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Session No. : 7
File name : CSO-e1.doc**

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**Replies to initial written questions raised by Finance Committee Members in
examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07**

**Controlling Officer : Director of Administration/Director of Legal Aid
Session No. : 7**

Reply Serial No.	Question Serial No.	Name of Member	Head	Programme
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Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO001

Question Serial No.

0276

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

What new policy or measures does the Administration have in cutting red tapes and streamlining procedures for SMEs? What is the amount of resources involved?

Asked by: Hon. LAM Kin-fung, Jeffrey

Reply:

The Government is committed to facilitating businesses by cutting red-tape, streamlining procedures and reducing compliance costs. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs), accounting for 98% of Hong Kong businesses, will benefit from the Government's business facilitation efforts.

In January 2006, the Government appointed the Business Facilitation Advisory Committee (BFAC), which comprised representatives from the business, academia, professional sectors and concerned government bureaux as well as LegCo Members, to take forward the business facilitation initiatives conducted under the former Economic and Employment Council.

In 2006-07, the five Task Forces under the BFAC, making up of representatives from relevant trades, will continue their sector-specific reviews of regulatory regimes covering the food business, retail, construction and real estate trades. The BFAC will also examine the feasibility of wider application of temporary licences, composite licences and certification by professionals as business facilitation measures to enhance the business environment.

The Economic Analysis and Business Facilitation Unit (EABFU) under the Financial Secretary's Office provides support to the BFAC and its Task Forces, coordinates Government's business facilitation efforts and follows up other business facilitation work for sectors not covered by the Task Forces.

There are eight full-time staff in the EABFU whose main duties are to support such business facilitation work. A provision of up to \$4.55 million is included in the 2006/07 draft Estimates for funding business facilitation consultancy studies/projects.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO002

Question Serial No.

0306

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO - Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

Regarding the pilot My STEP - Special Training and Enhancement Programme, would the Administration please inform the Committee of:

- (a) its details;
- (b) the provisions involved; and
- (c) the number of people to be benefited?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

For (a), My STEP is a new trial project which targets at unemployed youths who have been on the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme for a long time and remain unemployed and unmotivated by the present employment assistance programmes, including those from Social Welfare Department, Labour Department and Education and Manpower Bureau. The project will include tailor-made motivation programmes, post-programme support and active job placement of the participants.

For (b), around \$3 million has been earmarked for the pilot, including an evaluation on the effectiveness of the project. The actual expenditure would depend on the programme design and the number of participants.

For (c), the aim of the pilot is to ascertain the effectiveness of the proposed measure in tackling long-term unemployed youths. The focus is put on the programme design and how its outcome can guide future policy consideration. Detailed discussions are ongoing with a few NGOs experienced in youth unemployment and motivation work. The number of youths to be involved in the pilot would depend on relevant details such as the programme design and the NGOs' capacity.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO003

Question Serial No.

0307

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

The Employees Retraining Board is going to provide short-term travel support for Tin Shui Wai, Tung Chung and North District residents who are financially needy and have completed full-time courses with the Board. In this respect, will the Government inform this Committee:

- (a) the cost involved;
- (b) the number of beneficiaries;
- (c) the maximum amount of travel support for each person;
- (d) the duration of the scheme;
- (e) if a review will be conducted only after all the provisions are disbursed;
- (f) the department responsible for processing applications;
- (g) if additional administrative resources such as manpower and fund will be allotted to the Employees Retraining Board for the implementation of the scheme? If yes, what are the details of the additional manpower and fund?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

For (a), the Government has reserved about \$2.7 million to implement this trial scheme in 2006-07.

For (b), there are around 6,700 graduates residing in the three districts who have completed full-time courses offered by the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) in 2005. However, not all of the graduates would be needy nor travel to other districts to search for jobs. Our preliminary estimate is that this trial scheme would benefit no less than 1,500 retrainees. In the light of actual demand, the number of beneficiaries may be adjusted as and when required. There is no pre-set upper limit at the moment.

For (c), each eligible applicant will be entitled to a transport subsidy up to a maximum amount of \$1,500 in the form of either allowance or interest-free loan.

For (d), the trial scheme will be implemented for an initial period of one year starting from April 2006.

For (e), this trial scheme will be subject to an interim review after six-months' implementation, and an overall review will be conducted before the expiry of the one-year pilot.

For (f), the scheme will be administered by the ERB and delivered by training bodies which have been offering full-time placement-tied retraining courses in Yuen Long (including Tin Shui Wai), Islands (including Tung Chung) and North districts. In other words, the actual processing of applications will take place at the retraining centres of training bodies in these districts, and undertaken by designated placement officers and administrative staff with central guidelines issued by the Employees Retraining Board.

For (g), the estimated total administrative costs for implementing the trial scheme is about \$320,000 per annum, all of which will be allocated to concerned training bodies according to the number of applications they handle. The ERB Executive Office will absorb all the administrative work involved through re-deployment of resources and work re-prioritization without increase in manpower or funding.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
 INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO004

Question Serial No.

0413

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
 Secretariat: Offices of the
 Chief Secretary for
 Administration and the
 Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

Please provide information about the number of applications under the Public Policy Research funding scheme, the details of the approved projects and the amount of grants involved.

Asked by: Hon. YEUNG Sum

Reply:

For the first round of the Public Policy Research Funding Scheme, the Research Grant Council (RGC) received 73 applications. The RGC decided in December 2005 to fund the following 12 applications, costing a total of \$7.3 million:

Institution	Project Title	Fund Awarded (\$)	Duration (Months)
City U	Assessment on Suitability of Existing Air Quality Objectives (AQO) and Air Pollution Index (API) Used in Hong Kong	386,000	24
CUHK	Impacts of the Community Work Experience and Training Programme on Welfare Recipients	525,000	24
CUHK	Who Gets Ahead (or Stays Behind): Life Chances and Social Mobility in Hong Kong	916,000	34
CUHK	Cost-Effectiveness Analysis of an Acute Pain Service	804,000	36
CUHK	Siting Locally Unwanted Land Uses: In Your Backyard or in Mine?	472,000	24
HKU	Forfeiture of crime tainted property in Hong Kong	417,000	21
HKU	Integration of new immigrants in Hong Kong: a longitudinal investigation	696,825	33
HKU	Cost and clinical effectiveness of the Hong Kong scoliosis	710,000	24
HKU	Horizontal equity in health care utilization in Hong Kong	387,000	18
HKU	Innovative planning tools for urban renewal in Hong Kong	206,000	12
HKUST	Social inequality and mobility in Hong Kong: A benchmark study	981,000	30
HKUST	Hybrid vehicles and hydrogen economy as the interim and long-term solutions to Hong Kong's energy usage	771,000	18

For the second round, the RGC is now processing 66 applications and expects results to become available in mid-2006.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

CSO005

0683

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

Regarding the scheme of providing travel support to those unemployed who have completed full-time courses with the Employees Retraining Board and live in districts further afield, please give the details, expenditure and manpower of the scheme.

Asked by: Hon. YEUNG Sum

Reply:

The purpose of the scheme is to provide short-term travel support on a trial basis for residents of Yuen Long (including Tin Shui Wai), Islands (including Tung Chung) and North districts who are financially needy and have completed full-time or placement-tied courses with the Employees Retraining Board (ERB). The support will help them meet traveling expenses for attending job interviews and/or for commuting to work during their initial period of employment after placement. A total budget of \$2.7 million has been reserved to implement this trial scheme which will last for one year from April 2006.

Each eligible applicant will be entitled to a travel subsidy up to a maximum amount of \$1,500 in the form of either allowance or interest-free loan, which will be determined with reference to a set of criteria adopted in the Temporary Financial Aid Scheme under the Intensive Employment Assistance Projects of the Social Welfare Department. There are around 6,700 graduates residing in the 3 districts who have completed full-time courses offered by the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) in 2005. However, not all of the graduates would be needy nor travel to other districts to search for jobs. Our preliminary estimate is that this trial scheme would benefit no less than 1,500 retrainees. In the light of actual demand, the number of beneficiaries may be adjusted as and when required. There is no pre-set upper limit on the number at the moment.

The scheme will be administered by the ERB and delivered by twelve training centres which have been offering full-time or placement-tied retraining courses in the three districts concerned. The ERB will issue central guidelines to the training bodies on the implementation of the scheme, allocate funds to the participating training bodies, monitor progress and conduct evaluation and reviews on the implementation arrangements of the Scheme. The training bodies will engage designated placement officers and administrative staff for processing the applications. It is estimated that the administrative cost for implementing the trial scheme will be around \$320,000. The ERB Executive Office will absorb all the administrative work involved through re-deployment of resources and work re-prioritization.

The Scheme will be subject to an interim review after implementation for six months, and then an overall review before the end of the trial period.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title Acting Director of Administration

Date 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO006

Question Serial No.

0996

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (1) Efficiency Unit

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

What are the Efficiency Unit's plans in 2006-07 to help various government departments to better utilise public resources? Which departments in particular will be helped to undertake outsourcing or organisational restructuring?

Asked by: Hon. YEUNG Sum

Reply:

The Efficiency Unit has helped government bureaux and departments review their strategic objectives and operations with a view to better utilizing public resources. Depending on the issues to address, the Efficiency Unit may make recommendations in association with process re-engineering, outsourcing, or even amalgamation of functions. The Efficiency Unit will continue to carry out these reviews in 2006-07.

The EU is currently working with the following bureau/department in conducting outsourcing study/project:

Study Title	Client Department
1. Implementation of outsourcing the printing and enveloping demands for rates and Government rent	Rating and Valuation Department
2. Outsourcing strategy and tendering documentation for operation and management of the Centre for Youth Development	Home Affairs Bureau

The Efficiency Unit is also driving a number of central initiatives e.g. outsourcing review, setting up of a licensing support centre, and development of a youth portal providing one-stop public services. These initiatives will improve the Administration's overall capabilities.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO007

Question Serial No.

0663

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (1) Efficiency Unit

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question :

Is there any provision for consultancy studies in 2006-07? If yes, please list by studies the following details: (a) the content; (b) the name of consultant; (c) consultancy fee; (d) the progress; (e) whether the findings will be published; and (f) the follow-up action to be taken on the findings.

Asked by: Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply:

In 2006-07, the Efficiency Unit would have \$10.8 million for conducting consultancy studies. We will soon engage external consultants in the following Studies:

Content	Name of consultant	Consultancy fee	Progress on consultancy studies	Whether the findings will be published	Follow-up actions to be taken on the findings
Feasibility Study of Adopting a Customer Management Assessment Tool for HKSAR Government	Consultant to be selected	Consultant to be selected	Consultant to be selected	Yes, if the tool could be deployed service-wide	This is a pilot study. EU will evaluate the suitability of applying and extending the use of the tool to government departments based on the results of the study.
Setting up of a youth portal for public services	Consultant to be selected	Consultant to be selected	Consultant to be selected	Yes	It is currently planned to launch a youth portal in 2007.

There will be other consultancy studies in 2006-07, depending upon the nature of the studies requested by Bureaux and Departments and central initiatives in support of policies.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO008

Question Serial No.

0664

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (2) Government Records Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

Please provide details of the specific work, staffing and provision for the public education and publicity programme on Hong Kong's documentary heritage.

Asked by: Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply:

Government Records Service (GRS) encourages understanding, use and protection of Hong Kong's documentary heritage through its public programmes and reference services. In 2006, GRS aims to organize at least one exhibition and 16 seminars and visits to enhance public appreciation and use of archival heritage. It will continue to explore opportunities in conducting outreach activities in association with local archival and educational institutions. One Senior Assistant Archivist and one Assistant Archivist, supported by 6 clerical and workman staff are responsible for these services. Provision for the team in 2006-07 is \$2,414,000.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

CSO009

1116

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

Has any financial provision been earmarked for the Central Policy Unit to commission consultancy studies in 2006-07? If yes, please provide detailed information in respect of each study on the following: (a) subject; (b) name of consultant; (c) consultancy fee; (d) progress; (e) whether the results will be made public; and (f) the Administration's follow-up action on the results.

Asked by: Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply:

For 2006-07, a sum of \$6 million has been earmarked for the Central Policy Unit (CPU) to undertake consultancies. Projects which have been committed so far are as follows:

No.	(a) Title/ Subject	(b) Consultant	(c) Consultancy Fee (\$ million)	(d) Progress
1.	Socio-economic-political trends in the Mainland	Hong Kong Policy Research Institute Limited	0.906	on-going
2.	Sustainability of the Three Pillars of Retirement Protection in Hong Kong	Sau Po Centre on Ageing, University of Hong Kong	0.611	on-going
3.	Study on Social Enterprise and Anti-Poverty: The Case of Work-Integrated Services	PolyU Technology & Consultancy Co. Ltd.	0.369	on-going
4.	A study on Social Enterprises in Comparative Perspective	Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong	0.356	on-going

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO010

Question Serial No.

2355

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

The Administration has earmarked \$20 million in 2006/07 to launch a number of new employment assistance initiatives, including (a) My STEP – Special Training and Enhancement Programme; (b) strengthening district employment assistance; (c) short-term transport support; and (d) social entrepreneurship training. Please state the details and expected implementation date of the four initiatives as well as the expenditure involved and expected number of beneficiaries.

Asked by: Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply:

(a) My STEP

\$3 million has been earmarked to support the new trial project “My STEP” which targets at unemployed youths who have been on the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme for a long time and remain unemployed and unmotivated by the present employment assistance programmes. The trial project will include tailor-made motivation programmes, post-programme support and active job placement of the participants. Detailed discussions are ongoing with Non-government Organisations (NGOs) experienced in youth unemployment and motivation work. Staffing and actual expenditure would depend on the programme design and the number of participants. The project will be launched in later half of 2006.

(b) Strengthening district employment assistance

The trial projects target at the needs of the long-term unemployed and ‘hard-to-assist’ cases. Special features include job attachment to provide an opportunity for participants to gain work experience and relevant job skills, work-focused and sector-specific training as well as a one-off incentive to encourage participants to find and remain in a full-time job (defined as a job involving not less than 120 work hours per month) with a monthly wage of not less than \$1,435. The participant will be required to refund the incentive if he leaves the job without good reasons within the first four months. An amount of \$4.5 million has been earmarked for two years to run three pilots in districts having the highest number/proportion of long-term able-bodied unemployed CSSA recipients. NGOs would be commissioned to run these trial projects. The projects will be launched in later half of 2006.

(c) Short-term travel support

The purpose of the scheme is to provide short-term travel support on a trial basis for residents of Yuen Long (including Tin Shui Wai), Islands (including Tung Chung) and North districts who are financially needy and have completed full-time or placement-tied courses with the Employees Retraining Board (ERB). The support will help them meet traveling expenses for attending job interviews and/or for commuting to work during their initial period of employment after placement. There are around 6,700 graduates residing in the 3 districts who have completed full-time ERB courses in 2005. However, not all of the graduates would be needy nor travel to other districts to search for jobs. Our preliminary estimate is that this trial scheme would benefit no less than 1,500 retrainees. The number of beneficiaries may be adjusted in the light of actual demand. There is no pre-set upper limit at the moment. A total budget of \$2.7 million has been reserved to implement this trial scheme which will last for one year from April 2006. The scheme will be administered by the ERB and delivered by training bodies which have been offering full-time or placement-tied retraining courses in the three areas concerned. The Scheme will be subject to an interim review after implementation for six months, and then an overall review before the end of the trial period.

(d) Social entrepreneurship training

\$9.8 million has been earmarked to support initiatives to encourage the development of social enterprises in Hong Kong, including nurturing social entrepreneurs and strengthening their training through:

- (i) encouraging better management of resources in organizations which deliver social goals through business training opportunities, partnership with private sector organizations and professionals, as well as enhanced exposure to good social enterprise practices;
- (ii) promoting innovative and entrepreneurial ways to raise revenue to support activities delivering social goals; and
- (iii) encouraging more people to start-up/operate social enterprises which combine both business and social objectives in their operation.

We are liaising with universities/skills training institutes/private sector and non-governmental organisations to explore the feasibility of a number of initiatives, including consolidating resources on social entrepreneurship and building a platform to promote inter-disciplinary collaboration and information dissemination of innovative and successful business models of social enterprises in Hong Kong and overseas; training/business advisory service for mid-careers; and launching a Hong Kong-wide Social Enterprise Challenge to encourage the universities to collaborate with organizations delivering social goals and compete on viable and sustainable business models to help the disadvantaged.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO011

Question Serial No.

1017

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

Apart from providing short-term travel support, does the Administration have any long-term plans, such as developing economy and promoting employment at the district level, to help unemployed people in districts further afield who are not receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance to take up employment? Please provide the details.

Asked by: Hon. LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, Sohpie

Reply:

It has been the Administration's policy to assist the unemployed back to employment through multi-prong policies and measures, including:

- (a) promoting employment opportunities through economic development;
- (b) proactive employment policies, including training and retraining and employment assistance;
- (c) promoting community economy development including social enterprises; and
- (d) providing suitable incentives to encourage work.

Since the establishment of the Commission on Poverty in early 2005, we have adopted a district-based approach and given more emphasis on the specific needs of districts in our policies and programmes. The pilot travel support scheme to be administered by the Employees Retraining Board is one of the initiatives of the Administration in relation to (d) to encourage residents living in relatively remote districts to meet traveling expenses for attending job interviews and/or for commuting to work during their initial period of employment.

In relation to (b), the Administration has strengthened employment assistance in remote areas (e.g. organizing district-based job fairs to capture more local employment opportunities and facilitate job seekers to attend job interviews without the need to travel to urban areas). The Labour Department will also set up new job centres in Yuen Long and North District respectively. Both centres are expected to come into operation in the latter half of the year. The Vocational Training Council has also installed new facilities in the Institute of Vocational Education (Tuen Mun) campus to provide programmes for non-engaged youths in Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai areas.

In relation to (c), the Administration has earmarked an additional \$150 million over the next five years to strengthen district-based poverty alleviation work, including support for social enterprise development. As a start, \$30 million has been allocated to the Home Affairs Department to reinforce the district-based approach, particularly with an employment focus and to encourage sustainable district initiatives. Through the injection of funding, we hope to encourage multi-sector collaboration at the district level to develop initiatives which can cater for the needs of the respective districts.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
 INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO012

Question Serial No.

1055

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
 Secretariat: Offices of the
 Chief Secretary for
 Administration and the
 Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO - Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

In Programme (3), provision for 2006-07 is \$57.1 million (20.3%) higher than the revised for 2005-06. One of the reasons for such increase as stated by the Administration is the net creation of 16 posts. Please inform this Committee the titles, justifications, duties and salaries of these 16 posts ?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Wai-yip, Albert

Reply:

The 16 posts to be created under Programme (3) include:

Post	Number of posts	Notional annual mid-point salary (\$)	Reasons for creation and functions of posts
Senior Administrative Officer	1	929,220	To strengthen the support for the expanded Commission on Strategic Development.
Senior Official Languages Officer	1	681,180	
Executive Officer I	1	481,020	
Personal Secretary I	1	275,880	
Clerical Officer	1	275,880	
Assistant Clerical Officer	1	162,180	
Administrative Officer Staff Grade C	1	1,360,800	To provide support for the project team for Tamar Development. The posts will be created as necessary, on a time-limited basis to tie in with the level of actual workload of the project team in 2006-07.
Senior Administrative Officer	1	929,220	
Senior Executive Officer	1	681,180	
Executive Officer I	2	481,020	
Personal Secretary II	1	171,960	

Post	Number of posts	Notional annual mid-point salary (\$)	Reasons for creation and functions of posts
Senior Personal Assistant	1	622,440	To provide support for the Former Chief Executives' Office
Assistant Clerical Officer	1	162,180	
Office Assistant	1	110,940	
Chauffeur	1	152,280	

Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title Acting Director of Administration

Date 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO013

Question Serial No.

1128

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

Regarding the short-term travel support for residents of Tin Shui Wai, Tung Chung and North District who have completed courses with the Employees Retraining Board, will the Administration consider extending the support to all long-term unemployed persons in those three areas and allow them to apply on a reimbursement basis?

Asked by: Hon. CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, Selina

Reply:

The purpose of the scheme is to provide short-term travel support on a trial basis for residents of Yuen Long (including Tin Shui Wai), Islands (including Tung Chung) and North districts who are financially needy and have completed full-time or placement-tied courses with the Employees Retraining Board (ERB). The support will help them meet travelling expenses for attending job interviews and/or for commuting to work during their initial period of employment after placement.

In considering provision of travel support, albeit short-term support, we need to ensure that it can reach those who are genuinely financially needy to avoid abuse. The new pilot scheme of the ERB would build on the experience of Social Welfare Department's Temporary Financial Aid (TFA) under the Intensive Employment Assistance Projects (IEAPs). The TFA assists needy unemployed CSSA recipients as well as "near-CSSA" unemployed persons to meet employment related expenses, including job search. There is a set of consistent criteria for the operating NGOs to process applications and ensure that only the needy applicants would receive the support. Some participants in IEAP also join ERB courses. Hence not all unemployed persons and not all persons taking ERB courses would be eligible for the short-term travel support.

The ERB pilot scheme will be subject to an interim review after implementation for six months, and an overall review before the end of the trial period. The Administration will take into account the experience of the pilot, and consider ways to assist the needy unemployed in job search and smoothen their transition to work.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO014

Question Serial No.

1131

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

With regard to cutting red tape and streamlining procedures, the Government has adopted the 38 recommendations made by the Subgroup on Business Facilitation. Please inform the Council of:

- (a) the contents of those 38 recommendations and how they will help the small and medium enterprises (SMEs);
- (b) the new measures that will be implemented in 2006-07 to improve the business environment; and
- (c) the mechanism used by the Government to assess the needs of the SMEs and to decide on the appropriate measures according to their needs.

Asked by: Hon. CHOW LIANG Shuk-yee, Selina

Reply:

For (a), the Economic and Employment Council (EEC) and its Sub-group on Business Facilitation have, over the past two years, made a number of recommendations aimed at cutting red tape and streamlining procedures. The Government has adopted 38 of these recommendations, mainly on licences for ready-to-eat food, cinema licence, applications related to setting up retail business in housing estates of the Housing Authority and land lease conditions. These accepted recommendations and their potential benefits to the business sector, including SMEs, are as follows:

- (i) 15 recommendations are related to cinema licensing. These recommendations aim to develop a more transparent, business-friendly and efficient licensing regime for cinemas. The introduction of provisional licensing will reduce the lead time for getting a new cinema licence by half, enabling the trade to commence business earlier and save costs. The updating of licensing requirements to align with the development of the industry will reduce the regulatory impact and compliance costs to the trade. The streamlining of approval process, introduction of performance pledges for processing layout revisions and alteration works, development of a central database to promote better understanding of the licensing requirements, etc., will speed up the approval process and improve the business-friendliness of government services.

- (ii) Six recommendations are related to applications for setting up of retail business in housing estates of the Housing Authority. The recommendations, such as shortening the processing time of application by the landlord for fitting-out works to seven working days for simple cases and to a maximum of 21 working days for complicated cases and expediting the processing of licence referrals among relevant departments by streamlining the document flow, will enable prospective tenants to commence business earlier in housing estates and improve the business-friendliness of government services.
- (iii) Eight recommendations are related to the review on the licensing processes and procedures for food retail business. The introduction of a composite licence to cover 12 different retail food licences can simplify and speed up the business licensing process and reduce the compliance costs to the trades concerned. The simplification/relaxation of licensing requirements such as counter height and provision of drip-board and accepting private certification for the issue of full licences not involving fire services certification will speed up the approval process, reduce compliance costs and enable the trade to commence business earlier. By strengthening the public consultation mechanism, the Government can better gauge the views of the trades before introducing new regulatory requirements.
- (iv) Three recommendations are related to land matters. To simplify lease conditions, the Lands Department has already deleted 11 special conditions/sub-conditions, simplified 4 items and combined 10 items into 4 items of the residential land lease. A revised set of special residential lease conditions would be effective in the first quarter of 2006. The Lands Department has agreed to set up an enquiry system on land matters for exceptional cases whereby a land owner (*e.g. non profit making institutions*) may enquire about the basis for calculating the “before-value” of a proposed lease modification. The Lands Department has also agreed to take parallel action in processing the lease modification and ordinance related issues. Simplification of lease conditions would benefit developers by shortening the time to complete their projects.
- (v) Three recommendations are related to the management of property management contracts and property services agents contracts by Housing Department (HD). To address the operational difficulties faced by the Hong Kong Association of Property Management Companies Limited, HD has agreed to make the property management contract audit procedures more business-friendly by reducing the number of monthly audit visits from 4 to 6 separate sessions to a single joint audit. Prompt release of performance bonds will be made to property management contractors to reduce bank charges borne by property management companies. Regular meetings between HD and the Association will be established for exchange of issues and ideas of mutual interest.
- (vi) One recommendation is related to the proposed Volatile Organic Compounds legislation. The Retail Task Force of the EEC has facilitated discussion between the trade and the Government over the issue. After extensive discussion with the trade, the Government has agreed to reduce the number of categories of consumer goods to be regulated from 40 to 6. This will greatly reduce the regulatory impact and compliance costs to the trades concerned.
- (vii) One recommendation is related to the product responsibility scheme for waste dry rechargeable batteries. The Government has conducted a regulatory impact assessment and agreed to adopt a voluntary scheme to be operated by the industry. This will reduce the regulatory impact and compliance costs to the industry.
- (viii) One recommendation is related to food labelling. The Government has conducted a regulatory impact assessment on nutrition information on food labelling before introducing a nutrition labelling scheme. This will enable the Government to fully assess the impact of various options to the trade and the community with a view to reducing the regulatory impact and compliance costs.

For (b), in January 2006, the Government appointed the Business Facilitation Advisory Committee (BFAC) to take forward the business facilitation work conducted under the former EEC. In 2006-07, the five Task Forces under the BFAC will continue their sector-specific reviews of regulatory regimes covering the food business,

retail, construction and real estate trades. The BFAC will also examine the feasibility of wider application of temporary licences, composite licences and certification by professionals as business facilitation measures to enhance the business environment. The Economic Analysis and Business Facilitation Unit under the Financial Secretary's Office provides support to the BFAC and its Task Forces, coordinates Government's business facilitation efforts and follows up other business facilitation work for sectors not covered by the Task Forces.

For (c), to enable the Government to better understand the needs of the business sector, representatives from relevant industries and trades are invited to join the BFAC and Task Forces to advise the Government on business facilitation measures. The Government also welcomes views and comments on ways to improve the business environment from various quarters.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO015

Question Serial No.

1150

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

Regarding the provision of support to the Commission on Poverty, what are the revised estimate for 2005-06 and the estimated expenditure for 2006-07? What are the major support services provided by the Administration Wing to the Commission on Poverty?

Asked by: Hon. LEUNG Kwok-hung

Reply:

Support to the Commission on Poverty is carried out by the Secretariat to the Commission on Poverty (Secretariat) under the Financial Secretary's Office. The Secretariat provides support to the Commission in its work, including to study and identify the needs of the poor; to make policy recommendations to alleviate poverty and promote self-reliance; and to encourage community engagement and foster public private partnership in alleviating poverty.

The 2005-06 revised estimate for the Secretariat is \$13.6 million, including \$7.5 million non-recurrent expenditure for various poverty prevention and alleviation initiatives. The 2006-07 estimate for the Secretariat is \$47.5 million, including \$40.9 million non-recurrent expenditure for various poverty prevention and alleviation initiatives. The estimates cover the salaries and allowances of the Secretariat and the other operating expenses. The non-recurrent items include items 494, 499, 822, 823, 824 and 826 under Subhead 700 General non-recurrent.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO016

Question Serial No.

1508

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title): 700 General
Secretariat: Offices of the non-recurrent
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

Regarding Items 822 and 823: “Initiatives to strengthen support to children and youth” and “Initiatives to enhance incentive to work”, will the Administration provide information about the actual measures, work programmes, financial provisions and staffing arrangements?

Asked by: Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply:

Item 822 - Initiatives to strengthen support to children and youth

\$8.6 million has been earmarked for initiatives of the Commission on Poverty (CoP) to strengthen support to children and youth. Out of the \$8.6 million, \$3 million has been earmarked to support the new trial project “My STEP” as well as related research/assessment. The project targets at unemployed youths who have been on the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme for a long time and remain unemployed and unmotivated by the present employment assistance programmes. Detailed discussions are ongoing with NGOs experienced in youth unemployment and motivation work. Staffing and actual expenditure would depend on the programme design and the number of participants. The remaining amount (\$5.6 million) is earmarked to support initiatives being considered by the CoP Task Force on Children and Youth, including promoting and strengthening parenting for the economically disadvantaged and hard-to-reach parents taking into account the outcome of a proposed study on the subject.

Item 823 - Initiatives to enhance incentives to work

\$9.45 million has been earmarked for initiatives of the CoP to enhance incentives to work. Two pilot projects have so far been proposed and will be launched in 2006:

(i) District Employment Assistance Trial Projects - the trial projects target at the needs of the long-term unemployed and ‘hard-to-assist’ cases. Special features include job attachment to provide an opportunity for participants to gain work experience and relevant job skills, work-focused and sector-specific training as well as an one-off incentive to encourage participants to find and remain in a full-time job (defined as a job involving not less than 120 work hours per month) with a monthly wage of not less than \$1,435. The participant will be required to refund the incentive if he leaves the job without good reasons within the first four months. An amount of \$4.5 million has been earmarked for two years to run three pilots in districts having the highest number/proportion of long-term able-bodied unemployed CSSA recipients.

(ii) Travel Support Scheme - The purpose of the scheme is to provide short-term travel support on a trial basis for residents of Yuen Long (including Tin Shui Wai), Islands (including Tung Chung) and North districts who are financially needy and have completed full-time or placement-tied courses with the Employees Retraining Board (ERB). The support will help them meet traveling expenses for attending job interviews and/or for commuting to work during their initial period of employment after placement. A total budget of \$2.7 million has been reserved to implement this trial scheme which will last for one year from April 2006. The scheme will be administered by the ERB and delivered by 12 training centres which have been offering full-time or placement-tied retraining courses in the three areas concerned. The Scheme will be subject to an interim review after implementation for six months, and then an overall review before the end of the trial period.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO017

Question Serial No.

1509

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO - Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

Regarding item 826 “Researches on poverty-alleviation related issues”, will the Administration inform this Committee the direction of the researches, the proposed work plans as well as the manpower and funding arrangements?

Asked by: Hon. Frederick Fung

Reply:

\$2.1 million have been earmarked for conducting researches as tasked by the Commission on Poverty (CoP) and its task forces in order to facilitate the CoP to make recommendations on policy initiatives. The following are the researches which have been discussed by the CoP and are being commissioned:

- (a) The CoP Task Force on Children and Youth would consider a proposed study at its meeting on 9 March 2006 on parent education for the economically disadvantaged and hard-to-reach families, including recommendations on the possible ways to empower and support the parents in the performance of their parenting role, as well as the contents, modes of delivery, structure of parent education for the economically disadvantaged and hard-to-reach parents.
- (b) As set out in its terms of reference, the CoP Task Force on District-based Approach will commission studies on the district-based approach, including the facilitative and support structure needed to address common as well as district-unique issues of concern. The Task Force will be briefed on progress at its meeting on 15 March 2006.

We expect that preliminary findings from the above researches would be available in the third quarter of 2006 to facilitate CoP's further consideration of relevant policy recommendations. The exact amount of funding for each individual study would be subject to the finalised research design which will have an important bearing on the manpower that may need to be incurred by the research team. Additional study may be commissioned subject to the advice of CoP and availability of funds.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO018

Question Serial No.

1513

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

Regarding item 664 “Consultancy study on a comprehensive review and enhancement of the GDP forecasting framework”, will the Administration inform this Committee the topics of the research and the findings, the respective responsible organizations and financial provision?

Asked by: Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply:

The aim of item 664 is to review and enhance the macro-econometric model used by the Economic Analysis and Business Facilitation Unit (EABFU) in producing the government’s short- and medium-term economic forecasts. The consultancy study was undertaken by a renowned research institution in the UK. An in-house researcher was also appointed to assist in the model review work and to incorporate the consultancy study results into the model maintained by EABFU. With the expert advice of the Consultant, we have been able to enhance the model structure and improve our forecasting precision. The enhanced model now contains over 70 structural equations, substantially expanded from the 2001 version prior to the consultancy study.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO019

Question Serial No.

1525

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question :

Please specify how the Administration Wing will “act as the contact point in the Administration for the Office of The Ombudsman”. Moreover, under the Ombudsman Ordinance, the Ombudsman will not investigate into complaints against the Hong Kong Police Force, Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force and Independent Commission Against Corruption. Will the Administration consider extending the Ombudsman’s purview to cover complaints against the above government departments?

Asked by: Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

The Administration Wing (“Adm Wing”) acts as the house-keeping office for the Office of The Ombudsman including taking forward amendments to The Ombudsman Ordinance (TOO) proposed by the Ombudsman into LegCo and acts as the operating expenditure envelope holder for resources allocated to the Office. It should however be noted that The Office of The Ombudsman is a statutory body independent of Government and the Ombudsman shall not be regarded as an agent or servant of the Government.

At present, the Ombudsman is not empowered under TOO to handle maladministration complaints against the Hong Kong Police Force, Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force and the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Up to now, the Administration has not received from The Ombudsman any proposal for review or suggestions concerning the functions and powers of the Office. We also do not have any plan in hand to review the functions and powers of the Office.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 9 March 2006

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

CSO020

2191

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question :

One of the main responsibilities of the Administration Wing is to “act as the contact point in the Administration for the Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC)”. Please provide the details of the above work. In addition, please provide the expenditure involved and the staffing arrangement of the ICAC Complaints Committee. Since investigations of complaints are handled by a special group in the Operations Department of the ICAC, the fairness and credibility of investigations have been subject to external queries. In this connection, will the Government consider increasing the power of the ICAC Complaints Committee so that it can initiate direct investigation into the complaints concerned. If so, what are the details of the relevant work. If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. Fung Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply:

The Administration Wing (“Adm Wing”) acts as the house-keeping office for the ICAC including taking forward any anti-corruption legislation proposed by the ICAC into LegCo and as the operating expenditure envelope holder for resources allocated to the ICAC. It should however be noted that under the Independent Commission Against Corruption Ordinance, the Commissioner, ICAC is not subject to the direction or control of any person other than the Chief Executive and the ICAC has the duty to conduct its investigations independently.

The ICAC Complaints Committee (ICC) is an independent body appointed by the Chief Executive to monitor the proper handling by the ICAC of non-criminal complaints against the ICAC and their officers. It holds regular meetings to examine reports submitted by Commissioner, ICAC on every complaint received and advises if allegations of the complaints are substantiated. The Adm Wing provides secretarial support for the ICC amongst a whole range of other duties. Hence there is no breakdown of the expenditure and staff costs involved.

Complaints against ICAC staff are handled by the ICAC’s Internal Investigation and Monitoring Group (L Group). It is under direct command of the Director of Investigation/Private Sector, who reports the results of internal investigations relating to staff discipline directly to the Commissioner, ICAC. The purpose is to ensure that complaints are fully and impartially investigated. After the investigation is completed, the Commissioner, ICAC will forward his conclusion and recommendations regarding every complaint to the ICC. ICC Members may seek additional information and clarification from the ICAC regarding the investigation reports. In 2005, the Committee considered 22 complaints with 59 allegations. Eight allegations (13%) in seven complaints (32%) were found to be substantiated. Through investigations of complaints and examination of relevant issues, the ICC carefully scrutinises the ICAC’s internal procedures, guidelines and practices to see whether these need to be updated, clarified or formalised, with a view to making improvement. We consider that the existing complaint handling mechanism is fair and effective and there is no need to

change the arrangement .

Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title Acting Director of Administration

Date 9 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO021

Question Serial No.

2192

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question :

One of the main responsibilities of the Administration Wing is “to administer and co-ordinate the Justices of the Peace (JP) system”. Please provide details of the expenditure and the manpower involved in this respect for the last 5 years. According to the Justices of the Peace Ordinance, the main function of a JP shall be to visit various institutions (including prisons, detention centres, hospitals and custodial institutions or correctional homes). Please state the total number of the JPs of the last 5 years and the number of JPs who have discharged the above function each year.

Asked by: Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply:

The Administration Wing is responsible for the policy on and administration of the JP System. However, there is no designated team for performing the above duties. At present, one Senior Executive Officer, one Executive Officer I, one Clerical Officer, one Assistant Clerical Officer and one Clerical Assistant are responsible for providing support for, inter alia, the administration of the JP System. Since they also serve other duties, no breakdown on the staff cost is available. As for departmental expenses, it mainly involves travelling expenses for conducting JP visits. In the last five years, an average of 800 JP visits were conducted per annum. Breakdown on the traveling expenses for JP visits in the last five years are as follows:

<u>2000/01</u>	<u>2001/02</u>	<u>2002/03</u>	<u>2003/04</u>	<u>2004/05</u>
(\$)	(\$)	(\$)	(\$)	(\$)
719,582	664,778	675,686	630,046	549,601

From 2000/01 to 2004/05, statistics on the number of JPs/JPs that have performed JP visit duties are appended below:

	<u>2000/01</u>	<u>2001/02</u>	<u>2002/03</u>	<u>2003/04</u>	<u>2004/05</u>
Total No. of JPs	1,091	1,118	1,154	1,172	1,211
No. of JPs that have performed JP visit duties*	863	902	919	939	966

*Some JPs are exempted from visiting duties because of old age, health or other reasons.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title Acting Director of Administration

Date 9 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO022

Question Serial No.

1830

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

What timely, quality and strategic economic advice was provided by the Administration Wing in 2005-06 to support the Financial Secretary to formulate the 2006-07 Budget?

Asked by: Hon. SIN Chung-kai

Reply:

The Economic Analysis and Business Facilitation Unit under the Financial Secretary's Office provides economic analysis and strategic advice to the Financial Secretary in preparing the Budget. Specifically for the 2006/07 Budget, this involves (a) reviewing the performance of the economy in 2005, analysing key economic trends, assessing local and external risks to growth, and making forecasts for 2006 - 2010, (b) providing input related to the key macro assumptions and medium-term projections needed for fiscal projections, (c) providing input to the Financial Secretary for formulating economic policies and budgetary strategies.

Some of key economic issues highlighted in the 2006/07 Budget include: (a) the performance and adjustment of the labour market in the past 2-1/2 years and in the past decade, as well as the ongoing structural transformation of the economy, (b) the gradual turn in the economic cycle and the implied need to shift gradually our focus from unemployment to inflation, (c) the ongoing need for Hong Kong to keep adapting to changes in the Mainland and in the global economy, (d) long term challenges such as ageing, widening income disparity and protecting the environment, (e) the importance of the financial services industry in HK's future economic development, and (f) the importance of nurturing and attracting talents given that quality human resources are Hong Kong's key asset and competitive advantage.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO023

Question Serial No.

1831

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

What were the expenditure and establishment of the Financial Secretary's Office in 2005-06? What are its estimated expenditure and establishment in 2006-07?

Asked by: Hon. SIN Chung-kai

Reply:

The establishment and revised estimate for 2005-06 for the Private Office of the Financial Secretary and the Secretariat to the Commission on Poverty as well as the Economic Analysis and Business Facilitation Unit under the Financial Secretary's Office are:

Office	Establishment as at 31.3.2006	Revised estimate for 2005-06 (\$ million)
Private office of the Financial Secretary	8	9.3
Secretariat to the Commission on Poverty	9	13.6 (including \$7.5 million for General non-recurrent projects)
Economic Analysis and Business Facilitation Unit	41	34.6 (including \$0.8 million for General non-recurrent projects)

The establishment and estimate for 2006-07 for the offices are:

Office	Establishment as at 31.3.2007	Estimate for 2006-07 (\$ million)
Private office of the Financial Secretary	8	9.5
Secretariat to the Commission on Poverty	9	47.5 (including \$40.9 million for General non-recurrent projects)
Economic Analysis and Business Facilitation Unit	41	36.6 (including \$0.4 million for General non-recurrent projects)

The provision for 2005-06 and 2006-07 covers the salaries and allowances of the offices, including the remuneration of the Financial Secretary, and the other operating expenses.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO024

Question Serial No.

1867

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (1) Efficiency Unit

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

The service level of the Integrated Call Centre has not achieved the target. Will the Administration consider increasing the manpower of the Centre to improve the situation? If yes, what is the number of additional staff?

Asked by: Hon. TAM Heung-man

Reply:

There were unexpected increase in call volume and high staff turnover in the beginning of 2005-06. Since then, the Efficiency Unit has taken steps to improve the performance. The Integrated Call Centre has successfully achieved the target of answering 80% of calls within 12 seconds in recent months. The Efficiency Unit will continue with the improvement measures to uphold the service level and to ensure the delivery of quality service to citizens.

The Efficiency Unit plans to recruit 50 additional staff to meet the increasing demand.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO025

Question Serial No.

1868

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (1) Efficiency Unit

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question :

The estimate for 2006-07 is \$16 million higher than the revised estimate for 2005-06. How much of it will be directly used to increase the manpower?

Asked by: Hon. TAM Heung-man

Reply:

Of the \$16 million, \$6.6 million would be provided to meet the additional staffing required for the Integrated Call Centre.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title _____ Acting Director of Administration

Date _____ 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO026

Question Serial No.

1869

Head: 142 – Government Subhead(No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

The estimate for 2006-07 is higher than the revised estimate for 2005-06 by over \$50 million. This is mainly due to the expansion of the Secretariat to the Commission on Strategic Development, the setting up of the former Chief Executives' Office and the project team for Tamar development. Will the Administration inform this Committee: (a) whether the increased expenditure for the work of the Secretariat to the Commission on Strategic Development is actually necessary, and (b) of the establishment and terms of reference of the project team for Tamar development?

Asked by: Hon. TAM Heung-man

Reply:

- (a) The Commission on Strategic Development (CSD) is the most important advisory body to Government and provides a platform for prominent members from different sectors to consider long term strategic issues. During its current term, it will deal with topics ranging from our international competitiveness, the design of a universal suffrage system, income equality/social mobility and creation of employment.

CSD is now much bigger (over 150 non-official members) and meets frequently in four separate committees with their own specific terms of reference. The Secretariat is responsible for researching, writing and coordinating the necessary papers and servicing the formal meetings as well as numerous informal workshops to be convened between meetings. The additional resources are needed to cope with the additional workload.

- (b) The establishment of the Tamar Development Project Team as at 1 March 2006 is as follows:

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Establishment</u>
Administrative Officer Staff Grade C	1 (supernumerary post)
Senior Administrative Officer	1
Chief Executive Officer	1
Senior Executive Officer	1
Personal Secretary I	1
Personal Secretary II	1

However, the staffing support will be reviewed and adjusted in the course of the implementation of the project in 2006-07. The Tamar Development Project Team is responsible for all preparatory, co-ordination and monitoring work relating to the relaunch and implementation of the Tamar Development Project. Major responsibilities include mapping out the detailed implementation programme; coordinating the support of bureaux/departments in taking forward the project including the prequalification and tender exercise; providing secretarial support to the interdepartmental steering committee and the Special Selection Board; and attending to enquiries from the Legislative Council, media and the general public.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title Acting Director of Administration

Date 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO027

Question Serial No.

2174

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (1) Efficiency Unit

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

Provision for 2006-07 is 14.1% higher than the revised estimate for 2005-06 partly due to the need to carry out consultancy studies. Please state the subjects of and expenditure on the studies.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Ting-kwong

Reply:

In 2006-07, the Efficiency Unit would have \$10.8 million for conducting consultancy studies. We will soon engage external consultants in the following studies:

Content	Name of consultant	Consultancy fee
Feasibility Study of Adopting a Customer Management Assessment Tool for HKSAR Government	Consultant to be selected	Consultant to be selected
Setting up of a youth portal for public services	Consultant to be selected	Consultant to be selected

There will be other consultancy studies in 2006-07, depending upon the nature of the studies requested by bureaux/departments and central initiatives in support of policies.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title Acting Director of Administration

Date 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO028

Question Serial No.

2175

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title): 000 Operational
Secretariat: Offices of the expenses
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

Please set out the nature of the support services provided to the Guangdong/Hong Kong Cooperation Joint Conference and the manpower and expenditure involved. How many meetings had been held by the Joint Conference? Will the minutes of the meetings and the results achieved be published so as to enhance cooperation and understanding of different parties?

Asked by: Hon. KWOK Ka-ki

Reply:

The Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation Joint Conference (Joint Conference) provides a high-level forum to explore and pursue initiatives in cooperation between Hong Kong and Guangdong. Under the Joint Conference, the Plenary Meeting is co-chaired by the Chief Executive and the Governor of Guangdong, and Working Meetings are convened by the Chief Secretary for Administration and the Executive Vice-Governor of Guangdong to spearhead cooperation initiatives. The Joint Conference has also set up 18 Expert Groups to take forward various cooperation initiatives.

The Hong Kong Guangdong Cooperation Coordination Unit (HKGCCU) provides planning, liaison and secretariat support to the Joint Conference. The Unit works closely with the Guangdong authorities to organise meetings and activities under the Joint Conference and coordinates inputs from Bureaux and Departments concerned on the Hong Kong side. It also oversees the progress of work undertaken by the 18 Expert Groups. To mobilise input from the private sector to strengthen Hong Kong/Guangdong Cooperation, the HKGCCU also provides secretariat, planning and liaison support to the Greater Pearl River Delta Business Council, a business organisation set up under the Joint Conference.

The above-mentioned duties are performed by one Administrative Officer Staff Grade B, one Senior Administrative Officer, one Chief Executive Officer, one Executive Officer I and three secretarial supporting staff in the HKGCCU.

The revised estimated expenditure of HKGCCU in 2005-06 was \$7.6 million. This includes personal emoluments and departmental expenses. From 2006-07 onwards, the HKGCCU will be subsumed in the Mainland Affairs Liaison Office to be set up under the Constitutional Affairs Bureau.

Eight Plenary Meetings have been held since the inception of the Joint Conference in March 1998. Six Working Meetings have been held since the introduction of the Working Meeting mechanism in September 2003. Whilst the minutes of meetings are internal record, we issue detailed press releases after each Plenary Meeting and Working Meeting to let the public know the major issues of deliberation and achievements made.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title Acting Director of Administration

Date 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO029

Question Serial No.

2197

Head: 142 – Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Offices of the
Chief Secretary for
Administration and the
Financial Secretary

Programme: (3) CSO – Administration Wing

Controlling Officer: Director of Administration

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

The Administration plans to introduce the pilot “My STEP” - Special Training and Enhancement Programme” in 2006-07. What are the details of the project and the expenditure and manpower involved?

Asked by: Hon. CHENG Kar-foo, Andrew

Reply:

My STEP is a new trial project which targets at unemployed youths who have been on the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme for a long time and remain unemployed and unmotivated by the present employment assistance programmes. The project will include tailor-made motivation programmes, post-programme support and active job placement of the participants.

Around \$3 million has been earmarked for My STEP including an evaluation on the effectiveness of the project. The project will be conducted by NGOs experienced in youth unemployment and motivation work. The actual expenditure would depend on the programme design and the number of participants.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs Susan Mak

Post Title Acting Director of Administration

Date 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO032

Question Serial No.

0092

Head: 94 Legal Aid Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Litigation Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Legal Aid

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question: With regard to the monitoring of the performance of assigned private lawyers and progress of assigned-out cases, please inform the Committee:

- (a) the resources involved and the measures in place for 2005-06 and 2006-07; and
- (b) whether the Administration will increase resources to step up the monitoring of the performance of assigned private lawyers and progress of assigned-out cases.

Asked by: Hon. LI Kwok-ying

Reply: (a) Monitoring the performance of assigned lawyers and progress of assigned-out cases are part of the duties of legal aid counsel responsible for processing civil and criminal legal aid applications as assisted by law clerks and clerical staff. The expenditure involved in monitoring work has been included in the estimated provision of \$641.9 million in Programme (2) of the Controlling Officer's Report.

The Department has in place an elaborate system of monitoring legal aid assignments to lawyers. During the lifespan of a case, all assigned out cases are brought to the attention of the responsible legal aid counsel every three months for review of progress. Cases are also brought up to directorate officers for review two years from the date of the legal aid certificate and thereafter every six months. Apart from the standard bring-ups and depending on the circumstances and progress of the cases, ad-hoc requests to bring up files can be made by the legal aid counsel or the directorate. This mechanism ensures that the assigned solicitors report to the Department on the progress of each case at suitable intervals. The Department has also issued Guidance Notes to all the solicitors and counsel on the Legal Aid Panels highlighting the relevant statutory provisions relating to legal aid and setting out the Department's guidelines and standards required of a solicitor or counsel when handling legal aid cases. Performance of assigned lawyers is evaluated by reference to the relevant statutory provisions, the Department's Guidance Notes, the Code of Conduct issued by the Hong Kong Bar Association and the Guide to Professional Conduct issued by the Law Society of Hong Kong. The Department's in-house lawyers responsible for monitoring the assigned-out cases are required to report any instances of unsatisfactory performance by assigned lawyers.

A Departmental Monitoring Committee, chaired by the Director of Legal Aid and includes a representative from ICAC as member will decide on appropriate actions to be taken against a solicitor or counsel whose performance has been reported as unsatisfactory. Actions include the issue of warning letters, entry into the record of unsatisfactory performance and in appropriate cases, removal from the Legal Aid Panel. If the unsatisfactory performance involves professional misconduct that is within the regulatory ambit of the two professional bodies, with the consent of the aided persons, the Department will refer the case to the respective professional body.

- (b) In 2005-06, the Department completed a feasibility study on establishing an Electronic Portal (E-Portal) to facilitate the monitoring of assigned-out cases. The Department has since submitted a bid for funding to implement this project in 2006-07. If established, the new system would enable the Department and the assigned lawyers to communicate with each other directly and expeditiously, thereby enhancing the Department's ability to obtain and receive from assigned lawyers information that is necessary for the timely and efficient monitoring of assigned out legal aid cases.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Benjamin CHEUNG

Post Title Director of Legal Aid

Date 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO036

Question Serial No.

1007

Head: 94 Legal Aid Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Litigation Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Legal Aid

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question: The estimate for 2006-07 is \$65.8 million higher than the revised estimate for 2005-06, one of the reasons being the increase in legal aid costs upon the implementation of improvement measures for assessing the financial eligibility of legal aid applicants. Please provide details of the measures.

Asked by: Hon. NG Margaret

Reply: The legislative amendments to implement the following improvement measures relating to the criteria for assessing the financial eligibility of legal aid applicants come into force on 20 February 2006:

a. Amount to provide for the care of dependants during the time that the legal aid applicant is at work

Previously, in assessing the disposable income of a legal aid applicant, only the amount to provide for the care of any infant dependant living with the applicant during his absence from home by reason of employment, if considered reasonable, is a deductible item against the income of the applicant. Under the new regulations, aside from dependant infant, the amount incurred by the applicant to provide for the care of any dependants who are unable to care for themselves by reason of their mental or physical condition may also be deducted. This deductible is also made available to both employed as well as self-employed persons. The requirements that the dependant has to live with the applicant and that the applicant has to be absent from home have also been removed.

b. Maintenance payment

In assessing the disposable income of a legal aid applicant, periodical payments made by an applicant to support his spouse who is living separate and apart from him, or his divorced spouse or children following a divorce/separation becomes a deductible item against the income of the applicant. Rules on the maximum amount deductible are set out in the relevant legislation.

c. Insurance money received by an applicant relating to an injury in respect of which the applicant is applying for legal aid to claim damages

In assessing the disposable capital of an applicant, the Director of Legal Aid may disregard an amount of the insurance money received by the applicant to cover such expenses that the person may incur for the care and medical treatment and appliance required in the following three years, as considered by the Director to be reasonable in the circumstances of the case. In considering whether the amount is reasonable, the Director shall have regard to factors including the actual amount of expenses incurred by the applicant in the past year and any relevant medical evidence.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Benjamin CHEUNG

Post Title Director of Legal Aid

Date 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO039

Question Serial No.

1010

Head: 94 Legal Aid Department Subhead (No. & title): 000 Operational Expenses

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Director of Legal Aid

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question : Please provide the number of people employed under each programme who are legally qualified and the expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon. Margaret NG

Reply: The number of legally qualified officers employed under each programme of the Legal Aid Department and the expenditure involved are as follows:

	<u>Number of legally qualified officers</u>	<u>Salary Expenditure (\$ million)</u>
Programme 1	19	16.8
Programme 2	33	30.9
Programme 3	7	6.7
Programme 4	5	4.6
Total	64	59.0

In addition, seven senior directorate officers have responsibilities across the four programmes. The total amount of salaries is \$10.9 million.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Benjamin CHEUNG

Post Title Director of Legal Aid

Date 8 March 2006

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head: 94 Legal Aid Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Litigation Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Legal Aid

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question: The monitoring of the performance of assigned private lawyers and progress of assigned-out cases is treated by the Department as "matters requiring special attention in 2006-07". What are the estimated number of staff and expenditure involved and what specific measures will be taken? What follow-up actions will be taken if the performance of the private lawyers and the progress of assigned-out cases were found unsatisfactory?

Asked by: Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply: Monitoring the performance of assigned lawyers and progress of assigned-out cases are part of the duties of legal aid counsel responsible for processing civil and criminal legal aid applications. There are at present 36 legal aid counsel involved in such duties assisted by 107 Law Clerks and 142 clerical staff. The expenditure involved in monitoring work has been included in the estimated provision of \$641.9 million in Programme (2) of the Controlling Officer's Report.

The Department has in place an elaborate system of monitoring legal aid assignments to lawyers. During the lifespan of a case, all assigned out cases are brought to the attention of the responsible legal aid counsel every three months for review of progress. Cases are also brought up to directorate officers for review two years from the date of the legal aid certificate and thereafter every six months. Apart from the standard bring-ups and depending on the circumstances and progress of the cases, ad-hoc requests to bring up files can be made by the legal aid counsel or the directorate. This mechanism ensures that the assigned solicitors report to the Department on the progress of each case at suitable intervals. The Department has also issued Guidance Notes to all the solicitors and counsel on the Legal Aid Panels highlighting the relevant statutory provisions relating to legal aid and setting out the Department's guidelines and standards required of a solicitor or counsel when handling legal aid cases. Performance of assigned lawyers is evaluated by reference to the relevant statutory provisions, the Department's Guidance Notes, the Code of Conduct issued by the Hong Kong Bar Association and the Guide to Professional Conduct issued by the Law Society of Hong Kong. The Department's in-house lawyers responsible for monitoring the assigned-out cases are required to report any instances of unsatisfactory performance by assigned lawyers.

A Departmental Monitoring Committee, chaired by the Director of Legal Aid and includes a representative from ICAC as member will decide on appropriate actions to be taken against a solicitor or counsel whose performance has been reported as unsatisfactory. Actions include the issue of warning letters, entry into the record of unsatisfactory performance and in appropriate cases, removal from the Legal Aid Panel. If the unsatisfactory performance involves professional misconduct that is within the regulatory ambit of the two professional bodies, with the consent of the aided persons, the Department will refer the case to the respective professional body.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Benjamin CHEUNG

Post Title Director of Legal Aid

Date 8 March 2006

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

CSO043

Question Serial No.

2007

Head: 94 Legal Aid Department Subhead (No. & title): 000 Operational Expenses

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Director of Legal Aid

Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question: What are the eight permanent posts to be deleted in 2006-07 and how much will be saved as a result?

Asked by: Hon. LEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply: Under the Department's Manpower Plan, eight posts will be deleted in 2006-07. They include two Legal Aid Counsel, one Senior Law Clerk I, four Law Clerk and one Assistant Clerical Officer posts.

A total of \$3,031,020 in terms of Notional Annual Mid-point Salary (NAMS) will be saved.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Benjamin CHEUNG

Post Title Director of Legal Aid

Date 8 March 2006