

Training and development work of the Civil Service Training and Development Institute

The Audit Commission ("Audit") conducted a review of the works of the Civil Service Training and Development Institute ("CSTDI") in meeting the common training needs of civil servants.

2. CSTDI provides training programmes for some 183 000 government employees to equip them with the skills, knowledge and mind-set necessary for providing quality services to the public. In 2017-2018, the financial provision of CSTDI amounted to \$148.3 million.

3. The Committee noted the following findings from the Director of Audit's Report:

- the application and nomination process was automated for only 14 bureaux/departments ("B/Ds") using the two computerized training management systems which had direct interface with the computerized Training Information and Administration System ("TIAS")¹ of CSTDI;
- only 58 (10%) of the 610 classes of central programmes (i.e. open to all B/Ds) held in 2017 used e-forms for enrolment;
- CSTDI used paper-based evaluation forms rather than electronic means to collect feedback from course participants;
- of the 610 classes of central programmes held in 2017, 346 (57%) were over-subscribed. For these over-subscribed classes, Audit found that:
 - (a) for 83 classes (involving 33 workshops and two seminars) over-subscribed by 100% or more in 2017, no re-run was held for 19 workshops and one seminar;
 - (b) seven of the said 19 workshops were also over-subscribed by 100% or more in 2016 but the number of scheduled classes of these workshops remained unchanged in 2017; and

¹ TIAS assists CSTDI in various training administration functions, including inviting and processing nominations, training place allocation, attendance status update, training record maintenance and management reporting. Authorized users of B/Ds can login to TIAS to input training nominations and download training records.

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- (c) CSTDI had not arranged video-taping or uploading of the course materials onto the Cyber Learning Centre Plus ("CLC Plus")² for the said over-subscribed seminar without re-run in 2017;
- the practice of setting target class size varied among different training units, and the target class size for individual courses was not recorded in TIAS to facilitate the selection of nominees;
 - for 25 (7%) of the 346 over-subscribed classes in 2017, the number of selected nominees fell short of their respective target class sizes by 1% to 14% (averaging 6%), resulting in unused training places. However, there was no record to show that some of these unused training places had been reallocated to waitlisted nominees;
 - CSTDI had not invited new applications for the re-runs of eight over-subscribed seminars even when the venues could accommodate more attendees than the excess demand. As a result, there were unused training places in three of these re-runs;
 - it was unlikely that all middle-level civil servants (about 13 000 up to 2017 had yet to attend the programmes) could attend national studies programmes within the six-year time schedule as the number of planned training places provided by the three designated Mainland universities only increased from 280 in 2017 to 420 in 2019;
 - all government employees were free to choose accessing the e-learning resources on CLC Plus via their CLC Plus accounts or departmental portal accounts. As at May 2018, there were 139 362 user accounts, of which 79 713 (57%) were CLC Plus accounts and 59 649 (43%) were departmental portal accounts. Audit examination of the usage of CLC Plus revealed that:
 - (a) 14 955 (11%) of 139 362 accounts were not usable. For the remaining 124 407 usable accounts, 85 788 (69%) were inactive for one year or more (including 17 910 accounts which had remained inactive for five years or more); and

² The web-based CLC Plus was launched by CSTDI in September 2002 to provide a range of online training resources for civil servants to learn at their own time and according to their own pace.

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- (b) the number of user accounts of 15 B/Ds only accounted for less than 50% (ranging from 13% to 49%) of their establishment;
- CSTDI obtained funding of \$2.7 million for the enhancement of CLC Plus in December 2015. The enhancement work included revamping CLC Plus with a new user interface, which was launched on 21 April 2018, to provide an optimal viewing and interactive experience to support effective mobile learning. In July 2018, Audit used a tablet computer and a smartphone to conduct a test check of 30 e-learning resources on CLC Plus with the highest number of page views from January to April 2018, and discovered that:
 - (a) 17 (57%) e-learning resources could not be viewed on both mobile devices because they were developed using a legacy software not supported by major operating systems of mobile devices; and
 - (b) of 130 e-learning resources on CLC Plus developed using the legacy software, 33 items had been migrated to prevailing technology platforms or retired as at September 2018, while the remaining 97 items were planned to be migrated or retired by 2020;
- CSTDI launched its mobile application, namely "CSTDI App", for two mobile operating systems in March 2014 and March 2015 respectively. According to a survey conducted by CSTDI in 2015-2016 on the usage of CSTDI App by CLC Plus users, 77% of 2 084 respondents had not used CSTDI App before. The usage statistics of CSTDI App also showed that the numbers of downloads and visits decreased from 3 197 in 2015 to 1 136 in 2017 and from 18 260 in 2015 to 5 967 in 2017 respectively;
- there were 2 526 items of obsolete and physically deteriorated learning materials with a total purchase cost of about \$1.4 million being kept in the Learning Resource Centre³ of CSTDI pending disposal. However, there was no record showing when these 2 526 unserviceable resource items had been identified and why they had not been dealt with in previous disposal exercises; and

³ Learning Resource Centre is one of the training facilities of CSTDI providing borrowing service of learning resources and online library services.

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- while the utilization rates for most CSTDI training venues from January 2013 to May 2018 were generally above 50%, Audit examination revealed that:
 - (a) CSTDI made use of a web-based booking system to automate the booking of its training venues and ancillary facilities by internal users and the users of the General Grades Office only. Other B/Ds were still required to follow a set of manual booking procedures; and
 - (b) CSTDI had two multi-function areas, which were used to support classroom training, but these multi-function areas were not open for booking by other B/Ds. The respective utilization rates of these two multi-function areas between 2013 and 2018 (up to May 2018) were in the range from 3% to 19% and from 23% to 60%.

4. The Committee did not hold any public hearing on this subject. Instead, it asked for written responses regarding the use of information technology by B/Ds to enhance the administration of training applications/nominations; the use of e-forms in the training enrolment process by B/Ds; measures to address the demand for training places of over-subscribed courses; the arrangements for the setting of target class size of training courses; measures to ensure optimal utilization of training places; provision of training places of national studies programmes for middle-level civil servants; the usage of CLC Plus; management of e-learning resources used on mobile devices; measures to increase the usage of CSTDI App; management of learning materials in the Learning Resource Centre; and booking and utilization of CSTDI's training venues and ancillary facilities. The replies from **Secretary for the Civil Service** are in *Appendix 44*.

5. The Committee wishes to be kept informed of the progress made in implementing the various recommendations made by Audit.