up a high-level Steering Committee on Greening to set the direction and focus on the overall strategy and to oversee the implementation of major greening programmes. Under the Steering Committee, three working committees have been set up to provide technical and administrative support, and to collate inputs from the public and experts.

33. The overall progress for the implementation of the greening programme for 2002/2003 was satisfactory. More than 11 million plants were planted with the following breakdown:-

Trees	Shrubs	Annuals	Total
2 457 000	7 465 000	1 114 000	11 036 000

Our plan is to plant about 15 million plants (including trees, shrubs and annuals) in 2003/2004 fiscal year. About 10 million of them will be planted in the urban area. This is in line with our commitment to focusing our efforts on the urban areas.

34. Satisfactory progress is also being made in implementing the programme for 2003/2004. Up to the end of October 2003, about 7 million plants had been planted with the following breakdown:-

Trees	Shrubs	Annuals	Total
1 756 000	4 767 000	467 000	6 990 000

We are reviewing and enhancing the existing standards and guidelines on Greening to ensure the effectiveness of our greening efforts. We are also compiling a register of old and valuable trees on urban government land for priority protection. Furthermore, we will continue to draw up plans to enlist community support for greening activities and to work with private and community organizations for promoting greening programmes in the urban areas.

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

35. To tackle the flooding problem, we are actively implementing a programme of major flood prevention projects. These projects are being implemented in stages and are in good progress. We are now gradually seeing the benefits of the completed works. The risk of most extensive regional flooding in the northern and north-western New Territories has

already been substantially removed, and the last one at the Ta Kwu Ling area will be removed by 2006.

North-western New Territories

36. In the north-western New Territories the flooding situation has been substantially alleviated following the completion of 12 major flood prevention projects since 1997. For example, the flooding problem in the Shan Pui River has been resolved and the flood water in the upstream areas in Yuen Long and Kam Tin can now subside quickly after rainstorms have ceased. Furthermore, since the completion of the village flood pumping schemes in Tin Shui Wai, Yuen Long, Kam Tin and San Tin, no major flooding incidents have been reported for the relevant low-lying villages. Another 10 flood prevention projects, including the Yuen Long By-pass Floodway and San Tin Eastern Main Drainage Channel, are under construction. Five more projects are also in planning and design stages.

Northern New Territories

37. In the northern New Territories, 10 major flood prevention projects have been completed since 1997. The flow capacity of Shenzhen River from Lo Wu to the estuary at Deep Bay has been significantly increased after the completion of Stages I and II of the Shenzhen River Regulation Project, thus eliminating the flood risk along this section of the River. The Stage III of the Project involves the river from Lo Wu to Ta Kwu Ling and is in good progress for completion in 2006. In addition, the training of 18 km of the primary river network near Fanling and Sheung Shui, comprising River Indus in Fu Tei Au, Tin Ping Shan and Shek Wu San Tsuen as well as River Beas in Ho Sheung Heung, has also been substantially completed. The flooding situation in these previously

flood prone areas has been greatly improved. The drainage rehabilitation scheme for Ping Yuen River in Ta Kwu Ling is under construction. Four more projects are in planning and design stages.

West Kowloon

38. The Stage 1 of the West Kowloon Drainage Improvement Scheme was completed in 2003 and initial relief to the flooding problem in Mong Kok has been provided. The Stages 2 and 3 of the Scheme, which include the construction of the Tai Hang Tung Storage Scheme, the Kai Tak Transfer Scheme and the associated stormwater drains, are progressing well. Most of these critical works will be completed in 2004. Another two projects, including the Lai Chi Kok Transfer Tunnel, are in planning and design stages.

On-going Planning

39. With the primary drainage networks getting in shape, we are fostering the drainage improvements to the local areas. Eight Drainage Master Plan studies have been commissioned, out of which seven have been completed, to look into the long-term development needs of Hong Kong and identify the provision of secondary drainage networks. Eleven projects are now in planning and design stage to upgrade the secondary drainage networks in the rural New Territories and the urban area drainage systems to the current flood protection standards.

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

40. We will continue to maintain the on-going Landslip Preventive Measures Programme to upgrade 250 substandard government slopes in 2004 through systematic screening in accordance with a risk-based priority system. Slopes with higher risks will be upgraded first, thereby achieving maximum risk reduction in the shortest possible time. We will also put special emphasis on making the appearance of engineered slopes as natural as possible, blending them with their surroundings and minimising their visual impact on the built environment.

41. We will continue to carry out safety-screening for 300 man-made private slopes in 2004 and, where necessary, serve orders on the owners to rectify deficiencies. We will provide assistance and advice where possible to slope owners or their maintenance agents to beautify their slopes to maintain a visual harmony with the surroundings.

2003 Policy Agenda--New Initiatives

Vibrant Economy

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

Progress Made/Present Position

42. It becomes an on-going initiative in the 2004 Policy Agenda. Please refer to paragraphs 20-26 above.

Environmentally Responsible Development

Implement 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

43. It becomes an on-going initiative in the 2004 Policy Agenda. Please refer to paragraphs 27-29 above.

2003 Policy Agenda—On-going Initiatives

Environmentally Responsible Development

Encouraging the use of recycled construction and demolition materials in public works projects

Progress Made/Present Position

44. It continues to be an on-going initiative in the 2004 Policy Agenda. Please refer to paragraphs 30-31 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 area, and aiming initially to develop the most sustainable greening programme for the urban areas

Progress Made/Present Position

45. It continues to be an on-going initiative in the 2004 Policy Agenda. Please refer to paragraphs 32-34 above.

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
January 2004