

Executive Summary

Introduction

1. Under the improved civil service pay adjustment mechanism being developed by the Government, the conduct of periodic pay level surveys will be the principal means to ascertain whether civil service pay is broadly comparable with private sector pay.
2. In March 2005, the Government decided to conduct a pay level survey for the civil service using the methodology developed under the Phase One Consultancy. The purpose of this Phase Two Consultancy is to carry out the field work of the pay level survey as guided by the following principles -
 - (a) adhering to the survey methodology developed under the Phase One Consultancy and adopted by the Government;
 - (b) carrying out the survey field work in a professional and impartial manner;
 - (c) following the industry practice in various stages of work, where applicable, in ensuring the credibility of the survey results in the eyes of the public;
 - (d) on the proviso that guiding principle (b) above is not compromised, facilitating the participation of, and the consultation with, relevant staff bodies and staff representatives in various stages of the survey to ensure credibility of the survey results in the eyes of the civil service; and
 - (e) ensuring that the results of the survey will be understood by the general public and accepted as a professional and credible piece of work.
3. Upon the recommendation of the Phase One Consultant, the broadly-defined job family method was adopted by the Government as the methodology of the pay level survey. Notwithstanding the inherent differences between the civil service and the private sector, this methodology enables us to assess broad comparability between civil service pay and private sector pay by comparing jobs on the basis of readily comprehensible job characteristics.
4. Under the adopted survey methodology, an intensive job inspection process is to be carried out to gather detailed job-related characteristics of the civil service benchmark jobs, including their job content, work nature, level of responsibility and typical requirements on qualification and experience. The information will then be used for the preparation of job descriptions for the identification of private sector benchmark jobs. This process, to be conducted with close participation of grade/departmental management, Departmental Consultative Committees (DCCs), staff unions/associations and post-holder representatives, will help ensure proper job matching based on detailed information on the civil service benchmark jobs.
5. Prior to carrying out the job inspections, in September and October 2005, we consulted management, DCCs and all staff unions/associations on our proposed approach for the job inspection process. Taking account of the consultation feedback, we have finalised the job inspection approach as set out in this interim report.

6. Through the above consultation process, we have taken on board most of the views expressed by staff representatives and incorporated them into the job inspection approach. For example -

- (a) We have reviewed and refined the list of benchmark jobs in the light of the consultation feedback (see paragraph 9 below). We shall further consult management and staff bodies during the job inspection process before deciding any further refinements to the benchmark list for matching with private sector jobs are warranted;
- (b) In the light of views of some staff bodies, we have fine-tuned the various documents (e.g. job analysis questionnaire) for the collection of information on civil service benchmark jobs (see paragraph 10 below);
- (c) Upon the suggestion of some staff bodies, we have prepared detailed guidelines on the consultation arrangements for the job inspection process to ensure that the consultation will cover not only the DCCs but also staff unions/associations concerned (see paragraphs 11 and 16 below). We have also renewed our guiding principle that the Consultative Group and other staff bodies will be closely engaged throughout the job inspection process;
- (d) Taking account of staff's views, we have recommended that staff unions/associations be invited to nominate post-holder representatives for attending the job inspection interviews. As a broad reference for the management in finalising the list of post-holder representatives, we have specified that half of the post-holder representatives should come from the nominations of staff unions/associations while the other half from those of the management (see paragraph 15 below);
- (e) In view of staff bodies' views that the diversity and uniqueness of benchmark jobs should be adequately covered in the job inspection process, we have recommended that flexibility could be exercised in determining the actual number of representative posts/post-holder representatives to be drawn from each benchmark job (see paragraph 13 below). Specifically for common grades, we have recommended to cast the net of post-holder representatives wide by selecting representative posts from all departments with 100 or more posts of the benchmark grade and to exercise further flexibility for grades with high diversity in job functions (see paragraph 12(g) below); and
- (f) Taking account of staff bodies' suggestion about the timing for data collection, we have recommended that the reference date for this survey (i.e. the date of the pay data to be collected from the private sector) should be set at 1 April 2006 (see paragraph 22 below).

7. Following the completion of the job inspection process, we shall develop proposals on the next stage of work for further consultation with parties concerned in due course.

List of Civil Service Benchmark Jobs

8. Having reviewed the selection criteria of civil service benchmark jobs recommended by the Phase One Consultant, we conclude that no further refinement to the

criteria is necessary. We have also conducted a sample survey of the pay practices of non-government organisations (NGOs) in the education, medical and health care, and social welfare fields, the results of which showed that the professional staff of a majority of the NGOs in the above three fields either followed a pay scale similar to the civil service or did not meet the relevant criteria for participating in the survey. We conclude that the relevant civil service jobs in these fields should not be included in the survey field.

9. Having reviewed the provisional list of civil service benchmark jobs drawn up by the Phase One Consultant, we have added two grades (Postal Officer and Postman) involving 5 ranks to the list, and taken out 4 grades (Training Officer, Environmental Protection Officer, Environmental Protection Inspector and Amenities Assistant) involving 14 ranks from the list. The revised list comprises a total of 193 ranks in 61 grades, representing about 46% of the total civil service establishment.

Collection of Information on Civil Service Benchmark Jobs

10. In preparation for the job inspection interviews, we will first collect job-related information on the civil service benchmark jobs to facilitate the drafting of job briefs for each of them. We have prepared a job analysis questionnaire to facilitate the collection of the following information on the civil service benchmark jobs –

- (i) typical requirements on qualifications and experience;
- (ii) major responsibilities and nature of job;
- (iii) work assignment practices;
- (iv) posting patterns;
- (v) working relationship of the grade concerned with other grades; and
- (vi) other relevant features of the grade.

11. To facilitate consultation with the relevant staff bodies, we have drawn up detailed consultation guidelines for grade/departmental management to follow in compiling information on the civil service benchmark jobs.

Selection of Post-holder Representatives for Job Inspection Interviews

12. Post-holder representatives will be drawn from those representative posts that are typical and reasonably representative of the benchmark jobs in terms of various job-related characteristics for attending the interviews. Having taken into account comments from staff representatives, we have drawn up the following guidelines for the selection of representative posts -

- (a) the number of representative posts of a benchmark job should have regard to the establishment size of the benchmark job;
- (b) the representative posts should come from the most common job functions/streams/specialisations of the benchmark job;

- (c) taking (a) and (b) together, more representative posts should be sampled from a job with more diversified duties than another job with similar establishment size;
- (d) if grade/departmental management consider that the inclusion of certain job functions/streams/specialisations that are not common in a benchmark job but is yet important in enabling us to better understand the job for subsequent matching with private sector matches, the management may select a small number of representative posts from these functions/streams/specialisations;
- (e) the number of representative posts from each job function/stream/specialisation should have regard to its establishment size;
- (f) the representative posts from each job function/stream/specialisation should as far as possible come from different departments or divisions/units within a department, where applicable; and
- (g) for common grades under the management of individual departments, the representative posts should be drawn from departments with 100 or more posts of the benchmark grade concerned (or if no department fulfils this criterion, from departments with 10% or more of the total establishment of the grade) (Nomination Departments). Flexibility can be exercised to invite grade management whose department does not have 100 or more posts of the benchmark grade to nominate a small number of representative posts if the total number of such posts under their management but posted to different departments does not fall far short of 100 and the duties of such posts are distinctively different from those under the Nomination Departments.

13. In determining the actual number of representative posts to be drawn from each benchmark job, flexibility should be exercised after having due regard to the specific circumstances of the benchmark job. Our current estimate is that a total of over 1,000 post-holder representatives will participate in the job inspection interviews.

14. To ensure that accurate and up-to-date information will be collected, the post-holder representatives to be drawn from the representative posts should:

- (a) be incumbent holders of the representative posts;
- (b) have at least 2 years of service in the current rank and post;
- (c) be able to provide up-to-date characteristics of the relevant civil service benchmark job; and
- (d) taken together, be representative of the benchmark job having regard to the duties, in totality, of the posts the job-holders are currently holding.

15. To further enhance staff participation in the job inspection process, we recommend that staff unions/associations should be invited to nominate post-holder representatives for consideration by the grade/departmental management. As a broad reference by the management in finalising the list of post-holder representatives, half of the post-holder representatives should come from the nominations of staff unions/associations while the other half from those of the management.

16. To facilitate consultation with staff bodies in the selection of representative posts and post-holder representatives, we have drawn up detailed consultation guidelines for grade/departmental management to follow.

Job Inspection Interviews with Post-holder Representatives

17. The job inspection interviews are intended to ascertain the information contained in the draft job briefs of civil service benchmark jobs and to provide another opportunity for the post-holder representatives to furnish any supplementary information. Given this purpose and having regard to the industry practice, we recommend that the job inspection interviews be conducted in the form of group interviews, with each interview normally comprising 6-8 post-holder representatives.

18. Each interview session will comprise two parts - an introductory part for all relevant parties followed by an interview between the post-holder representatives and consultants. In line with the industry practice, the interview part will be attended by post-holder representatives only without the presence of any third parties, including management and staff bodies. This is because interviews without third-party's involvement will enable the post-holder representatives to speak freely in the absence of any influence or pressure from third parties, whether actual or perceived. This is essential to maintaining public confidence in the process.

Documentation of the Job Inspection Process

19. The key deliverables of the job inspection process include the finalised list of civil service benchmark jobs, their job briefs as well as their categorisation by job family and job level. The finalised job briefs will be turned into job descriptions after formatting changes and highlighting those unique duties of the civil service benchmark jobs that may not be found in the corresponding private sector job matches. The job descriptions will be used in the job matching process to identify private sector jobs that are broadly comparable with the civil service benchmark jobs.

20. We will publish a report on the results of job inspections after the completion of the job inspection process so that parties concerned will be fully informed of how the job inspection process has been carried out.

Other Views on the Conduct of the Pay Level Survey

21. During the consultation on the job inspection approach, we have received comments on the survey timetable as well as the list of private sector job matches mentioned in the Phase One Consultant's Final Report. While these comments are not directly related to the job inspection approach, we have highlighted in this interim report our responses to them.

22. Regarding the survey timetable, having regard to the latest work progress and taking account of staff's comments, we recommend that the reference date for this survey (i.e. the date on which to compare civil service pay with private sector pay) should be set on 1 April 2006. Since it has been the established practice of the Government to effect annual pay adjustments on 1 April, the survey with a reference date on 1 April 2006 will provide ready information for the Government to consider civil service pay adjustment in 2006 without the need to conduct a supplementary survey after the pay level survey or any pay trend survey up to April 2006.

23. On the comments that certain private sector job matches in the Phase One Consultant's Final Report are not appropriate job matches of the corresponding civil service benchmark jobs, we wish to point out that Annex C of the Phase One Consultant's Final Report has already stated that the private sector job matches only serve as broad reference of possible job matches. To avoid any further ambiguity, in the job descriptions to be drawn up after the job inspection, we will not specify any job titles of the private sector jobs.

Next Steps

24. The table below summarises the next steps for the job inspection process -

Groundwork	Job interviews	Documentation
<p>Job analysis questionnaire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Management to consult staff bodies on information on the benchmark jobs before sending the completed questionnaire to Consultant <p>Nomination of post-holder representatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Management to consult staff bodies on the selection of representative posts ● Staff bodies to nominate post-holder representatives for consideration by management 	<p>Job interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consultant to prepare post-holder representatives for the job inspection interviews ● Consultant to conduct interviews with post-holder representatives after debriefing staff bodies/ representatives 	<p>Preparation of job briefs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consultant to consult post-holder representatives and staff bodies before finalising the job briefs and other relevant documents <p>Outcome of job inspection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consultant to make known and explain the outcome of job inspection to staff bodies/ representatives ● Consultant to provide a report on job inspection outcome