

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Environmental Report for 2013

Profile

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) provides services to the public in three programme areas with the following aims –

- i) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets –
 - ◆ to facilitate agricultural and fisheries production and promote its sustainable development;
- ii) Country and Marine Parks and Nature Conservation –
 - ◆ to conserve flora, fauna and natural habitats; designate and manage country parks, special areas, geoparks, marine parks and marine reserves; and control international trade in endangered species of animals and plants in Hong Kong; and
- iii) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services –
 - ◆ to monitor the welfare of, and control the diseases in, animals and plants through enforcement of relevant legislation; protect public health; protect and regulate fisheries; and provide technical services.

2. We are responsible for the management and operation of the Hong Kong Global Geopark of China, Hong Kong Wetland Park, Endangered Species Resource Centre, Fisheries Education Centre, Tai Lung Experimental Station, Tai Lung Veterinary Laboratory, 24 Country Parks, 22 Special Areas, 9 Country Park Visitor Centres/ Education Centres, 4 Marine Parks, 1 Marine Reserve, 4 Animal Management Centres, 1 Plant Quarantine Station and 4 Wholesale Food Markets.

3. As at 31 March 2013, we had 1 777 civil servants working at our headquarters offices in Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices and over 50 outstations throughout the territory. The departmental expenditure for

2013-14 amounted to \$1,149.87 million.

Environmental Policy

4. Our environmental policy is –
 - i) to promote the local production of fresh food in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way; and
 - ii) to conserve and enhance our natural environment.

Environmental Objectives

5. In implementing this environmental policy, we will –
 - i) develop and promote environmentally responsible technology in agricultural and fisheries production;
 - ii) conserve and manage the natural environment through identification, designation and management of country parks, special areas, geoparks, marine parks and marine reserves;
 - iii) conserve local flora, fauna and their natural habitats through law enforcement and provision of conservation advice on development proposals and planning studies;
 - iv) conserve endangered species through controlling international trade;
 - v) fully comply with environmental legislation and adopt environmentally responsible practices in daily operations; and
 - vi) regularly review the use of resources and seek improvement to reduce any adverse environmental impacts, such as reducing energy consumption and air pollutant emission in our operations.

Environmental Performance

6. We have launched various programmes to foster environmentally responsible practices and sustainable use of natural resources in agriculture and fisheries. Highlights of 2013 are set out below –

- ◆ The Accredited Vegetable Farm Scheme continued to promote good horticultural practices and proper use of pesticides. In 2013, the total number of accredited farms in Hong Kong was 261, covering some 81 hectares of farming area.
- ◆ To promote local organic agriculture, the Organic Farming Support Service provided technical support to 225 local organic farms covering about 88 hectares of farming area in 2013. Organic farming helps to achieve a natural balance with the environment and produce crops in an environmentally friendly and sustainable manner.
- ◆ The Department continued to register local fishing vessels with a view to maintaining the fishing effort in Hong Kong waters at appropriate levels.
- ◆ The Department has been vigilantly enforcing against destructive fishing practices, such as fishing with explosives, toxic substances, electricity, dredging, suction and trawling devices. Also, the Department will flexibly deploy resources to step up patrols and stringently enforce the law. During the year, 1 293 patrols were conducted to combat destructive fishing activities. The departments concerned, including Marine Department, Hong Kong Police Force and Mainland counterparts, have enhanced communication and co-operation to combat illegal fishing activities in Hong Kong waters. Joint enforcement actions will be carried out where necessary.
- ◆ The Department continued to enhance fisheries habitats and resources through deployment of artificial reefs and restocking. The accumulated volume of artificial reefs established in Hong Kong is over 170 000m³. Fish fingerlings release programmes are being conducted at appropriate artificial reefs.
- ◆ The Fisheries Education Centre has been set up in the Aberdeen Fisheries Office to promote public awareness of the

need and importance of fisheries conservation. During the year, the Centre received 2 260 visitors.

- ◆ The Department continued to implement the voluntary Accredited Fish Farm Scheme to enhance the quality of cultured fish. In 2013, a total of 112 fish farms (32 freshwater fish farms and 80 marine fish farms) covering some 18.16% of total area of local fish farms have been registered under the Scheme.
- ◆ Environmentally friendly aquaculture practices have been promoted among fish farmers, such as proper disposal of fish carcasses, maintaining appropriate stocking density and the use of pellet feed to replace trash fish. Some 165 fish farms (109 mariculture farms and 56 pond fish farms) were visited in 2013 to promote good aquaculture practices.
- ◆ To promote organic fish farming, the Department has provided technical support to fish farmers in converting their fish farms into organic fish farms. 3 organic fish farms received the accreditation from the Hong Kong Organic Resources Centre.

7. We have introduced measures to conserve biodiversity and protect natural habitats. We also designate and manage country parks, special areas, geoparks, marine parks and marine reserves so as to conserve and enhance our natural environment. The following projects and activities were carried out in 2013 –

- ◆ Over 690 000 seedlings were planted in the country parks to enhance the landscape and rehabilitate the areas damaged by hill fires and soil erosion. Some 80% of the seedlings planted were native species providing more suitable habitats for local fauna and wildlife.
- ◆ As one of our on-going efforts to enhance diversity of flora and fauna in the country parks, we have introduced the Country Park Plantation Enrichment Project since 2009.

Under the Project, exotic plantation species, in particular the aged and weak ones, were removed for the growth of local plants. Native species, where appropriate, would be planted to speed up the enrichment process. In 2013, 17 plantation sites in different country parks covering some 94 000 m² were identified for the Project.

- ◆ A variety of conservation education and publicity programmes were organised for schools and the general public in 2013, including school visits, guided tours, lectures, exhibitions, workshops, competitions, tree planting and hiking events. These programmes have attracted some 290 000 participants.
- ◆ The Country Parks Volunteer Scheme, launched in March 2010, continued to foster public participation in nature conservation work in country parks and special areas. In 2013, more than 380 new volunteers were trained to provide services and support in conservation programmes. In 2013, Country Parks volunteers served over 48 000 hours.
- ◆ Various kinds of information and themed exhibitions were provided to marshal public support and action for nature conservation at Country Park Visitor Centres/ Education Centres. Some of these Centres also offer various kinds of education programmes for schools and the public to enhance their park experience. In 2013, these Centres recorded over 573 000 visitors.
- ◆ A total of 168 environmental impact assessment applications and studies on development projects were handled.
- ◆ Conservation and management projects were undertaken in the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site. After a Pilot Project conducted in 2012-13, two 2-year Management Agreement projects under the New Nature Conservation Policy were implemented from March 2013. The projects provide financial incentive to fishpond operators to enhance the ecological value of fishponds and promote public awareness of aquaculture in Deep Bay.

- ◆ Removal of invasive exotic mangrove species was continued in the Inner Deep Bay area. In 2013, over 15 000 *Sonneratia* trees were removed from the intertidal mudflat.

- ◆ A long-term territory-wide biodiversity survey was continued with a view to updating and maintaining a comprehensive ecological database for Hong Kong.

- ◆ Pamphlets were produced and distributed with a view to enhancing public awareness of conservation of wildlife in Hong Kong.

- ◆ The Department is preparing the first Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) for Hong Kong. A three-tier committee, consisting of a Steering Committee, three Working Groups and various focus groups, was set up in May 2013 to steer the formulation of BSAP and facilitate discussion on identified priorities. A dedicated website was set up (www.afcd.gov.hk/bsap) to provide relevant information.

- ◆ The internet-based information and experience sharing platform, the Hong Kong Live Eco-map (www.hkecomap.net), has been updated regularly for public browsing. Another internet-based database, the Hong Kong Biodiversity Online (www.hkbiodiversity.net), continued to provide the public with handy biological and ecological information of more than 1 300 animal species.

- ◆ The Department continued to promote public awareness on endangered species protection through the Endangered Species Resource Centre. In 2013, there were over 12 231 visitors to the Centre.

- ◆ A series of education and publicity activities were organized in 2013, including seminars, talks, exhibitions and a publicity campaign on licensing control of endangered species at

different border control points.

- ◆ Pamphlets and posters were distributed, and a roving exhibition was organized to arouse public awareness of the regulatory framework for genetically modified organisms.
- ◆ The enforcement momentum to curb illegal trade in endangered species has been maintained. In 2013, there were 163 prosecutions in respect of illegal imports, exports or possession of endangered species.
- ◆ The Hong Kong Wetland Park (HKWP) was opened to the public on 20 May 2006. It has attracted over 4.2 million visitors by the end of December 2013.
- ◆ An extensive school and public education programme on wetland conservation has been carried out. In 2013, over 8400 educational activities were organized at the HKWP for some 300 000 students and members of the public.
- ◆ Through the Wetland Park Volunteer Scheme, the Department continued to promote direct public involvement in wetland conservation. More than 1 100 volunteers were registered under the scheme in 2013 to provide guided interpretation service and support conservation work in wetlands. In 2013, volunteers served over 33 000 hours in the Park.
- ◆ HKWP has continued to implement energy saving measures. For example, exhibition lights in the exhibition galleries were replaced by phases with LED lights and cathode ray tube TVs were replaced by LED TVs. During broad daylight, exhibition lights at the Atrium will be switched off to fully utilize the natural sunlight. In addition, timer switches have been installed in most life support systems for live exhibit display tanks and back stage rearing tanks for generic live exhibit lighting, UV lighting and heating systems. Also, the operating hours of air conditioning systems in office and exhibition galleries has been shortened.

8. To comply with environmental legislation and to reduce environmental impacts on our operations, we have adopted the following environmentally responsible measures –

- ◆ We have been using manual sectional switches to turn off parts of the lighting and mechanical ventilation systems in areas exposed to sunlight and natural flow of air, where practicable.
- ◆ T8 luminaires lighting panels have been replaced with T5 model in our headquarters office at Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices.
- ◆ We have adjusted the condensing water temperature of the cooling system, reduced the air conditioning pumps / machine numbers and shortened the operating hours of air conditioning facilities without affecting our normal operation.
- ◆ We have established a standing working mechanism with the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) to explore possible energy saving projects in the Department. EMSD had conducted energy audits in Sai Kung Country Park Visitor Centre and Au Tau Fisheries Office in 2013.
- ◆ We have deactivated / removed non-essential lighting, replaced light bulbs with lower wattage/ energy efficient models and adjusted the lighting hours of specific zones to suit our operational needs. Outstations have ceased procuring tungsten filament lamps for general lighting purposes since 2011.
- ◆ Since mid-2010, we have installed humidity and temperature sensors and photosensors for more effective control of market ventilation fans system and lighting system respectively at Cheung Sha Wan Wholesale Food Market (CSWWFM) and Western Wholesale Food Market (WWFM). The replacement work of lighting installation for both markets, which started in mid-2010, was completed in August 2011. With these measures, electricity saving of 3% in 2010, 8% in

2011, 10% in 2012 and 10% in 2013 as compared to the calendar year of 2009 were achieved.

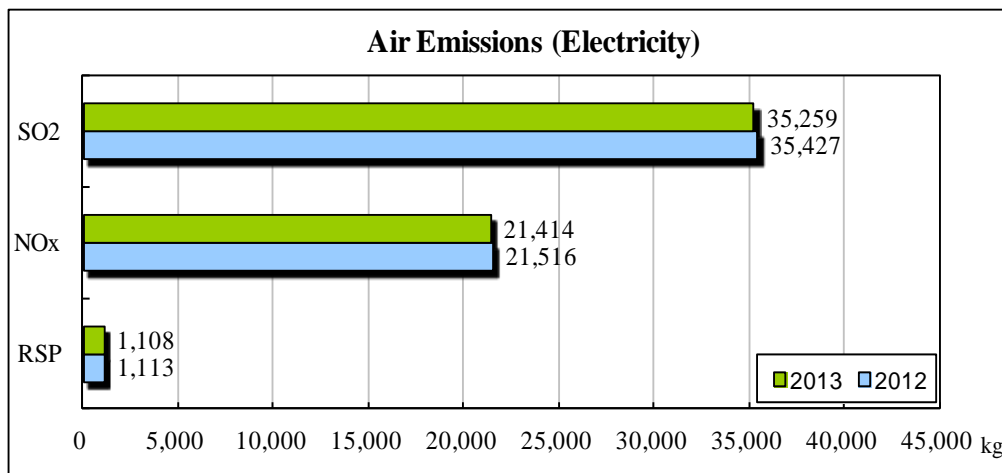
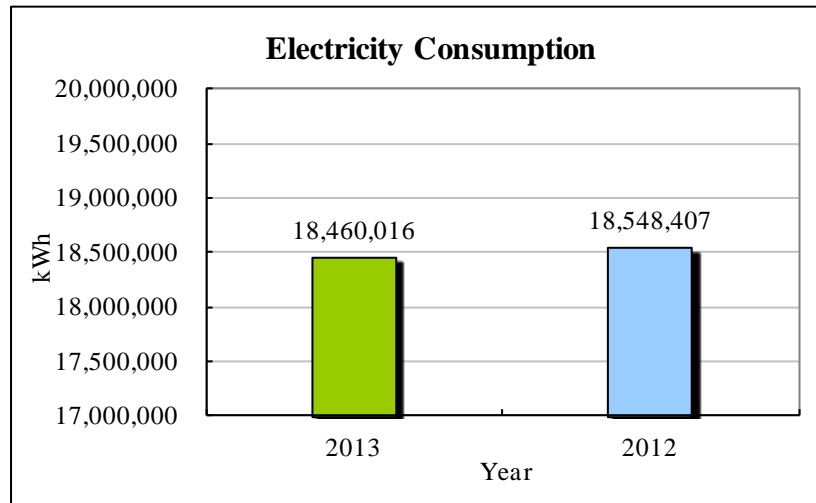
- ◆ Green and energy saving initiatives, such as Photovoltaic (PV) system over the covered walkway, solar hot water system, PV panel integrated lamp poles, sensors for lighting system, have been installed in the new NT South Animal Management Centre and Shatin Plant Quarantine Station.
- ◆ In premises such as Tai Lung Veterinary Laboratory, we had partitioned the centralized air conditioning areas and shortened the air conditioning hours in non-essential zones such as common areas. Air-conditioning in our headquarters office and central lighting were programmed to shut down at 6:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. respectively to sustain energy saving.
- ◆ We have continued to replace dilapidated electric appliances by new models with energy saving label.
- ◆ In 2013, our headquarters office, Visitor Centre of the HKWP, CSWWFM, WWFM, Tuen Mun Area 44 Joint-user Complex and Wholesale Fish Market and Kowloon Animal Management Centre obtained “Good” Class Certificate under the Indoor Air Quality Certification Scheme.
- ◆ We have encouraged our colleagues to adopt the green specifications promulgated by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) for procurement of items. Also, we have incorporated environmental protection guidelines into all cleansing contracts.

Electricity, Petroleum and Paper Consumption

9. The major sources of our air emissions are due to use of electricity and vehicles. These air emissions mainly include Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂), Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x) and Respirable Suspended Particulates (RSP).

i) Electricity ¹

Our electricity consumption in 2013 was 18 460 016 kilowatt hour (kWh), leading to emission of 35 259 kilograms (kg) SO₂, 21 414 kg NO_x and 1 108 kg RSP. Compared with electricity consumption of 18 548 407 kWh in 2012, there was a saving of 88 391 kWh and a reduction in emission of SO₂ by 169 kg; NO_x by 103 kg; and RSP by 5 kg.

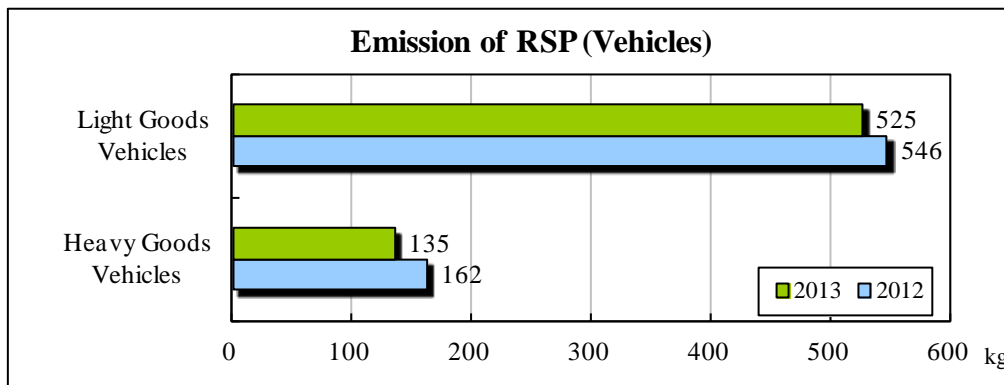
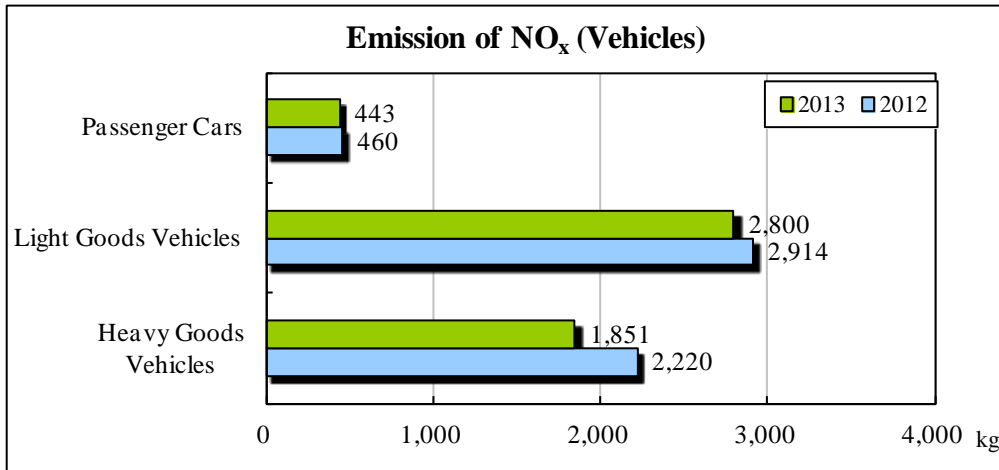


ii) Petroleum

The total kilometers (km) traveled by our departmental vehicles in 2013 was 2 462 159 km (as compared to 2 602 876 km in 2012). The average emission of NO_x of our passenger cars, light goods vehicles and heavy goods vehicles were 443 kg (as compared to 460 kg in 2012), 2 800 kg (as compared to 2 914 kg in 2012) and 1 851 kg (as

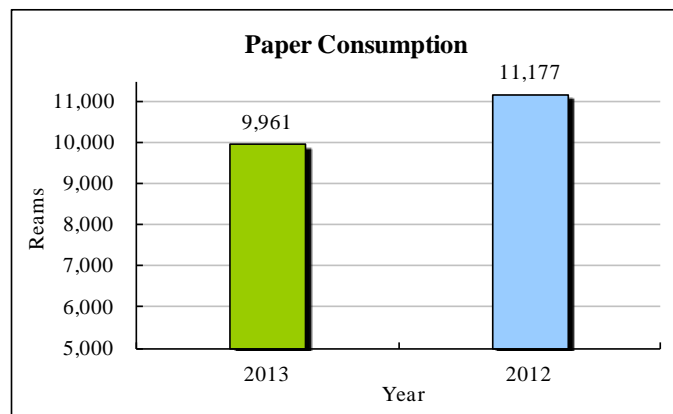
¹ Electricity consumption of our offices accommodated at joint-user buildings under the management of the Government Property Agency is not included.

compared to 2 220 kg in 2012) respectively. For RSP, 525 kg (as compared to 546 kg in 2012) and 135 kg (as compared to 162 kg in 2012) were emitted by our light goods vehicles and heavy goods vehicles respectively, while the emission of our passenger cars was negligible.



iii) Paper

In 2013, we consumed 9 961 reams of paper in our daily operations. Compared with the 11 177 reams in 2012, there was a reduction of 1,216 reams.



10. We will continue to make our best endeavours to ensure the most cost-effective use of resources in the years ahead.

Green Housekeeping System

11. We have set up a departmental green management system since 1994. A Green Manager has been appointed to coordinate the green housekeeping efforts in the Department. In addition, the Green Management Committee, chaired by a Directorate Officer, with representatives from our five operation Branches, will steer the development, implementation and monitoring of green office practices and promote environmental awareness among all staff.

12. To assist the Green Manager in the monitoring and implementation of agreed green policy and practices, a group of Assistant Green Managers, who are usually officers in charge of outstations, have also been appointed. They monitor the green housekeeping performance of premises under their purview and report on a monthly basis.

13. To further strengthen the system and explore areas for improvement to ensure the green targets are achieved, Environmental Audit Teams have been formed since 2000. Led by the Green Management Committee members, the Audit Teams are tasked to carry out green audits in our office premises. Committee members, as Leaders of the Audit Teams, are required to report their audit results at regular Committee meetings.

Nurturing a Green Culture

14. We are committed to nurturing a green culture in our workplace. Green tips and relevant information are uploaded to the departmental intranet for access by all staff. To increase awareness and participation of staff in green management issues, colleagues are also encouraged to attend training and workshops on green management and energy conservation. Staff participation in the annual Staff Suggestion Scheme was encouraging in 2013. There were nine useful entries on green saving initiatives.

15. The 3-R principle of “Reduce, Reuse and Recycle” is practised in our offices to make effective use of resources and reduce wastage and pollution as

far as possible. Examples are –

- i) Economizing the use of paper
 - ◆ Use both sides of paper
 - ◆ Use recycled paper
 - ◆ Cut down on photocopying
 - ◆ Default double-sided printing for all network printers at headquarters office
 - ◆ Discard use of fax leader pages
 - ◆ Use electronic mail and soft copies for exchange of documents
 - ◆ Reduce the number of copies for distribution/circulation, if hard copy is absolutely needed
 - ◆ Reduce the use of envelopes and re-use envelopes

- ii) Energy conservation
 - ◆ Check vehicles regularly to ensure that they are in good conditions to enhance fuel efficiency
 - ◆ Control fuel consumption and reduce pollutants emission by encouraging staff to share pool car for duty visits and site visits
 - ◆ Strict compliance with the requirement of switching off idling motor vehicle engines
 - ◆ Proactive participation in the Government's electric vehicle trial tests
 - ◆ Encourage adoption of more electric cars in the coming years
 - ◆ Use public transport whenever possible, especially when the Air Quality Health Index² is high
 - ◆ Switch off electrical appliances when not in use
 - ◆ Control individual light zones by using sectional light switches
 - ◆ Lower the illumination level of the offices where appropriate
 - ◆ Shorten central lighting hours
 - ◆ Shade sun-exposed windows and keep exterior

² EPD launches the Air Quality Health Index to replace the Air Pollution Index from 30 December 2013.

- doors/windows closed as much as possible
 - ◆ Maintain room temperature of all air-conditioned office premises at 25.5°C during summer months
 - ◆ Use manual sectional switches to turn off parts of the lighting and mechanical ventilation systems in those areas of the wholesale food markets exposed to sunlight and natural flow of air as appropriate
 - ◆ Replace dilapidated electric appliances by new electric appliances with energy saving labels
- iii) Minimizing waste and recycling
- ◆ Use refillable ball pens
 - ◆ Separate collection of used and waste paper
 - ◆ Encourage staff to use their own cups instead of paper cups
 - ◆ Minimize use of products which are not environmentally friendly such as correction fluid
 - ◆ Re-use loose minute jackets
 - ◆ Proactively inform other bureaux/departments the minimum number of hard copies of reports, newsletters, circulars, publications, etc. required and request soft copies whenever feasible
 - ◆ Introduce recycle bins in offices to encourage separation of wastes (paper, plastic bottles, aluminum cans, CDs, stationary and rechargeable batteries) for recycling since 2002
 - ◆ Explore the possibility on wider adoption of biodegradable plastic bags in AFCD venues. Reduce using plastics or plastic bags and similar materials that are not environmental friendly in packaging souvenirs
 - ◆ Circulate guidelines on green practices and waste avoidance to all staff to raise staff awareness

Way Forward

16. We are committed to enhance our green performance. We will continue to explore green saving initiatives for our offices and to encourage our staff to attend experience sharing sessions to learn more about the latest

trend and technological advances in efficient use of resources and in reduction of air-emission.

17. The four wholesale markets have accounted for some 50% of our total electricity consumption during the year. Given the significant reduction in electricity consumption in the markets after adopting power-saving measures in the past few years, we will continue to explore and adopt further energy saving measures for the markets. We will regularly review and take on board energy saving measures with due regard to the ever changing environment and new development in technology so as to further eliminate wastage and enhance more efficient use of resources. Continuous efforts will be made to secure the support of our staff and market traders in taking part in the saving drive. We would include the CSWWFM into the “Three-year Energy-cum-Carbon Audit Programme for Government Buildings” conducted by EPD in 2014.

18. To enhance colleagues’ awareness of resources efficiency, we will regularly remind staff to observe the guidelines on green measures. We will continue to implement the annual Staff Suggestion Scheme to commend staff’s contribution and achievement in resources saving, waste reduction, as well as setting good examples to foster good habits in the workplace.

Comments and Suggestions

19. We welcome your comments and suggestions, which help us to further improve our green performance. You may send us your views through any of the following channels –

Post : 5/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices,
303 Cheung Sha Wan Road,
Kowloon.
Fax : 2311 3731
Telephone : 1823
Email : mailbox@afcd.gov.hk

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