

### (III) QUALITY SERVICES & SYSTEMS

40. The delivery of quality housing requires an effective supervision and monitoring system. We have launched a number of measures to effect quality assurance throughout construction, completion and handover stages. At the same time, we have introduced measures to strengthen the third party checking of our new projects. Initiatives to achieve "Quality Services & Systems" embrace the following pillars of reform -

- Pillar Three - Reinforcing Site Supervision
- Pillar Eight - Enhancing Quality Monitoring Assurance
- Pillar Nine - Reinforcing Third Party Control

#### ***Pillar Three - Reinforcing Site Supervision***

41. We firmly believe that quality construction depends on quality supervision on site. To maintain the quality of our products during the production peak in the period of 2000 to 2001, we have worked with both contractors and consultants to strengthen site supervision level. Actions already taken include the following -

- (a) **Deployment of sufficient and competent site staff**  
To reinforce site supervision for in-house projects, we have reviewed the benchmark manning scale of site staff. In 2000/01, we have recruited 162 additional site staff including those seconded from consultants. For consultant projects, we have reimbursed the project supervision cost to the consultants for providing extra staff for enhanced requirements to safeguard the quality of supervision.
- (b) **Deployment of resident professionals**  
We have deployed resident engineers to all piling sites. 12 assistant resident engineer have been recruited to strengthen site supervision of piling contracts. We have deployed 10 new recruits as resident professionals to complex building projects.

(c) **Training to site staff**

We have provided mandatory induction training courses for all new recruits including consultant site staff to reinforce site supervision <sup>Note4</sup>. Some trade practices / skills and refresher courses are available to in-house staff.

(d) **Delegation of more authority to project teams**

We have delegated more authority to project teams and resident professionals, enabling them to resolve technical problems on site more speedily.

(e) **Streamlining handover procedures**

To streamline the procedures of handover inspections, we have prepared an aligned inspection and defect reporting form for domestic flats to be used by our site staff, the management agencies and the tenants / HOS owners to facilitate inspection and handling of defects.

### ***Pillar Eight – Enhancing Quality Monitoring Assurance***

42. To ensure consistency of product quality, we have established **global benchmark sample flats** to demonstrate quality acceptance standard for all stakeholders to follow in November 2000. In view of the multiple parties involved in the sample flat approval and handover inspections, we have clarified their roles and responsibilities to reaffirm the Contract Manager's role as the **single acceptance authority** under the contract. To uplift the level of workmanship, we are now working, in collaboration with Hong Kong Construction Association (HKCA), on the training materials such as '**good trade practices**' training guide for workers to follow.

43. We will review the effectiveness of **milestone payment** of the two pilot projects. Milestone check-points have been used for

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<sup>Note4</sup> Induction and refresher training programme has been conducted for the site staff. Since April 2000, over 232 classes covering 49 training modules have been held, attended by 654 departmental staff and 140 consultants' staff.

monitoring project progress under the Performance Assessment Scoring System (PASS).

44. Currently, we have already established very comprehensive and structured site supervision procedures and requirements for various stages of different construction works. These are continuously improved in response to experience, needs and feedback. In addition to various measures to tighten site supervision in piling contracts, we follow the Quality Supervision Plan (QSP) for piling works promulgated by the Buildings Department in June 2000. For building contracts, we are continuously reviewing and rationalising our current site supervision system. As a further step to tighten site supervision in building works, we intend to require contractors to prepare and submit **Contractors' Supervision Plan (CSP)** to set out their supervision and on-the-job training proposals. This will then form the basis for monitoring their performances during the construction process. Three pilot building projects have been identified to try out the requirements on CSP.

45. We have conducted a consultancy study to explore the viability of effecting **warranty insurance**. We are concerned about the absence of a mature market in Hong Kong for the proposed insurance product. As deliberated at the joint Home Ownership Committee and Building Committee Meeting in September 2000, it was decided that we would not adopt the warranty insurance until after the success of the insurance scheme in the local context and the effectiveness of other initiatives to provide quality assurance could be ascertained.

### ***Pillar Nine – Reinforcing Third Party Control***

46. In recognition of the community's expectation for an objective third party scrutiny of Housing Authority (HA) projects, Government has been examining the various options on bringing HA's construction works under the ambit of the Buildings Ordinance, and the associated implications on matters of legal, technical, resources, programming and staff concerns, in close liaison with Housing Department, Buildings Department and the concerned bureaux.

47. Full building control cannot take place in short term. We have taken interim measures to parallel the practice of building control (Paper No. BC 161/2000, QH 19/2000 refers). These measures include :-

- (a) The establishment of an **Independent Checking Unit (ICU)** under the Director's Office in November 2000.
- (b) The progressive alignment of HD's procedures and practices to BD's requirements.
- (c) Strengthening administrative control over accountability through the application of equivalent Authorized Persons / Registered Structural Engineers in consultant projects and the designation of contractors' Authorized Signatories / Technical Directors.
- (d) Revisiting HD's specifications, procedures and practices.
- (e) Engagement of Independent Structural Checking Consultant for selected projects.
- (f) Strengthening staff training on the buildings regulations and their application.

48. An additional Assistant Director post has been created to head the ICU and develop the third party building control system for HA project (Paper no. HRC 19/2001 refers). A status report on the works of the ICU was submitted for Members' information in May 2001 (Paper no. BC 62/2001, QH 09/2001 refers).

49. The ICU now carries out third party checking of new projects that were approved by Members from May 2000, through formal checking of General Building Plans, Foundation Plans and Drainage Plans. Upon the approval of plans, the project teams then apply for the issue of a consent before the commencement of any foundation or building work. The checking process is modeled on that of the BD and in parallel, the ICU has taken action to align the Department's existing practices with the BD requirements in consultation with both the BD and

the specialist works groups in HD.

50. The first stage of the ICU implementation has been smooth and there has been a positive response from the project teams and constructive liaison with the BD. An appeal process has been promulgated whereby interpretation of the regulations and decisions of the ICU may be channeled back to BD to ensure that there is a consistent approach on HD projects.

51. The second stage implementation of independent checking of projects will start in April 2002 and will expand the checking consistent with the cycle of typical projects and will cover the superstructure of buildings, the building envelope, excavation and lateral support plans, demolition plans and site inspection. In addition, the ICU will carry out third-party checking of on-going building projects that were approved by Members before May 2000.