

ITEM FOR ESTABLISHMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

HEAD 143 – GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT : CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU

HEAD 115 – OFFICIAL LANGUAGES AGENCY

Subhead 000 Operational expenses

Members are invited to recommend to Finance Committee the following proposal to facilitate the incorporation of the Official Languages Agency into the Civil Service Bureau with effect from 1 July 2003 and the provision of administrative support to the Secretary for the Civil Service –

- (a) the deletion of the following grade and rank –

Chief Conference Interpreter
(D1) (\$98,595 - \$104,615);

- (b) the deletion of the following permanent posts in the existing Official Languages Agency –

1 Administrative Officer Staff Grade B
(D3) (\$128,365 - \$136,015);

1 Chief Conference Interpreter
(D1) (\$98,595 - \$104,615);

/(c)

- (c) the creation of the following permanent post in the existing Civil Service Bureau –

1 Administrative Officer Staff Grade C/
non-civil service position at D2-equivalent
(D2) (\$117,040 - \$124,305);

- (d) the deletion of the following supernumerary post in the existing Civil Service Bureau –

1 Administrative Officer Staff Grade C
(D2) (\$117,040 - \$124,305); and

- (e) an increase in the ceiling placed on the total notional annual mid-point salary value of all non-directorate posts in the permanent establishment under Head 143 in 2003-04 from \$137,508,000 by \$106,661,000 to \$244,169,000.

PROBLEM

We consider that there is scope for streamlining the organisation structure and working relationship between the Official Languages Agency (OLA) and the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) and for rationalising the service delivery and the role of OLA, thereby achieving better efficiency and economy. Separately, we need to formalise the arrangement whereby an Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (AOSGC) (D2) post within CSB has been temporarily re-deployed since 1 July 2002 to provide the Secretary for the Civil Service (SCS) with administrative support under the accountability system.

PROPOSAL

2. We propose that, with effect from 1 July 2003 –

- (a) OLA be subsumed under CSB;

/(b)

- (b) one post of Commissioner for Official Languages (COL) (Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (AOSGB)) (D3) (\$128,365 - \$136,015) and one post of Chief Conference Interpreter (CCI) (D1) (\$98,595 - \$104,615) in OLA be deleted and, consequentially, the grade and rank of CCI, which is a one-rank grade, be deleted;
- (c) one AOSGC (D2) post/non-civil service position at D2-equivalent (\$117,040 - \$124,305) be created in CSB to serve as the Administrative Assistant to SCS (AA/SCS);
- (d) one supernumerary AOSGC (D2) post in CSB be deleted in advance of its expiry on 31 December 2003; and
- (e) the ceiling placed on the total notional annual mid-point salary value of all non-directorate posts in the permanent establishment under Head 143 in 2003-04 be increased from \$137,508,000 by \$106,661,000 to \$244,169,000 to facilitate the transfer of non-directorate posts from OLA to CSB.

JUSTIFICATION

3. CSB has implemented Phase One of its reorganisation on 1 November 2002 by reorganising its internal organisation structure and devolving more human resources management responsibility to bureaux and departments. The exercise has enabled bureaux and departments to assume greater ownership in the management of their staff, accelerated the decision-making processes and achieved a better use of manpower resources. As compared with March 2002, the Bureau will be able to reduce its establishment by about 10% or 34 non-directorate posts by mid 2003, representing a net savings of about \$9.5 million in terms of full annual average staff cost.

4. In Phase Two of CSB's reorganisation exercise, we have reviewed the working relationship between CSB and OLA and the scope for further streamlining in the organisation structure. We consider that there is scope for rationalising the way OLA delivers its services. In addition, considering that the standard of Chinese language of civil servants has improved generally, OLA should reprioritise its work so that it is not just a primary service provider in respect of translation and interpretation services, but should also become the Government's language advisor in driving the effective use of the official languages in the civil service. The existing structure of OLA should be streamlined and OLA be subsumed under CSB to reflect these changes as well as to achieve economy in operation and maximise the use of resources.

/The

The existing structures of CSB and OLA

5. At present, there are a total of 21 (20 permanent and one supernumerary) civil service directorate posts in CSB and OLA –

- (a) for CSB, there are 18 directorate posts comprising the Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service (AOSGA1) (D8), three Deputy Secretaries (one AOSGB1 (D4) and two AOSGB (D3)), one Director of General Grades (D3), nine (eight permanent and one supernumerary posts of) Principal Assistant Secretaries (AOSGC) (D2), two Senior Principal Executive Officers (D2) and two Principal Executive Officers (D1); and
- (b) for OLA, there are three directorate posts comprising one COL (AOSGB) (D3), one Principal Chinese Language Officer (D1) and one CCI (D1).

Encls. 1 The existing organisation charts of CSB and OLA are at [Enclosures 1](#) and [2](#).
& 2

Rationalisation of service delivery and role of OLA

6. Since the establishment of the OLA in 1996, OLA has completed the major policy tasks with which it was originally entrusted. It has issued 44 sets of guidelines and standards for the use of official languages in the past six years. Through the intensive and concerted efforts on the promotion of wider use of Chinese by OLA and Chinese Language Officers (CLOs) stationed in bureaux and departments, many civil service colleagues are now more accustomed to drafting papers in Chinese and the standard in Chinese has improved generally. The overall level of Putonghua proficiency within the civil service is also improving steadily. As the Chinese language standard and Putonghua proficiency of civil servants further improve, the reliance on CLOs to provide the more straightforward and basic translation support and Putonghua interpretation service should diminish over time. A Training and Development Study for the CLO Grade conducted in 2002 has recommended that CLOs should, in the long run, also take up the enhanced role of language advisors and facilitators in driving the effective use of the official languages in the civil service, Chinese and Putonghua in particular. In addition to their core duties of translation, vetting and interpretation, they should also be engaged in other language-related services such as drafting speeches for senior officers, or acting as language advisors/tutors for other officers.

7. In brief, there is scope for streamlining the organisation structure of OLA and for rationalising service delivery to achieve savings, providing at the same time a foundation for CLOs to take up the enhanced role as language experts.

/Organisational

Organisational change

Incorporation of OLA into CSB

8. To tie in with the streamlining of operations and the rationalisation of service delivery, we propose to institute the following changes to the organisation structure of OLA –

- (a) to subsume OLA under CSB with effect from 1 July 2003. To underline the great importance the Government continues to attach to improving the language standard of civil servants, the office will be placed under a D4 officer in CSB, namely the existing Deputy Secretary (Civil Service)¹. This senior directorate officer will assist SCS in assuming the overall responsibility for both the formulation and implementation of the Government's language policies in the civil service, and in overseeing all relevant policy matters. The officer will also be the Head of the CLO, the Interpreter (Simultaneous Interpretation) (I(SI)) and the Calligraphist grades. The existing and proposed job descriptions of Deputy Secretary (Civil Service)¹ are at [Enclosures 3 and 4](#); and
- (b) to streamline OLA's structure by deleting 25 posts, including two directorate posts, namely one post of COL (AOSGB) (D3) and one post of CCI (D1) which is vacant at present, and 23 non-directorate posts¹.

Encls. 3
& 4

9. Upon the reorganisation, the OLA will maintain its role as the Government's primary service provider of translation, vetting and interpretation services. At the same time, it will strengthen its provision of other language-related services with a more streamlined structure. For example, it will act as the language advisor in the civil service; serve as the language research and support centre for the Government; assume an active role in facilitating the use of Chinese on computing systems and network; provide support services to facilitate the outsourcing of translation assignments, etc. On the other hand, in view of the fact that OLA's structure will be streamlined with a reduction of some CLO posts, service priorities in respect of translation work may need to be reviewed and reset if necessary.

/Redeployment

¹ Including one Interpreter (Simultaneous Interpretation) post which has been deleted on 1 April 2003.

Redeployment to SCS's private office

10. Under the accountability system introduced on 1 July 2002, each Director of Bureau is to have his/her own private office, comprising an administrative assistant (equivalent to AOSGC rank), and other non-directorate support staff. The financial provisions for these posts in the Director of Bureau's private office are to be made available through internal redeployment of resources within the bureau concerned. To provide administrative support to SCS, we have, since 1 July 2002, temporarily redeployed an AOSGC (D2) post within CSB as AA/SCS. The redeployment was made possible by combining the original duties of the AOSGC post (in appointments matters) with those of another supernumerary AOSGC post (which was created up to end 2003 to oversee the preparatory work for the implementation of the new Civil Service Provident Fund).

Encl. 5 11. We now propose to formalise the arrangement by creating an AOSGC (D2) post/non-civil service position at D2-equivalent upon the incorporation of OLA into CSB to accommodate AA/SCS. When Members considered the creation of non-civil service positions of principal officials under the accountability system in June 2002 (EC(2002-03)2), Members noted that the principal official's administrative assistant would be pitched at a level equivalent to AOSGC (D2). These positions could be filled by civil servants on postings or by way of direct appointment to non-civil service positions at the rank of D2-equivalent. Hence, while the incumbent AA/SCS is an AOSGC, we propose to rank the administrative assistant at AOSGC (D2)/non-civil service position at D2-equivalent to provide SCS with flexibility in filling this position. The job description of the AA/SCS post is at [Enclosure 5](#). Upon creation of the AA/SCS post, the permanent AOSGC post redeployed so far to undertake the duty of AA/SCS may then be released to take up its original duties as well as the duties of the supernumerary AOSGC post mentioned above. The supernumerary AOSGC post can also be deleted concurrently in advance of its expiry on 31 December 2003.

Proposed structure of the new CSB

Encl. 6 12. The proposed new organisation chart of CSB following the proposed incorporation of OLA into CSB on 1 July 2003 is at [Enclosure 6](#). There will be a net deletion of one directorate post arising from the deletion of one AOSGB (D3) post and one CCI (D1) post and the creation of one AOSGC (D2) post/non-civil service position at D2-equivalent. In addition, a supernumerary AOSGC (D2) post will also be deleted on 1 July 2003 in advance of its expiry on 31 December 2003. The total directorate establishment of CSB and OLA will then be reduced from 21 to 19 posts.

/Increase

Increase in the establishment ceiling for Head 143 – Government Secretariat : Civil Service Bureau

13. Following the deletion of one vacant I(SI) post on 1 April 2003, there are three directorate posts and 216 non-directorate posts in OLA. Upon reorganisation, two directorate posts (COL and CCI) in OLA will be deleted on 1 July 2003. Another 22 non-directorate posts in the Agency will be deleted by phases after 1 July 2003 having regard to departure of staff through natural wastage, voluntary retirement and redeployment to other bureaux/departments. We will process changes in the non-directorate establishment through the Departmental Establishment Committee. As a result of the incorporation of OLA into CSB, Head 115 – OLA will be deleted and the existing establishment of 216 non-directorate posts under this Head will be placed under Head 143 – CSB starting from 1 July 2003. Hence, the ceiling placed on the total notional annual mid-point salary value of non-directorate posts in the permanent establishment under Head 143 – CSB in 2003-04 should be correspondingly increased from \$137,508,000 by \$106,661,000 to \$244,169,000. Subject to endorsement of this reorganisation proposal by the Establishment Sub-committee, we will seek the approval of the Finance Committee for the deletion of Head 115 – OLA and for supplementary provision under Head 143 – CSB.

Staff consultation

14. We have consulted members of the CLO, I(SI) and Calligraphist grades and other staff representatives. The majority of them have no strong views about the proposed incorporation of OLA into CSB. A large number of CLOs have offered constructive views on the implementation details and the future role of the Grade. We will take into account these views when finalising the implementation details.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

15. The proposed changes involving directorate posts will bring about the following net savings in notional annual salary cost at mid-point –

	\$	No. of posts
Deletion of posts		
AOSGB (D3)	1,585,680	1
CCI (D1)	1,217,520	1
Less		
New permanent post		
AOSGC (D2)/non-civil service position at D2-equivalent	1,448,040	1
Net savings	1,355,160	1

/The

The net savings in full annual average staff cost, including salaries and staff on-cost, is about \$2,147,000. In addition there will be a one-off saving of \$1,236,000 (in full annual average staff cost) arising from the deletion of a supernumerary AOSGC post six months in advance.

16. In addition, following rationalisation of service delivery, it is anticipated there will be an additional savings of \$10,570,000 (in full annual average staff cost) arising from the phased deletion of 23 non-directorate posts in OLA. The total savings in full annual average directorate and non-directorate staff cost may amount to \$12,717,000.

ESTABLISHMENT CHANGES

17. The establishment changes in CSB and OLA for the last two years are as follows –

Establishment (Note)	Number of posts		
	Existing (as at 1.4.2003)	as at 1.4.2002	as at 1.4.2001
CSB			
A	17+(1)	17+(1)	17+(1)
B	100	95	96
C	210	227	240
Total	327+(1)	339+(1)	353+(1)
OLA			
A	3	3	3
B	79	81	82
C	137	131	143
Total	219	215	228

Note :

- A - ranks in the directorate pay scale or equivalent
- B - non-directorate ranks the maximum pay point of which is above MPS point 33 or equivalent
- C - non-directorate ranks the maximum pay point of which is at or below MPS point 33 or equivalent
- () - number of supernumerary directorate posts

/CONSULTATION

CONSULTATION WITH LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL

18. The Legislative Council Panel on Public Service was consulted on the proposal on 17 March 2003 and Members indicated support to the proposal.

ADVICE OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DIRECTORATE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

19. The Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service has advised that the grading proposed for the AA/SCS post would be appropriate if the post was to be created.

Civil Service Bureau
May 2003