

Message

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (HKSARG) delivers a huge volume of services for the community and over the years these services have expanded to cope with a rapid increase in population. This increase continues and with it the needs and expectations of the community expand. The issues facing Hong Kong are becoming more complex and faster moving, and we must therefore improve the way in which public services are delivered and managed.

To help achieve this the Efficiency Unit (EU) has developed the Serving the Community Programme to drive continuous improvement in the management and delivery of public services.

The Serving the Community Programme incorporates the government's management principles –

- **Being accountable**, because the Government has an obligation to answer to the community which it exists to serve
- **Living within our means**, because the Government must determine how best to meet the community's needs within the resources available
- **Managing for performance**, because the Government must deliver the best possible services for public money
- **Developing our culture of service**, because the Government must be a responsive organisation, committed to quality service

The EU co-ordinates and resources a programme of work to put these principles into practice. As part of this, the EU identifies potential gaps and takes temporary ownership of issues until a long-term owner emerges. Examples include the EU's launch of the Helping Business Programme, since handed over to the Business and Services Promotion Unit, and the Code on Access to Information, since transferred to Home Affairs Bureau.

In order to facilitate its role of working across organisational boundaries the EU reports directly to the Chief Secretary for Administration and works closely with policy bureaux, resource bureaux and departments.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sankey', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

(Colin Sankey)
Head, Efficiency Unit

Continuous Improvement in Public Services

Our Policy Objective is to secure continuous improvement in public services through an on-going programme of public sector reform, promoting best practice in management.

Our targets in pursuing this Policy Objective are –

- To implement the Target-based Management Process across all Policy Objectives by May 1999
- To establish reshaping Government as part of an enhanced productivity programme with clear milestones and targets for improved productivity by mid-1999
- To develop and broaden the Performance Measurement Programme to exploit its full potential and contribution to the corporate improvement agenda for the Government by mid-1999
- To pull together current and planned initiatives (including new technology) into a comprehensive Customer Service Programme by mid-1999
- To develop measures and collect data to allow community views, customer satisfaction and public sector productivity to be assessed across Government by October 2000

Key Result Areas (KRAs)

To ensure that this Policy Objective can be achieved, we must deliver results in a number of key areas, that is, we must –

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The following sections of this booklet explain the importance of these KRAs, describe the broad thrust of our efforts, and outline the indicators which we are using to assess progress. Each section lists the new key initiatives being taken to achieve our objectives and pinpoints the agency accountable for each initiative and the specific targets which we intend to meet.

I

Evaluate current approach, assess and benchmark best practice, and identify problems and improvement opportunities

The Efficiency Unit (EU) focuses its efforts on issues of particular concern to the community. To identify problems and opportunities it collects information on current performance through membership of high level groups, through a network of contacts across Government, and by responding to requests for assistance from policy bureaux and departments.

The Government faces challenges that are different from those facing the private sector, and indeed often different from those facing other governments. Approaches and solutions to problems have to be designed to fit the Hong Kong environment. But there is much that can be learnt from best practices developed in the private sector and in other governments. The EU collects and manages knowledge of approaches which have been used elsewhere, what has worked well and what has not, why different approaches have been more successful, and what might work best in Hong Kong.

The EU's Term Consultants contribute information and insight into best practices in the public and private sectors, and advise on how these might be tailored and developed for Hong Kong. We also draw more broadly on the expertise of practitioners, academics and consultants.

Indicators

The indicators we will use to measure progress in this area are –

- the number of significant opportunities identified for improvement in the management and delivery of services
- the availability of up-to-date information on best practices in the public and private sectors

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To design and conduct surveys of satisfaction with public services <i>(Efficiency Unit (EU))*</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To establish a range of surveys across Government and a mechanism for aggregating them by end 1999 ● To make available an up-to-date picture of community views from early 2000
<p>To launch a network to share best practice in the management and delivery of public services with selected governments across Asia-Pacific <i>(EU)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To inaugurate an active exchange through an Asia-Pacific Forum by mid-1999 ● To conduct benchmarking and best practice studies on at least three topics a year from 1999-2000
<p>To create opportunities for partnership with the private sector in sharing best practices in the management and delivery of services <i>(EU)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To conduct at least three benchmarking and best practice studies per year from 1999-2000 ● To organise and conduct at least two experience sharing events a year with private sector

* the brackets denote the agency with lead responsibility for the initiative

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To conduct stocktaking studies of selected topics across government as the basis for benchmarking with best practice</p> <p><i>(Management Services Agency)</i></p>	<p>To conduct at least three stocktaking studies per year from 1999-2000</p>
<p>To conduct a review of the Management Services Agency (MSA) with a view to maximising its contribution to continuous improvement in public services</p> <p><i>(EU)</i></p>	<p>To complete the review and make proposals by January 1999</p>

II

Develop broad direction and proposals for improvement in public services

Having identified problems and opportunities, and reviewed the potential application of best practice, the next step is to develop the broad direction and specific proposals. New proposals are developed through papers, seminars and presentations, and through the use of external advice.

The broad direction has been established through the Government's management principles described earlier. Under this broad umbrella the Government has developed the following programmes of work to achieve continuous improvement in the management and delivery of public services:

- Target-based Management Process: to clarify objectives and priorities, focus on results and ensure delivery of outcomes for the community
- enhanced productivity programme: to achieve a lasting improvement in Civil Service productivity
- Customer Service Programme: to understand better customers' needs and improve the quality and timeliness of the response
- Performance Measurement Programme: to develop and promote best practice in measuring performance at government-wide, policy and departmental levels

The EU acts as lead or facilitator for these programmes under high-level sponsorship, managing progress and piloting solutions before wider roll out. This ensures that the proposals are workable in practice, and that we have the hands on experience to achieve successful implementation.

Indicator

The indicator we will use to measure progress in this area is the number and scope of the improvement proposals developed and the number of bureaux and departments served by the various improvement programmes.

Initiatives

Targets

To develop and pilot an approach to extending the benefits of the Target-based Management Process to departmental level

(Efficiency Unit (EU))

- To develop the proposals by end 1998
- To have the pilot approach in place by March 1999

To develop and test improved models for the role, operation and resources of Resource Management Units (RMUs) in policy bureaux

(EU)

To develop and pilot the revised RMU role, operation and resources by July 1999

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To establish reshaping Government as part of the enhanced productivity programme to achieve a step jump improvement in the results achieved from available resources. This will include : transferring services; more trading funds and autonomous agencies; and re-inventing front line and support services. The EU will co-ordinate the effort across Government, working with the lead agencies</p> <p><i>(EU)</i></p>	<p>To establish clear milestones for achievement and set targets for improved productivity by mid-1999</p>
<p>To broaden the Performance Measurement Programme to develop and promote best practice in measuring performance at government wide, policy and departmental levels</p> <p><i>(EU)</i></p>	<p>To develop broader a performance measurement framework and an implementation programme by mid-1999</p>
<p>To develop and pilot a range of methods and tools for assessing customer satisfaction</p> <p><i>(EU)</i></p>	<p>To develop and pilot a range of tools by mid-1999</p>

Initiatives	Targets
To design and pilot the first phase of a call centre approach for handling telephone enquiries and managing service delivery <i>(EU)</i>	Subject to the success of a feasibility study, to develop proposals for implementation by mid-1999



Secure ownership and support and foster an enabling environment

Governments around the world, and organisations in the private sector, are littered with examples of apparently compelling change agendas that have come to nothing. Successful implementation requires much more than identifying a problem and developing the right answer. It requires firm commitment from senior levels and support from managers and staff. The Chief Executive's announcement of the Target-based Management Process and the Chief Secretary for Administration's long-term involvement with and contribution to the Serving the Community Programme are examples of strong senior level commitment.

Securing management and staff support involves broadening awareness and understanding of the opportunities available to improve public services and conveying both the benefits of change and the practicability of the proposals.

Experience of implementing change in Hong Kong demonstrates that once a corporate decision is taken the Civil Service is quick to commit to putting the changes into practice, and to ensuring that real practical improvements result.

Indicators

The indicators we will use to measure progress in this area are –

- the level of support within the Civil Service for proposals to achieve continuous improvement to be measured through internal surveys and regular contact with departments
- the proportion of proposals which proceed to implementation

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To organise seminars to encourage support and understanding of the improvement agenda amongst departmental directorate and staff (EU)</p>	<p>To organise seminars on a regular basis on the four key programmes to achieve continuous improvement in public services. Four seminars will be organised in 1999</p>
<p>To organise, promote and run a conference on continuous improvement in public services (EU)</p>	<p>To organise the conference in Autumn 1999</p>
<p>To promote innovation in the management and delivery of public services, including improved productivity, through an awards scheme (EU)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To have an awards scheme in place by end 1999 ● To secure at least ten entries to the awards scheme in the first year ● To devise a scale of improvements identified by projects entered into competition and develop a target for future years

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To develop the EU's Internet web page as a mechanism for promoting best practice in the management and delivery of public services (EU)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To develop and implement a world class web page on public sector management and reform by early 1999 ● To measure the number of hits for the web page and set a target for future years
<p>To organise and promote a second Serving the Community week (EU)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To organise and run the event in Autumn 2000 ● To promote at least 80 linked events ● To have over 50 000 visitors attend the events

IV

Roll-out implementation and ownership across Government and monitor results

All of the previous Key Result Areas are vital if the Government is to achieve its objective of continuous improvement in public services, but they will only succeed if the potential improvements identified are successfully implemented.

Successful implementation begins with developing sound solutions to real issues and building support and commitment. It also requires effective planning and implementation, together with dedicated resources and expert assistance where needed. An example of this is the successful development and first stage of implementation of the Target-based Management Process (TMP) under the leadership of the Secretary for the Treasury. The improved management process, announced by the Chief Executive in his 1997 Policy Address, shifts the focus of management to managing for results and by results, ensuring that the Government is better able to deliver its promises to the community. A key feature in effective implementation of TMP was the use of mixed project teams, combining bureau, department and external resources, and this approach will be used for other programmes.

Indicators

The indicators we will use to measure progress in this area are –

- evidence of continuous improvement in productivity and customer service standards
- the number of departments implementing improvements in service management and delivery

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To implement TMP across all remaining policy areas <i>(Efficiency Unit (EU))</i></p>	<p>Full implementation by May 1999</p>
<p>To design and implement a series of surveys to provide feedback on the Government's achievements against its stated Policy Objectives <i>(EU)</i></p>	<p>By October 2000, to develop measures and collect data to allow community views, customer satisfaction and public sector productivity to be assessed across Government</p>
<p>To implement the computerised Performance Review System across the remaining Policy Objectives <i>(EU)</i></p>	<p>Full implementation by April 1999</p>
<p>To produce a practical step by step guide to performance measurement for departments <i>(EU)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To issue the guide by end 1998 ● To have at least 15 departments making active use of the guide by end 1999
<p>To promote and implement a model for measuring and improving customer service <i>(EU)</i></p>	<p>To have at least eight departments adopting the model by mid-2000</p>

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To promote and run a group for customer services managers in departments to share new developments in customer service <i>(EU)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To have at least 15 departments participating in 1999 ● To organise at least four related events in 1999
<p>To review Performance Pledges adopted by departments and implement further improvements in the programme <i>(EU)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To complete the review by end 1998 ● To implement improvements by mid-1999
<p>To refocus MSA's effort on efficiency studies to support the enhanced productivity programme <i>(Management Services Agency)</i></p>	<p>To support Policy Secretaries and relevant Departments in achieving targeted productivity improvements</p>