

Head 35 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: BEIJING OFFICE

Controlling officer: the Director, Beijing Office will account for expenditure under this Head.

Estimate 2004–05 **\$48.3m**

Establishment ceiling 2004–05 (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 17 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2004 reducing by four posts to 13 posts as at 31 March 2005 **\$10.6m**

In addition there will be an estimated three directorate posts as at 31 March 2004 and as at 31 March 2005.

Controlling Officer's Report

Programmes

Programme (1) Liaison This programme contributes to Policy Area 28: Constitutional Affairs (Secretary for Constitutional Affairs).

Programme (2) HKSAR Immigration-related Matters This programme contributes to Policy Area 10: Immigration Control (Secretary for Security).

Detail

Programme (1): Liaison

	2002–03 (Actual)	2003–04 (Original)	2003–04 (Revised)	2004–05 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	36.3	35.5	33.7 (–5.1%)	35.2 (+4.5%)

(or –0.8% on
2003–04 Original)

Aim

2 The aim is to enhance liaison and communication with the Central People's Government (CPG) and other Mainland authorities.

Brief Description

3 The Beijing Office's role is to further enhance liaison and communication between the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and the CPG and other Mainland authorities. This will enable the Government of the HKSAR to have a better understanding of the policies and practices in the Mainland and to evaluate their possible implications on Hong Kong. In addition, we also provide an accurate and up-to-date picture of the HKSAR to the CPG, other Mainland authorities and Mainland residents to facilitate their understanding of how the provisions of the Basic Law, in particular "One Country, Two Systems" and "Hong Kong people running Hong Kong" with "a high degree of autonomy", are being put into practice.

4 The Beijing Office's main responsibilities under this programme are to:

- provide information about the HKSAR to the CPG, other Mainland authorities and non-governmental bodies;
- keep the relevant bureaux and departments of the Government of the HKSAR informed about the latest developments in the Mainland;
- take necessary action with the Mainland authorities on specific issues on the basis of the instructions of the relevant bureaux and departments of the Government of the HKSAR;
- liaise with the CPG and other Mainland authorities;
- liaise with HKSAR non-governmental bodies in the Mainland;
- provide logistical support to visiting delegations of the Government of the HKSAR;
- provide information on Hong Kong to, and handle enquiries and requests for assistance (other than those relating to personal safety) from, the general public; and
- promote Hong Kong in the Mainland with a view to enhancing the Mainland residents' understanding of Hong Kong's systems and latest developments, strengthening trade and economic links, and facilitating exchanges between Hong Kong and the Mainland.

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5 In 2003, the Beijing Office continued to maintain close contact with the CPG and other Mainland authorities. It facilitated the discussion and follow-up of substantive issues between various government bureaux and departments and their counterparts in the Mainland. It monitored closely major developments in the Mainland, and kept relevant bureaux and departments in the Government of the HKSAR informed of these developments so that they could assess the implications on Hong Kong and disseminate the information to the business community and other parties as appropriate.

6 With the increased official exchanges between the Government of the HKSAR and the Mainland authorities, the Beijing Office had put more emphasis on facilitating such exchanges during the year. It assisted in arranging visits and exchanges for delegations both from Hong Kong and from the Mainland. It provided logistical support to HKSAR Government delegations visiting the Mainland. Details of such visits and exchanges are (with number in brackets): visits of officials from the Government of the HKSAR to the Mainland (33), visits of Mainland officials to the HKSAR (18), and visits of Mainland non-government bodies to the HKSAR (6).

7 The promotion of Hong Kong's business and professional sectors in the Mainland continued to be a major task of the Beijing Office in 2003. The Office organised two major promotions in Fujian and Zhejiang provinces to promote Hong Kong's financial services, professional services, tourism, logistics, inward investment, as well as various trade and industry sectors. The promotions were the first two promotional events of the Government of the HKSAR in the Mainland after the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome and signing of the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement with the Mainland. The effectiveness of these promotions was evidenced by the number, level and representativeness of the attendees, the feedback of participants, media reports, the promotional impact in the relevant region, and attendees' interests in participating in similar activities in future. These promotional activities had received extensive and prominent coverage from the central, local and Hong Kong media, and aroused immense interest particularly in the places where the promotion was held. Both local and Hong Kong participants were generally of the view that such activities would enhance mutual understanding and help establish contacts, and were conducive to future economic co-operation between business and professional sectors in Hong Kong and the Mainland. It is understood that some of them had initiated direct contact after the promotion to discuss co-operation projects.

8 The Beijing Office also maintained close contact with the Beijing Organising Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad and kept in view the preparation of the ExPo 2010 Shanghai China with a view to keeping Hong Kong up-dated of the business opportunities arising from the Games and the Expo and promoting the advantages of Hong Kong companies.

9 The Beijing Office continued to broadcast a weekly radio programme to keep the residents in the southern part of the Mainland abreast of the latest developments in Hong Kong. The programme, which was broadcast in Cantonese on China National Radio Hua Xia Zhi Sheng, was estimated to have reached an audience of at least 1 500 000 in that area.

10 The Beijing Office handled 288 enquiries and 321 requests for assistance (other than those relating to personal safety) from the general public in 2003. Details are as follows:

- Public enquiries: trade and business-related enquiries (32), enquiries seeking information on the Government of the HKSAR or organisations in Hong Kong (66), enquiries seeking information on the Mainland (47), miscellaneous enquiries or expression of views (62) and initial enquiries relating to request for assistance (81).
- Request for assistance: business and trade disputes (64), complaints relating to real property in the Mainland (50), complaints against administrative, law enforcement and judicial agencies in the Mainland (139) and others (68).

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2004–05

11 In 2004–05, the Beijing Office will continue to:

- assist in the implementation of the Government's plan to foster closer co-operation between the Mainland and Hong Kong;
- further its promotional activities in selected provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities taking into consideration the potential for developing business opportunities between Hong Kong and the Mainland location concerned, and interests of the various sectors of the HKSAR;
- keep concerned parties in Hong Kong up-dated of the preparatory work of the 2008 Olympic Games and the Expo 2010 Shanghai China, in particular the related business opportunities; and
- implement the project to acquire permanent accommodation for the Office.

Programme (2): HKSAR Immigration-related Matters

	2002–03 (Actual)	2003–04 (Original)	2003–04 (Revised)	2004–05 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	13.8	13.0	12.4 (–4.6%)	13.1 (+5.6%)
				(or +0.8% on 2003–04 Original)

Aim

12 The aim is to facilitate the application of foreign nationals in the Mainland for entry visas to the HKSAR and to maintain close liaison with relevant CPG departments as well as foreign diplomatic corps in Beijing on immigration matters.

Brief Description

13 The Immigration Section of the Beijing Office deals with the following HKSAR immigration-related matters:

- processing applications for entry to Hong Kong for visit, employment, investment, training, residence and education in accordance with approved immigration policies and procedures;
- conducting negotiations on visa-free access with foreign diplomatic missions which have embassies only in Beijing but do not have representation in the HKSAR;
- liaising with diplomatic corps in Beijing on HKSAR immigration matters;
- liaising and maintaining contacts with counterparts in relevant CPG departments on immigration and nationality matters;
- providing practical assistance to Hong Kong residents in distress in the Mainland; and
- providing information to, and handling enquiries from the general public.

14 In 2003, the Beijing Office received 219 requests for assistance from Hong Kong residents in distress in the Mainland. Of these, 54 cases involved the loss of travel documents or monies, and 69 cases were from persons who were in danger, involved in traffic accidents, injured or whose relatives had passed away in the Mainland. The remaining 96 cases involved the detention of Hong Kong residents in the Mainland.

15 For cases involving the loss of travel documents and monies, the Beijing Office would after confirming the identity of the Hong Kong residents, issue Entry Permit for their return to Hong Kong and contact their families in Hong Kong for remittance to settle their expenses incurred in the Mainland. In the event that assistance could not be sought immediately from their family members, the Beijing Office could advance a suitable amount of money to the persons in question subject to their undertaking to repay the advanced sum in full and return to Hong Kong immediately. In 2003, there were five cases requiring provision from the advance account, involving a total of RMB21,937.

16 For Hong Kong residents seeking assistance due to traffic accidents, injuries, illness, dangerous situations or fatal cases requiring follow up actions with their families, etc., the Beijing Office would contact the relevant Mainland authorities to ensure that the following assistance was promptly provided:

- processing the lost documents and assisting Hong Kong residents in applying for entry and exit permits and death notarial certificates;
- contacting family/travel agencies to arrange for the expeditious return of the injured person(s) to Hong Kong for treatment;
- co-ordinating with relevant departments in the HKSAR Government regarding the necessary arrangements relating to the reception of the injured person(s) in Hong Kong; and
- assisting the families and/or relatives of the deceased Hong Kong residents in completing the procedures for the transportation of their corpses back to Hong Kong.

17 For those Hong Kong residents being detained in the Mainland, the Beijing Office would pass on and reflect their requests or their family members' requests to relevant authorities and follow up the cases, including the Public Security Departments, General Administration of Customs, Committee of Political Science and Law under the Communist Party of China Central Committee, People's Procuratorates, People's Courts, and Bureau for Letters and Calls. In 2003, the number of detention cases for which assistance was sought from the Beijing Office was 96. Those involved in 12 of these cases were released, another 45 of the cases were serving sentences, and the remaining 39 cases were under detention pending charges and prosecution.

- The reasons for detention were as follows: fraud/illegal operation/false capital contribution/false official tax receipt (30), smuggling (26), smuggling/manufacturing of narcotic drugs (12), official tort/misappropriation (5), theft/robbery/kidnapping (4), breach of state order (4), common assault (4), murder with intent (2), business dispute (2), giving away information without authorisation (2), buying/selling gun (1), corruption (1), illegal migration (1), organising for illegal migration (1) and traffic accident (1).
- The places for detention were as follows: Guangdong (57), Beijing (9), Fujian (6), Zhejiang (6), Guangxi (3), Jiangxi (3), Yunnan (3), Shanghai (2), Henan (2), Sichuan (1), Shandong (1), Hainan (1), Tianjin (1) and Qinghai (1).

18 The Immigration Section handled 4 653 public enquiries on immigration matters.

19 In 2003, the Beijing Office met all of its performance targets.

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20 The key performance measures in respect of HKSAR immigration-related matters are:

Targets

	Target	2002 (Actual)	2003 (Actual)	2004 (Plan)
average processing time per case				
unreferred visas/entry permits				
within three working days (%)	95	98	98	98
referred visas/entry permits within				
six weeks upon receipt of				
supporting documents (%).....	75	85	85	85
normal response time per case				
assistance to Hong Kong residents				
in distress in the Mainland within				
same day upon request (%).....	95	95	95	95

Indicators

	2002 (Actual)	2003 (Actual)	2004 (Estimate)
unreferred visas/entry permit cases			
received.....	8 038	6 074	6 000
processed	7 956	6 074	6 000
referred visas/entry permit cases			
received.....	5 055	3 810	3 900
processed	5 130	3 659	3 900
provide practical assistance to Hong Kong residents in			
distress in the Mainland, including handling of cases			
involving the detention of Hong Kong residents	209	219	200

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2004–05

21 During 2004–05, the Immigration Section of the Beijing Office will:

- maintain its service to the public by processing 98% of unreferred visa/entry permit applications within three working days and 85% of referred visa/entry permit applications within six weeks upon receipt of supporting documents; and
- continue to provide practical assistance to Hong Kong residents in distress in the Mainland, including handling of more complicated cases involving detention of Hong Kong residents, and follow up cases which have been referred to the appropriate Mainland authorities.

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ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

Programme	2002-03 (Actual) (\$m)	2003-04 (Original) (\$m)	2003-04 (Revised) (\$m)	2004-05 (Estimate) (\$m)
(1) Liaison.....	36.3	35.5	33.7	35.2
(2) HKSAR Immigration-related Matters	13.8	13.0	12.4	13.1
	50.1	48.5	46.1 (-4.9%)	48.3 (+4.8%)
				(or -0.4% on 2003-04 Original)

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

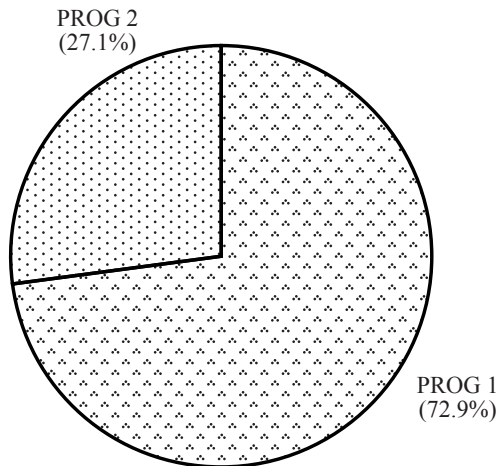
Programme (1)

Provision for 2004-05 is \$1.5 million (4.5%) higher than the revised estimate for 2003-04. This is mainly due to the provision required to pay one-off allowances for staff on transfer and the decentralisation of the funding for the payment of disturbance allowance to officers posted to and from the Beijing Office, partly offset by the deletion of two permanent posts.

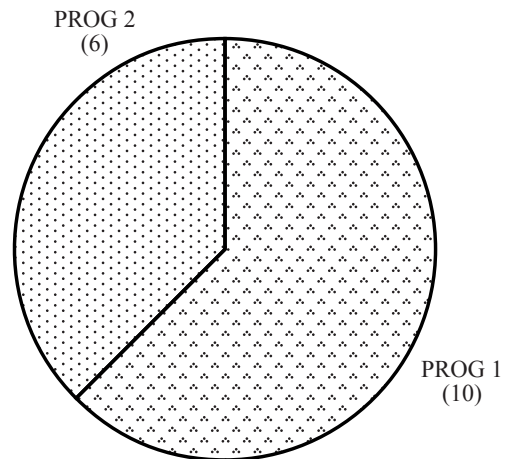
Programme (2)

Provision for 2004-05 is \$0.7 million (5.6%) higher than the revised estimate for 2003-04. This is mainly due to the provision required to pay one-off allowances for staff on transfer and the decentralisation of the funding for the payment of disturbance allowance to officers posted to and from the Beijing Office, partly offset by the deletion of two permanent posts.

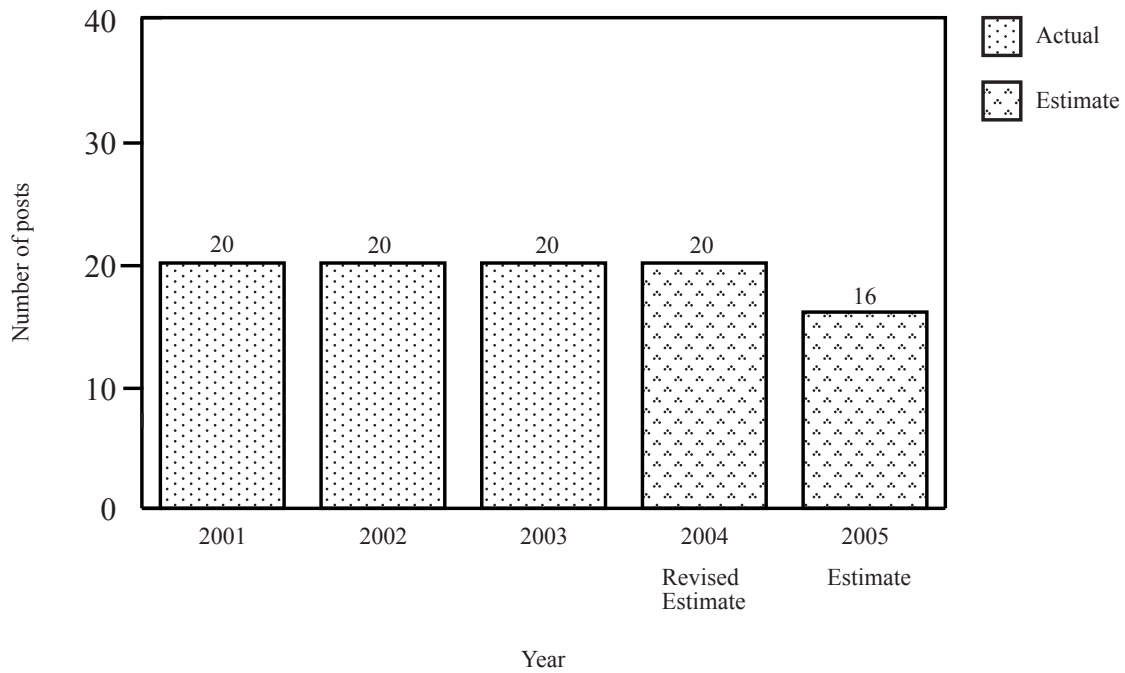
Allocation of provision to programmes (2004-05)



Staff by programme (as at 31 March 2005)



Changes in the size of the establishment (as at 31 March)



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Sub-head (Code)	Actual expenditure 2002-03	Approved estimate 2003-04	Revised estimate 2003-04	Estimate 2004-05	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
Operating Account					
Recurrent					
000	Operational expenses	—	48,457	46,024	48,256
	Salaries	15,985	—	—	—
	Allowances	12,717	—	—	—
	Hire of services and professional fees	1,653	—	—	—
	General departmental expenses.....	10,496	—	—	—
	Publicity	3,740	—	—	—
	Total, Recurrent.....	44,591	48,457	46,024	48,256
Non-Recurrent					
	General non-recurrent.....	5,498	60	60	—
	Total, Non-Recurrent.....	5,498	60	60	—
	Total, Operating Account	50,089	48,517	46,084	48,256
Total Expenditure					
	Total Expenditure	50,089	48,517	46,084	48,256

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Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2004–05 for the salaries and expenses of the Beijing Office is \$48,256,000. This represents an increase of \$2,172,000 over the revised estimate for 2003–04 and a decrease of \$1,833,000 against actual expenditure in 2002–03.

Operating Account

Recurrent

2 Provision of \$48,256,000 under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is for the salaries, allowances and other operating expenses of the Beijing Office.

3 The establishment as at 31 March 2004 will be 20 permanent posts. It is expected that four permanent posts will be deleted in 2004–05. Subject to certain conditions, the controlling officer may under delegated power create or delete non-directorate posts during 2004–05, but the notional annual mid-point salary value of all such posts must not exceed \$10,629,000.

4 An analysis of the financial provision under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is as follows:

	2002–03 (Actual) (\$'000)	2003–04 (Original) (\$'000)	2003–04 (Revised) (\$'000)	2004–05 (Estimate) (\$'000)
Personal Emoluments				
- Salaries	15,985	16,544	16,253	16,477
- Allowances	12,717	13,961	12,139	13,069
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Disturbance allowance	—	—	—	613
Departmental Expenses				
- Hire of services and professional fees.....	1,653	1,903	1,699	2,209
- General departmental expenses	10,496	11,749	11,633	11,588
Other Charges				
- Publicity	3,740	4,300	4,300	4,300
	44,591	48,457	46,024	48,256