

Helping Business Programme

Completed Projects

(since inception of the Programme)

Item No.	Project	Achievements
Lands, Buildings and Works		
1.	Review of lease modification and land exchange procedures	The processing of land exchanges and lease modifications has been speeded up by 35%.
2.	Review of Buildings Regulations on prescribed windows for bathrooms	The requirement has been made flexible to accord with modern practice in other countries. It also results in a reduction of building cost.
3.	Review of application for consent to sales of uncompleted buildings	Procedures for processing applications have been speeded up by 33%.
4.	Review of application procedures for short-term waivers of land grant conditions	Average processing time has been reduced by 15%. An across-the-board 15% reduction on waiver fees has also been achieved.
5.	Review of the procedure for water supply applications	A number of improvement measures introduced. These include application for water supply via Internet and more user-friendly leaflets and forms. Processing time for different types of water supply application has been shortened by between 2 days and 26 days.
6.	Relaxing the restriction on the sale of service apartments	Unnecessary restrictions on the sale of service apartments lifted.
7.	Participation of private developers in the construction of utilities connection, run-ins and access facilities to completed developments	Developers have been given better control of building programmes, thus enabling earlier completion / sale of units by up to 3 months.
8.	Feasibility study on private sector participation in water supply services	Options for private sector to participate in the provision of water supply services identified.
9.	Corporatisation of the Survey & Mapping Office	Business case established for corporatisation of the Office.

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10.	Departmental business study for Planning Department	Opportunities to improve the business-friendliness of the Department identified. The Department's operation has become more transparent.
11.	Booklet on excavation permits	An easy-to-use guide on procedure for applicants. Procedure has become more transparent.
12.	Information booklet on application procedure for drainage connections	An easy-to-use guide on procedure for applicants.
13.	Speeding up the retrieval of approved building plans	Retrieval time has been reduced from 28 working days to 4 days. Pilot electronic service established in Yau Tsim Mong District which allows retrieval of plans within minutes.
14.	Review of approval procedure for general building plan submission	Streamlined procedure has shortened processing time by 25%. In addition, transparency and business-friendliness of the procedure have been enhanced.
15.	Provision of portable water meters to the construction industry	Contractors can obtain metered water supply speedily and conveniently for early commencement of their works.
16.	Processing of Short Term Waiver in North District	Processing of application for Short Term Waiver in North District speeded up.
17.	Review of industrial land use	Restrictions on use of industrial land for entertainment, business and other institutional uses relaxed to provide flexibility to owners and occupiers.
18.	Pilot project on slope advertisement	Two slopes in Lung Cheung Road and Lion Rock Tunnel Road have been opened up for advertisement industry to create more business opportunities.
19.	Feasibility study on bulk billing of rates and government rent for mutli-property owners	Established the case to introduce bulk billing. Implementation plan has been developed. The project will save time and operating costs.
20.	Establishment of the Building Innovation Unit in Buildings Department (*)	Provided a supportive business-friendly regulatory environment for the real estate, construction and associated industries, enhanced communication with the industries and facilitated the implementation of innovative designs.

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21.	Lands Department's Business Partnership Scheme and Temporary Licence Scheme for Value Added Digital Maps (*)	Created business opportunities for business sector to develop value-added consumers products based on the digital map.
22.	Improved service relating to change in account for construction water supply (*)	Simplified application procedure and saved construction contractors' application time and effort.
23.	On-line access to Valuation List and Government Rent Roll (*)	Helped rate-payers and professional valuation firms ascertain quickly and conveniently the effect of revaluation of ratable values.
Food		
24.	Review of restaurant licensing	Streamlined and improved licensing process. Provisional licence can be issued on the same day as the application. A resource centre has been set up to help applicants.
25.	Extension of provisional licensing to food premises other than restaurants	Operators can start to do business pending the issue of a full licence.
26.	Review of licensing of food premises other than restaurants	Opportunities to streamline licensing process identified. Implementation in progress. The number of licences and permits will be significantly reduced.
27.	Review of licensing of outside seating accommodation for food premises	Established a policy and mechanism for approval of outside seating accommodation for food premises.
28.	Re-definition of light refreshment restaurants	Flexibility for food items to be sold at light refreshment restaurants.
Entertainment and Leisure		
29.	Review of hotel and guesthouse licensing	Licensing procedures have become more business-friendly. Savings to operators achieved with the introduction of multi-year licences.
30.	Review of entertainment licensing for amusement games centres, public dance halls, dancing schools and mah-jong / Tin Kau establishments	Several licences (<i>including dancing schools</i>) are found suitable for removal. Procedures for other licences have been simplified.

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31.	Review of entertainment licensing for lotteries, tombola, amusements with prizes and trade promotion competition	Improvements being implemented. Processing of trade promotion competition licences is reduced from 21 days to 7 working days.
32.	Review of licensing requirements for massage establishments	Consent Panel set up to help applicants understand requirements of different departments and address technical problems. Guides (<i>also in braille and sound tape versions</i>) have been produced to help potential operators understand the requirements. Licensing process time has been reduced.
33.	A feasibility study on greater private sector participation in the ticketing, promotion and venue booking of sports, cultural and performing arts events	Business case confirmed. Ticketing services outsourced by phases with effect from August 2000.
34.	Transferring civic centre processes and functions to the private sector	Some short-term outsourcing options including building maintenance, stage operations and marketing identified.
35.	Licensed hotels/guesthouses on Internet	New service to publicize licensed hotels and guesthouses in Hong Kong.
36.	Information booklet on application procedures for hotel and guesthouse licensing	An easy-to-use guide to help applicants understand the requirements and procedures.
37.	A review on relaxing the restrictions on home and leisure brewing	Unnecessary restrictions on home and leisure brewing lifted.
38.	Review of regulatory activities for amusement rides	Measures identified for speeding up application process and easy access to information.
39.	i-Permit for Taiwan Visitors (*)	Simplified and speeded up the processing of applications for Taiwan Visit Permits.
40.	The "Support Filming in Your Community" Campaign (*)	Launched a publicity campaign to rally support of the public for location filming.
41.	One-stop service for applications for road closure for location filming (*)	Facilitated location filming by the filmmaking industry.

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Marine and Transport		
42.	Review of application procedure for cross-boundary permits for private cars	Procedure has been streamlined, with less supporting documents required.
43.	Review of management of public cargo working areas	The fee structure has been simplified with 1 composite permit to replace 7 separate permits. Physical access and land-side management have been improved.
44.	Review of licensing of local vessels	License fee items reduced from 135 to 65. Relevant procedures have also been streamlined.
45.	Research on overseas practices on the licensing and testing of vehicles and drivers	Options for private sector participation have been worked out.
46.	Corporatisating Government Dockyard	Business case not established. Recommendations made to streamline the Dockyard operation instead.
47.	Departmental business study for Marine Department	Department has become more business-friendly, with simpler and speedier licensing arrangements and other improvements. One-stop service for port formality procedures introduced.
48.	Review of two regulations administered by Transport Department	Disaggregation of regulation and standards to be in line with modern practices worldwide.
49.	Review on overnight parking for non-franchised buses.	More overnight parking spaces identified to meet the shortfall.
50.	Out-reach activities to promote the Hong Kong Shipping Register (*)	Facilitated communication with the industry, and assisted shipping companies in the conduct of their business. Helped strengthen Hong Kong's position as an international maritime centre.
Trade and industry		
51.	Review of payment remittance form	The form is now providing more information to facilitate processing at the recipient end.
52.	Departmental business study for Trade Department	Department has become more business-friendly, with enhanced performance pledges for processing transactions and other improvements. Substantial savings have been achieved.

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53.	Establishment of a Business Licence Information Centre	Information on all business licences is available at a single location to provide an efficient and effective service on licence information to the business sector <i>(also available on Internet)</i> .
54.	Feasibility study on introduction of an open bond system	Feasibility confirmed. Full implementation is in progress.
55.	Review of customs cargo clearance requirements and services	Opportunities for improving trade facilitation and tightening up customs control identified. Implementation in progress.
56.	Departmental business study for Government Supplies Department	Increased business-friendliness of the Department's suppliers' registration system and web site.
57.	Improved customs clearance for air cargoes (*)	Clearance of air cargoes streamlined and speeded up. Enhanced the status of Hong Kong International Airport as a global aviation hub and a gateway of China.
58.	PayThruPost Service (*)	Enabled public utilities to immediately expand their payment network through the 126 Post Offices.
59.	Outsourcing the catering services of the Fire Services Department (*)	Catering services of 17 Fire Stations/Ambulance Depots transferred to the private sector from June 2001 to March 2002.
60.	Enhancing the efficiency of the Business Registration Office of Inland Revenue Department (*)	Applications for new registration or amendments to business certificates can be processed within 30 minutes.
61.	Helping the industry participate in government IT projects (*)	Increased outsourcing activities to enable more private sector participation in government IT projects, and issued guidelines to help the industry.
62.	New quota system for importation of Scheduled Substances under the Ozone Layer Protection Ordinance (*)	Saved administrative work of the trade, enabled flexible business planning and better use of unutilized quota. Licence validity is extended from 28 days to 60 days to allow flexibility in shipment and better stock control.

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Education		
63.	Review of registration procedures for kindergartens and tutorial schools	Streamlined procedures with improved coordination between departments. Processing time for school registration shortened by 50%. Clear guidelines published for reference by school operators.
64.	Transfer of Non-means tested loan scheme for students to the private sector	Business case confirmed. Financial models developed to test out different options.
Labour and employment		
65.	Providing sample employment contract	Serves as a reference for employers and employees when drawing up their contracts.
66.	Employers' practical guide and good management practices and frequently asked questions about labour laws on Internet	A user-friendly information kit to help employers understand the labour laws.
67.	Labour Department Cyber Resource Centre for Business	A more business-friendly web site covering employment and labour related issues.
Fire Safety		
68.	Outsourcing the maintenance of portable fire fighting equipment in government premises	Business opportunities in the value of \$5 million transferred to the private sector.
69.	Guidelines for Fire Service Installation (FSI) Contractors (*)	Helped FSI contractors to complete the Certificate of Fire Service Installations & Equipment efficiently and accurately.
Social, Medical & Health		
70.	Provision of quality homes for the elderly at vacant quarters at Prince of Wales Hospital	Vacant quarters leased out to the private sector for use as quality homes for the elderly.
71.	Outsourcing the preparation and delivery of meals for the elderly	Opening up business opportunities involving the provision of 350,000 meals per annum.
72.	Medical examination service in Government	From August 2000, all medical examination for new recruits has been taken up by the private sector.

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Intellectual Property		
73.	Identification of activities in the Intellectual Property Department appropriate for transfer to the private sector	Non-core activities identified for contracting out to the private sector. These include IT and publication functions, as well as the front desk operation.
74.	Simplification of Copyright Complaint Procedures (*)	Saved copyright owners' efforts in completing tedious recordation formalities, and provided greater protection of their works.
Others		
75.	Stocktaking of business related regulatory activities	A useful database for future cutting red tape exercises.
76.	Government courier services	50% reduction in courier service for routine documents by civil servants. Opening up business opportunities for private courier companies.
77.	A feasibility study on setting up a private-sector operated business centre in two major government offices buildings	Business case not established. Alternative measure taken to compile a list of service providers in business services to help small & medium enterprises introduce themselves to departments requiring their services.
78.	Introduction of "Hong Kong Background Information"	A user-friendly information kit for government officials and businessmen (<i>also available on Internet</i>).
79.	Public forms on Internet	Some 1400 public forms are now available via Internet providing the community with a better and more efficient service. Bilingual search facilities available.
80.	Review of government payment and collection procedures	Government settlement of invoices has been made faster (<i>shortened from one month to 20 days</i>), and payment to Government can be made more convenient through electronic means including ATMs.
81.	Government flying service for industries	Services terminated in 1997 now resumed providing competitive service to industries which require aerial photography service.

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82.	Electronic submission of Government forms through Internet	Enables the public to fill in and submit forms to Government electronically anytime and anywhere. Currently, about 240 "e-Forms" are available for electronic submission.
83.	Water-cooled air-conditioning systems	Trial scheme to allow energy saving water-cool air-conditioning systems extended to more districts, thus helping users save costs.
84.	Companies Registry (CR) On-line Public Search System (*)	Enabled subscribers to obtain key company information kept by the CR in English or Chinese and to view or print the results quickly and conveniently at their own office.
85.	Early distribution of dividends to creditors in an insolvency case (*)	Benefited creditors in business sector, including trade creditors, banks and financial institutions because of quicker return of part, if not all, of their trade debts.

Note : Items marked with (*) are initiatives of relevant bureaux / departments covered by the Helping Business Awards Scheme 2001.

Helping Business Programme

Projects in Progress

Item No.	Project	Objectives
Lands, Buildings and Works		
1.	Review of building regulations relating to lighting & ventilation; sanitary fitments, plumbing & drainage	To establish a new set of standards taking cognizance of Hong Kong's conditions and living standards.
2.	Outsourcing the interim valuation work for village type houses in the North District	To expedite the process of rates and Government rent assessment.
3.	Helping estate agents to comply with statutory requirements (*)	To enhance the Info-Hotline service to provide a speedy and low-cost alternative for estate agents to obtain property information to facilitate compliance with the Estate Agents Ordinance.
4.	Town planning information on Internet (*)	To provide online town planning information including outline zoning plans for the business sector and the public.
5.	Electronic Stamping of Property Transfer Instruments (*)	To introduce an electronic service for transfer of property, including receiving applications and payment and issuing certificates by electronic means.
6.	Helping construction industry protect the environment (*)	To introduce a partnership programme to help the construction industry fulfill legislative requirements on environmental protection.
7.	Web-based building records retrieval service (*)	To launch a web-based retrieval service for building records covering all districts of Hong Kong.
Marine and Transport		
8.	Departmental business study for Transport Department	To help Transport Department to develop and maintain high-standard and cost-effective services for the business community.

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9.	Introduction of Vehicle Type Approval Regulations (*)	To update the existing legal and technical provisions for vehicle type approval and introduce a “one-stop” service.
10.	Establishment of a Transport Information System (*)	To set up a computerised traffic and transport information data warehouse for use within and outside the Government.
11.	Business lounge at the Macau Ferry Terminal and the China Ferry Terminal (*)	To upgrade VIP-reception rooms to business-class standard for use by trade delegations and other VIP groups; and to provide business opportunities for the private sector.
Trade and Industry		
12.	Business process re-engineering study for an integrated Government e-trade system	To explore the feasibility of establishing a single window system for the trade to transact business with Government electronically with respect to import, export and transshipment of cargoes and port clearance.
13.	Private sector involvement in selling tickets for publicly owned venues	To optimize the use of industry technology, market resources and customer service by a private sector enterprise to provide the back-end system for selling tickets.
14.	Setting up an Interactive Response System for trade declaration purpose (*)	To provide a 24-hour telephone service to facilitate importers or exporters to respond to notices for submitting import/export declarations to Census and Statistics Department.
Fire Safety		
15.	Introducing 'smarter' regulations for dangerous goods (*)	To ease restrictions on dangerous goods by introducing two levels of exempted quantities according to industrial and non-industrial premises.
Social, Medical & Health		
16.	Streamline the issue of import/export licences for pharmaceutical products	To simplify the licensing processes without compromising safety standards.

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17.	Review of registration procedures of pharmaceutical products	To speed up and streamline the process of pharmaceutical products' registration
Others		
18.	Departmental business study for Environmental Protection Department	To ensure that the Department provides high standard services in the execution of its environmental protection functions, with due regard to cost of compliance, transparency and benefits to the community at large.
19.	Electronic Service Delivery Scheme in the Environmental Protection Department	To build an information infrastructure so that the public can submit online applications for various permits, licences and appeals.
20.	Outsourcing the transport service and seizure management for Customs and Excise Department	To provide more cost-effective and better quality service.
21.	Outsourcing the electrical & mechanical maintenance services for Radio Television Hong Kong	To optimise the use of industry technology for the provision of electrical & mechanical maintenance service.
22.	Online public search of bankruptcies and compulsory winding-up of companies (*)	To provide online information search (with payment facility) of bankruptcies and compulsory winding-up of companies.
23.	Setting up an On-line Data Dissemination System on Census and Statistics Department website (*)	To enable browsing, purchasing and obtaining statistical compilations and publications over the Internet.

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