

**Interim Report on the Conduct of a Pay Level Survey for the Civil Service:
- Approach for Conducting the Job Inspection Process**

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Civil Service Bureau

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I. Introduction

Background

1.1 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 comparable with private sector pay.

1.2 In November 2003, the Government commissioned a consultant to draw up the methodology of the pay level survey (Phase One Consultancy). Taking into consideration the views of the parties concerned, the Phase One Consultant submitted the Final Report on the Methodology of a Pay Level Survey for the Civil Service in November 2004. The Phase One Consultant's recommendations formed part of the Consultation Paper on the Proposals on the Methodology of the Pay Level Survey and the Application of the Survey Results issued by the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) in November 2004 for consultation until January 2005. In the light of the consultation feedback, the Phase One Consultant had made refinements to his recommended pay level survey methodology, which are set out in the Report on Refined Recommendations on the Methodology of a Pay Level Survey for the Civil Service issued in March 2005.

Guiding principles of the Phase Two Consultancy

1.3 The purpose of the current consultancy (Phase Two Consultancy), commissioned by CSB in June 2005, is to carry out the field work of the pay level survey as well as the consolidation and analysis of the data collected in the survey.

1.4 In carrying out the various tasks under the Phase Two Consultancy, we are 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.

Job inspection process

1.5 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.

1.6 Under the 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 the 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 the 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. This interim report focuses primarily on the approach for conducting the job inspection process.

1.7 At the outset, we have drawn up a proposed approach for conducting the job inspection process in accordance with the survey methodology developed under the Phase One Consultancy and having regard to the industry practice in carrying out similar kind of work. On 2 and 14 September 2005, we conducted two technical sessions to brief the staff side members of the the Consultative Group on Civil Service Pay Adjustment Mechanism (Consultative Group)¹ on the proposed approach and listen to their views. Two similar briefing sessions were conducted for DCCs and all civil service staff unions/associations on 28 and 29 September 2005 respectively. Staff representatives were invited to let us have their views on the proposed approach by mid-October 2005.

1.8 By the end of the consultation, a total of 46 written submissions were received. Of these submissions, 5 were from grade/departmental management, 16 from staff sides of the DCCs and 25 from staff unions/associations. A summary of the views received and our responses are set out in **Annex B**. On 24 November and 30 November 2005, we presented the consultation feedback to the staff side members of the Consultative Group together with our responses. In finalising the job inspection approach as set out in this report, we have taken account of the views collected from the Consultative Group, various staff bodies and representatives through the above consultation process.

1.9 The approach for the job inspection process at the three main stages of work is detailed in the ensuing Sections –

(a) Before the job inspection interviews

- reviewing the provisional list of civil service benchmark jobs drawn up by the Phase One Consultant (including the conduct of a sample survey on the education, medical and health care and social welfare fields to ascertain if the pay practices in these fields are heavily influenced by civil service pay practice) (see Section II);
- collecting up-to-date job-related information on the civil service benchmark jobs (see Section III);
- sampling post-holder representatives from the civil service benchmark jobs for job inspection interviews (see Section IV);

¹ The Consultative Group on Civil Service Pay Adjustment Mechanism comprises the staff sides of the four civil service central consultative councils and representatives from the four major service-wide staff unions.

(b) Job inspection interviews

- conducting job inspection interviews with post-holder representatives (see Section V); and

(c) Documentation of the job inspection interviews

- compiling the various documents for the civil service benchmark jobs in the light of the job inspection outcome (see Section VI).

Next steps

1.10 Upon completion of the job inspection process, we shall proceed to the next stage of work, which is to collect pay data and other relevant information from private sector organisations and to consolidate and analyse the collected data according to the adopted survey methodology. When we are ready to proceed to this next stage of work, we shall develop detailed proposals on the relevant aspects for further consultation with parties concerned. Nonetheless, noting that some of the views collected during the consultation on the job inspection approach in September - October 2005 relate to these subsequent tasks, we have highlighted our preliminary responses to certain key issues in Section VII of this report.

II. List of Civil Service Benchmark Jobs

2.1 To ensure that the civil service benchmark jobs are reasonably representative of the civil service and have broadly comparable private sector job matches, the Phase One Consultant has recommended a set of criteria for selecting civil service benchmark jobs,² as follows –

- (a) the civil service benchmark jobs should have reasonable counterparts, in terms of broadly comparable job nature, skills, qualifications and experience, in a large number of private sector organisations;
- (b) the civil service benchmark jobs should be representative of the civil service: each civil service benchmark grade should have an establishment size of not less than 100 posts;
- (c) taken together, the civil service benchmark jobs should be reasonably representative of various civil service pay scales, the breadth of disciplines, the depth of job levels and the range of government bureaux/departments;
- (d) there should be a sufficient number of benchmark jobs at different job levels to ensure that the survey results are reliable;
- (e) the total number of benchmark jobs to be matched and for which private sector pay data are to be collected should be reasonable and manageable for the participating private sector organisations to ensure the integrity of the comparison on the one hand while not deterring these organisations from participating in the survey on the other.

2.2 In accordance with the above criteria, the Phase One Consultant has drawn up a provisional list of civil service benchmark jobs.³ Apart from those grades that do not have broadly comparable matches in the private sector (e.g. disciplined service grades), the provisional list does not include civil service grades in the education, medical and health care and social welfare fields on consideration that the employers in these fields mostly use civil service pay scales or pay adjustments as the major factors in determining the pay levels or the pay adjustments of their staff.

2.3 Under the Phase Two Consultancy, we are tasked to –

- (a) review the selection criteria of civil service benchmark jobs in paragraph 2.1 above to see if any refinement is necessary;
- (b) in accordance with the recommendation in the Phase One Consultant's Report on Refined Recommendation issued after the consultation exercise conducted between November 2004 and January 2005, conduct a sample survey of the non-

² See paragraph 2.42 of the Phase One Consultant's Final Report on the Methodology of a Pay Level Survey for the Civil Service.

³ The provisional list is set out in Annex C to the Phase One Consultant's Final Report on the Methodology of a Pay Level Survey for the Civil Service.

government organisations (NGOs)⁴ in the education, medical and health care and social welfare fields to ascertain if civil service pay practice still has a heavy influence on the pay levels of a substantial proportion of major NGOs in these fields;

- (c) based on the results in the sample survey in (b) above, advise whether civil service jobs in the three fields should be excluded from the survey field and if not, propose appropriate comparison organisations and identify appropriate civil service benchmark jobs in these fields for inclusion in the survey field; and
- (d) review the provisional list of civil service benchmark jobs drawn up by the Phase One Consultant.

Review of selection criteria of civil service benchmark jobs

2.4 We have reviewed the selection criteria of civil service benchmark jobs as recommended by the Phase One Consultant. We consider that the criteria can help ensure that the benchmark jobs will be reasonably representative of the civil service and that there are broadly comparable job matches in the private sector. These are two key ingredients of the methodology of the pay level survey. The criteria have also taken due account of the technical considerations in conducting a credible and professional pay level survey. We do not recommend any further refinement to the criteria for selecting civil service benchmark jobs.

Sample survey on the education, medical and health care and social welfare fields

2.5 The Phase One Consultant has recommended that civil service jobs in the education, medical and health care and social welfare fields should be excluded from the survey field. This is because the pay data collected from a field where the majority of its employers determine the pay level of their staff by reference to civil service pay would not provide any meaningful data for comparing civil service pay with private sector pay. It is worth noting that for the education field, around 89% of primary/secondary school teachers work in government or aided schools; for the medical and health care field, over 85% of hospital beds are in the public sector; and for the social welfare field, while the pay of some of the subvented social service providers may have been delinked from civil service pay scales, this has only been done recently and the actual pay levels may still reflect the legacy of civil service pay practices.

2.6 Nevertheless, in view of the staff's concern expressed during the consultation conducted in November 2004 – January 2005 about the exclusion of civil service jobs in these three fields, the Phase One Consultant has recommended that we should investigate representative samples of NGOs in these fields to confirm whether or not civil service pay practice still has a heavy influence on the pay levels of a substantial proportion of major NGOs in these fields.⁵ The following paragraphs describe in detail the process of conducting the sample survey.

⁴ In the context of this report, NGOs include all organisations which are not being part of the government, including private sector companies and government-owned or subsidised organisations.

⁵ See paragraph 3.17 of the Phase One Consultant's Report on Refined Recommendations Following the Extensive Consultation Conducted between November 2004 and January 2005.

Scope of the sample survey

2.7 The scope of the sample survey is to investigate if there is a substantial proportion of major NGOs in the education, medical & health care and social welfare fields whose pay practices are heavily influenced by civil service pay practice, and if not, to identify civil service benchmark jobs in these fields for inclusion in the survey field.

Sampling criteria of NGOs

2.8 Having regard to the purpose of the sample survey, the recommendations in the Phase One Consultant's Report on Refined Recommendations and other policy considerations, we have adopted the following sampling criteria in selecting NGOs for study in the sample survey –

- (a) NGOs which are known to have been following civil service pay practice should not be sampled for investigation, e.g. Hospital Authority in the medical and health care field⁶, aided schools in the education field⁷;
- (b) a target of 15-30 major NGOs in respect of each field (education, medical & health care and social welfare);
- (c) the sampled NGOs should normally employ 100 or more employees; and
- (d) taken together, the sampled NGOs for each field should constitute a representative sample of the major NGOs in the fields concerned.

The survey process

2.9 We first approached the relevant government bureaux/departments to obtain a list of NGOs in the three fields concerned. On the basis of the list of NGOs obtained, we sampled NGOs in accordance with the sampling criteria set out in paragraph 2.8 above for invitation to participate in the sample survey. As a result, a total of 88 NGOs from the three fields were sampled for invitation to participate in the sample survey. Of these NGOs, 19 were from the education field, 34 from the medical and health care field and 35 from the social welfare field.

2.10 We then extended the invitation of the CSB to each of the 88 NGOs sampled to participate in the sample survey. In addition, we had made follow-up calls to each of these NGOs to invite them to participate in the survey and to address any questions that they might have.

2.11 The 88 NGOs had been invited to complete a questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first part sought basic information on the surveyed NGOs for the purpose of ascertaining whether the NGOs met the sampling criteria, e.g. whether the NGO employed

⁶ The Hospital Authority (HA) has all along adjusted the dollar value of the HA pay scales according to the annual adjustments made to the civil service pay scales.

⁷ According to the Code of Aid, the pay of teachers of aided schools normally follows that of their civil service counterparts.

100 or more staff. The second part comprised seven questions concerning the pay practices of the surveyed NGOs and its relationship with the civil service pay practice. The seven questions, which were drawn from the Phase One Consultant's Report on Refined Recommendations,⁸ were as follows:

- Q1. Does your organisation follow a pay scale that is identical or highly similar to corresponding civil service pay scales, or cover a similar range of pay?
- Q2. Do you have the policy to adjust pay upwards and downwards by the same percentage as the civil service?
- Q3. If your organisation adopts a pay scale/pay range that is set with explicit reference to the civil service pay scales, is there an intention to change this policy in the next three years?
- Q4. a. If the pay scales are not the same or similar to corresponding civil service pay scales, were they once similar in the past, and how long has it been since the pay scales/pay ranges diverged?

b. Are the older pay scales/pay ranges still applied to some categories of staff, and if so, what is the percentage of the total work force?
- Q5. a. Does the pay system in the organisation include a cash allowance that is now or once was calculated with respect to the estimated value of allowances or fringe benefits given to civil servants?

b. Does the cash allowance contain any components of fringe benefits (e.g. benefits on housing, education, passage, etc)?

c. Is any component of the cash allowance subject to the rules against double benefits similar to the civil service practice (e.g. an officer is not eligible for the housing component of the cash allowance if his spouse is receiving housing benefits from her employer)?
- Q6. Are there any other unique characteristics about the employer-employee relationship of your organisation (e.g. part-time medical practitioners in a hospital)?
- Q7. Are there any other information that may help show whether your organisation is influenced by civil service pay practices?

2.12 Out of the 88 NGOs invited to participate in the survey, we received questionnaires from a total of 50 NGOs⁹, comprising 11 from the education field, 16 from

⁸ See paragraph 3.18 of the Phase One Consultant's Report on Refined Recommendations.

⁹ According to the information collected before the sample survey, all 50 NGOs sampled should have more than 100 employees. From the information collected in the returned questionnaires, we found that 48 of them have more than 100 employees but 2 do not. However, considering the fact that the number

the medical & health care field and 23 from the social welfare field. A list of those participating NGOs that have given consent to disclosure of their names is at **Annex C**. The overall response rate of the sample survey reached a level of 57%, which is satisfactory by industry standard.

Findings of the sample survey

2.13 From the responses of the NGOs concerned, the professional staff of a majority of the NGOs in the three fields either followed a pay scale similar to the civil service or which did not meet the criteria for participating in the survey. Details are as follows –

Table 2.1: Summary of Findings of the Sample Survey on the Education, Medical and Health Care and Social Welfare Fields

Field	No. of NGOs which returned questionnaires	No. of NGOs whose professional staff followed a pay scale similar to the civil service or which did not meet the criteria for participating in the survey
Education	11	11 (100%)
Medical and health care	16	14 (88%)
Social welfare	23	19 (83%)

2.14 Of the 11 respondents in the education field, five local schools indicated that the salary of their teachers followed a pay scale similar to the civil service whereas six international schools indicated that salary of their professional staff did not follow a pay scale similar to the civil service. Of these six international schools, five indicated that they had been following the annual civil service pay adjustments in adjusting the pay of their professional staff and the remaining one indicated that it mainly made reference to factors applying to places outside HK in determining the pay of their staff.

2.15 The 16 respondents in the medical & health care field comprised seven private hospitals, seven elderly homes and two nursing homes. Of the seven private hospitals which responded, three indicated that the salary of their doctors followed a pay scale similar to the civil service and the remaining four indicated that most of their doctors were non-resident doctors who were not their employees.¹⁰ As regards the other professional staff,¹¹ five of the seven responding private hospitals indicated that their pay followed a pay scale similar to that of the civil service. Of the 9 elderly homes and nursing homes which responded to the survey, all indicated that the salary of their nurses followed a pay scale similar to the civil service.

of staff employed by these 2 NGOs does not fall far short of 100, we have not removed them from the list of sampled organisations.

¹⁰ The sample survey revealed that of the private hospitals surveyed, the number of resident doctors employed by each private hospital concerned is less than 15, constituting only a small proportion (less than 10%) of the total number of doctors working in these hospitals.

¹¹ These include nurse, radiographer, pharmacist, dispenser, dentist, laboratory technician, etc.

2.16 In the social welfare field, 19 out of the 23 responding organisations indicated that the salary of their professional staff¹² followed a pay scale similar to that of the civil service. Of these 19 organisations, seven indicated that while they had implemented changes to the pay scale in the past few years, the new pay scale was still influenced by the civil service pay scale, e.g. they had adopted a shorter pay range or used civil service mid-point salary as the maximum salary.

Recommendations arising from the sample survey

2.17 Based on the findings of the sample survey, we observe that –

- (a) In the education field, an overwhelming majority of primary/secondary school teachers work in government schools or aided schools and are paid in accordance with the civil service pay scales. While there is a small percentage of teachers working in private schools, directly subsidy schools or international schools, their salary either followed a pay scale similar to the civil service or civil service pay adjustment, or was set mainly by reference to factors applying to places outside Hong Kong.
- (b) In the medical and health care field, the bulk of the hospital services are provided by the public sector. The salary of the professional staff of these hospitals is adjusted in accordance with the annual adjustments made to the civil service pay scales. As regards doctors working in private hospitals, most of them were not employees of the hospitals concerned. Nursing staff in most of the private elderly homes and nursing homes followed a pay scale similar to the civil service. For other professional staff who had an employer-employee relationship with the NGOs in this field, the pay of a majority of them followed a pay scale similar to the civil service.
- (c) In the social welfare field, a majority of the surveyed NGOs still followed a pay scale similar to the civil service. While some had implemented changes to the pay scale in the past few years, the new pay scale was still heavily influenced by the civil service pay scale.

2.18 In the light of the forgoing, we agree with the Phase One Consultant's recommendation that even if the civil service jobs in the above three fields are included in the survey field, it will not provide any meaningful data for the purpose of comparing civil service pay and private sector pay. In the circumstances, the relevant civil service jobs in the education, medical & health care, and social welfare fields should be excluded from the survey field.

Views received from staff and our responses

2.19 At and after the technical/briefing sessions we conducted for the Consultative Group, DCCs and staff unions/associations in September 2005, we have received the following views –

- (a) there was a request asking for more details (e.g. list of non-governmental organisations surveyed) and clarify certain points about the sample survey (e.g. how was the criterion for selecting 15-30 samples from each field worked out); and

¹² These include social worker, registered nurse, enrolled nurse, psychologist, health care/personal care workers, and physiotherapists.

- (b) there was a comment that the survey results would be skewed if jobs in these fields were excluded.

2.20 On paragraph 2.19(a) above, our responses to the requested information and clarifications about the sample survey have been set out in detail in **Annex B**. A list of the NGOs surveyed (with consent obtained) is at **Annex C**.

2.21 On paragraph 2.19(b), it should be noted that in accordance with the selection criteria of private sector organisations for inclusion in the survey field as recommended by the Phase One Consultant, the organisations concerned should not use civil service pay scales or pay adjustments as major factors in determining the pay levels or pay adjustments for their staff, or should not have done so in the past five years. We agree with this criterion and consider it as inappropriate to treat pay information from NGOs in the three fields concerned as private sector pay data when they in fact follow a pay scale similar to the civil service. This would defeat the purpose of using the survey as a means to compare civil service pay with private sector pay. We are therefore of the view that civil service jobs in the three fields concerned should not be included in the survey field.

Review of the provisional list of civil service benchmark jobs

2.22 The Phase One Consultant has drawn up a provisional list of civil service benchmark jobs at Annex C of its Final Report published in November 2004. During the consultation exercise conducted between November 2004 and January 2005, some comments were received on the provisional list of benchmark jobs. Following the technical sessions for the Consultative Group and the briefing sessions for DCCs and all staff unions/associations, we have received some further comments on the provisional list of benchmark jobs.

2.23 We have reviewed the Phase One Consultant's provisional list of benchmark jobs in the light of the comments received on the proposed changes to the list. In our review, we have been guided by the selection criteria of the civil service benchmark jobs referred to in paragraph 2.1 above.

Additions to the list

2.24 In respect of comments proposing additions to the list, there was a suggestion that the Postal Officer, the Postman and the Bank Examiner grades should have sufficient private sector job matches and should therefore be included in the list of civil service benchmark jobs. We see no objection to including the Postal Officer and Postman grades in the list of benchmark jobs for further examination in the job inspection process. Following the job inspection process, if we are satisfied that there are sufficient private sector job matches for these two grades, we will include these two grades in the list of benchmark jobs to serve as the basis for comparison with the private sector.

2.25 As for the Bank Examiner grade, it has less than 100 posts and therefore does not meet the relevant criterion for being selected as a civil service benchmark job.

Deletions from the list

2.26 We have categorised the comments received as follows –

- (a) Grades the latest establishment figure of which shows that they have less than 100 posts

We recommend that the grade concerned (i.e. Training Officer grade¹³) should be excluded from the list.

- (b) Grades/ranks which may not have broadly comparable job matches in a large number of private sector organisations

Based on our professional knowledge of the job market in the private sector, we recommend the exclusion of the grades/ranks concerned (i.e. Environmental Protection Officer¹⁴, Environmental Protection Inspector¹⁴ and Amenities Assistant¹⁵) from the list.

- (c) Grades/ranks having certain duties (e.g. law enforcement, regulatory duties) which cannot be found in their private sector counterparts

We should clarify that under the adopted survey methodology, the pay level survey seeks to compare the overall pay practices between the civil service and the private sector, rather than making precise comparison of the pay levels of individual jobs between the two sectors. The pay comparison will not be made on the basis of closely similar job matches; it will be based on groups of jobs that are broadly comparable in terms of job content, work nature, level of responsibility and typical requirements on qualification and experience. Nonetheless, the survey will not ignore the inherent differences of the jobs between the two sectors. These differences have been set out in the Consultation Paper issued by the CSB in November 2004¹⁶ and will be ascertained further through the job inspection process. They will serve as relevant factors for consideration by the Government of any necessary adjustment to civil service pay following the pay level survey.

The job inspection process seeks to ascertain job-related information about the jobs on the benchmark list for us to make a professional judgment on whether there are broadly comparable job matches in the private sector. We recommend that the grades/ranks concerned (i.e. Waterworks Inspector, Law Clerk, Chief Technical Officer (Building), Foreman, Housing Officer, Occupational Safety Officer, Liaison Officer, Clerical Assistant and Workman) remain in the list for

¹³ The establishment of the Training Officer grade has been reduced from 101 as at 31 December 2003 to 78 as at 30 September 2005.

¹⁴ It is envisaged that the private sector job matches of the Environmental Protection Officer and the Environmental Protection Inspector grades exist only in a few consulting firms and public utilities companies. The former mostly do not meet the criterion of employing at least 100 employees while there are only very few corresponding job matches in each of the latter companies.

¹⁵ While certain duties of the Amenities Assistant grade may be found in the private sector, it is difficult to identify sufficient number of private firms with over 100 employees and yet have private sector job matches in respect of a significant portion of the duties of the grade.

¹⁶ See paragraph 2.3 of the Consultation Paper on the Proposals on the Methodology of the Pay Level Survey and the Application of the Survey Results issued by CSB in November 2004.

closer examination in the job inspection process.

2.27 We received a comment from some staff bodies (e.g. Artisan) that there was a lack of consultation with them in drawing up the list of civil service benchmark jobs. We note that the Phase One Consultant has set out the provisional list of civil service benchmark jobs in the Final Report on the Methodology of a Pay Level Survey for the Civil Service published together with the Consultation Paper issued by the CSB in November 2004. While the two-month consultation period for the Phase One Consultant's Final Report ended in January 2005, in the recent round of consultation running up to mid-October 2005, staff unions/associations were invited again to comment on the provisional list of civil service benchmark jobs. Unless with strong justifications for exclusion from the list (see, for example, paragraphs 2.26(a) and (b)) we recommend that the grades/ranks concerned should remain in the list for closer examination at this stage. Through the job inspection process, we shall, in consultation with the grade/departmental management, relevant staff bodies and post-holder representatives, ascertain details of the benchmark jobs concerned before deciding whether any further refinements to the benchmark list for matching with private sector jobs are warranted.

2.28 In the light of paragraphs 2.24 to 2.27 above, we have drawn up a revised list of civil service benchmark jobs at **Annex D**. The list comprises a total of 193 civil service ranks from 61 grades. Taken together, the grades/ranks on the list represent about 46% of the total civil service establishment, as compared with 44% in the case of the provisional list drawn up by the Phase One Consultant. The revised list represents 77% of the remaining civil service establishment (as compared with 73% of the provisional list), if jobs which obviously do not have private sector matches (e.g. the disciplined services and the civil service ranks on the directorate pay scales) as well as those civil service jobs the private sector matches of which generally have their pay levels determined by reference to civil service pay (including civil service ranks in the education, medical and health care and social welfare fields) are excluded. We consider that such a level of representativeness of the revised list of benchmark jobs is statistically adequate for the purpose of the pay level survey.

2.29 We are of the view that the grades/ranks on the above list at **Annex D** should serve as the subjects for further examination in the job inspection process. Following the job inspection process, we shall review whether further refinements to the list are warranted.

III. Collection of Information on Civil Service Benchmark Jobs

3.1 In preparation for the job inspection interviews, we will, as a first step, collect job-related information about each civil service benchmark job. The collection of such information will facilitate our drafting of a job brief for each civil service benchmark job for circulation to post-holder representatives before their attending the job inspection interviews.

3.2 We will be approaching the grade and/or departmental management of each civil service benchmark job for the provision of inputs regarding some basic factual information about the benchmark job, including its job content, work nature, level of responsibility and typical requirements on qualification and experience. Before such information is passed to us, the grade and departmental management concerned are expected to take account of the views of their respective DCCs and/or staff unions/associations concerned. By doing so, we can ensure that the staff sides' views can be fully taken into account in the early stage of the job inspection process.

Information to be collected

3.3 In accordance with the recommendation of the Phase One Consultant,¹⁷ the following information about civil service benchmark jobs will be collected and analysed –

- (i) typical requirements on qualifications and experience;
- (ii) major responsibilities and nature of job;
- (iii) work assignment practices;
- (iv) posting patterns, e.g. the spread of the grade members deployed to perform various functions;
- (v) working relationship of the grade concerned with other grades; and
- (vi) other relevant features of the grade.

3.4 We agree with the Phase One Consultant that the above are key information that should be collected for the preparation of job briefs for the civil service benchmark jobs.

Views received from staff representatives

3.5 There was a suggestion from staff representatives that instead of collecting information on major responsibilities, information on all responsibilities of the civil service benchmark jobs should be collected in the job inspection process. We should clarify that the job inspection process is meant to collect and ascertain job-related information on the benchmark jobs for the purpose of drawing up job briefs that can reasonably reflect the job content, work nature, level of responsibilities and typical requirements on qualification and experience of the benchmark jobs concerned. Insofar as the collection of information on job responsibilities is concerned, we consider that the collection of major responsibilities

¹⁷ See paragraph 3 of Annex E of the Phase One Consultant's Final Report on the Methodology of a Pay Level Survey for the Civil Service.

should be adequate for the purpose. Nonetheless, in the light of the suggestion from the staff representatives, we shall invite grade/departmental management to provide us with information on job duties/responsibilities that are not major or typical but are yet considered important, or indeed any other relevant features so as to enhance our understanding of the benchmark jobs concerned.

Job analysis questionnaire

3.6 Having regard to the considerations in paragraphs 3.3 to 3.5 above, we have prepared a job analysis questionnaire for the purpose of seeking input from grade/departmental management concerned. An explanatory note on the questionnaire together with a sample of the completed questionnaire is at **Annex E**.

3.7 The job analysis questionnaire is designed in a format such that the information collected can be readily turned into a job brief for each civil service benchmark job. The intention is that with minor formatting changes and highlighting of those unique duties of the civil service benchmark jobs that may not be found in the corresponding private sector job matches, the job brief will be turned into a job description for the identification of private sector benchmark jobs.

Workshop for management

3.8 We have conducted workshops for grade and departmental management to brief them on the details of the job inspection process and specifically on the collection of information on benchmark jobs. Where appropriate, we have incorporated the comments of the grade/departmental management in the job analysis questionnaire and the explanatory note at **Annex E**.

Consultation with staff bodies

3.9 To facilitate grade/departmental management in consulting staff bodies on their returns to the job analysis questionnaire, we have drawn up some guidelines in paragraphs 3.10 – 3.13 below for their reference.

Guiding principles

3.10 Grade/departmental management should consult the relevant staff bodies in preparing returns to the job analysis questionnaire before providing such returns to us. For this purpose, grade/departmental management should make use of their established consultation channels in seeking inputs from the relevant staff bodies. Grade/departmental management may also consider supplementing their established consultation channels with working groups or ad hoc briefing sessions, where necessary. To facilitate the collection of inputs from all staff bodies of the grade concerned, grade/departmental management should, where practicable, cast the consultation net as wide as possible.

Relevant staff bodies to be consulted

3.11 The following staff bodies should be consulted in the collection of information on civil service benchmark jobs –

- (a) In the case where the benchmark job is a departmental grade¹⁸, the departmental management should consult its DCCs and departmental staff unions/associations of the benchmark grade.
- (b) In the case where the benchmark job is a common grade¹⁹, the management of those departments having the benchmark grades/ranks should, in accordance with their established consultation arrangement, consult their respective DCCs, departmental staff unions/associations of the benchmark grade and/or individual members of the benchmark grade, as the case may be.
- (c) In the case where the benchmark grade is general grade²⁰, the grade management should consult the staff unions/associations of the benchmark grade.
- (d) In addition to (a) to (c) above, grade/departmental management may, in accordance with their established consultation arrangement, consult any other staff bodies as the management considers it appropriate and practicable.

Consultation arrangement

3.12 To facilitate the consultation process, the following consultation arrangements should be followed –

- (a) Grade/departmental management should compile a draft return to the job analysis questionnaire and circulate it to the relevant staff bodies for comment. This guideline applies to the case where the benchmark job is a departmental grade or a general grade.
- (b) In the case where the benchmark job is a common grade, the management of those departments with 100 or more posts of the benchmark grade concerned (or if no department fulfills this criterion, departments with 10% or more of the total establishment of the grade) (Nomination Departments) should prepare draft returns to the job analysis questionnaire in the first instance. The Nomination Departments should then circulate their respective draft returns (or a consolidated draft return if deemed appropriate by the management concerned) to their relevant staff bodies for comment. The management of all other departments having the benchmark job should adapt the draft return(s) prepared by the Nomination Departments or prepare a separate return, as the case may require, and then

¹⁸ For the purpose of this exercise, departmental grades include Government Counsel, Valuation Officer, Valuation Surveyor, Assessor, Controller of Posts, Postal Officer, Postman, Cultural Services Assistant, Housing Manager, Labour Officer, Leisure Services Manager, Liaison Officer, Manager, Cultural Services, Occupational Safety Officer, Programme Officer, Transport Officer, Building Surveyor, Electronics Inspector, Waterworks Inspector, and Estate Assistant.

¹⁹ For the purpose of this exercise, common grades include Estate Surveyor, Law Clerk, Architect, Building Services Engineer, Building Services Inspector, Clerk of Works, Electrical and Mechanical Engineer, Electrical Inspector, Electronics Engineer, Engineer, Geotechnical Engineer, Inspector of Works, Maintenance Surveyor, Mechanical Inspector, Quantity Surveyor, Structural Engineer, Survey Officer, Technical Officer, Works Supervisor, Artisan, Foreman, Ganger, Property Attendant, Senior Artisan, Workman I and Workman II.

²⁰ For the purpose of this exercise, general grades include Clerical Assistant, Clerical Officer, Personal Secretary, Accounting Officer, Analyst/Programmer, Computer Operator, Executive Officer, Information Officer, Official Languages Officer, Statistical Officer, Statistician, Supplies Officer, Suppliers Supervisor, Treasury Accountant, and Motor Driver.

circulate the adapted draft return(s)/separate return to their relevant staff bodies for comment.

- (c) Grade/departmental management should circulate the draft returns to the relevant staff bodies through their established communications channels (e.g. via emails, letters, departmental Intranet or hard copies) for comment.
- (d) In addition to (a) – (c), to cast the consultation net wide, CSB should separately write to all staff unions/associations inviting them to provide feedback on the draft returns to the grade/departmental management concerned. Individual staff would also be encouraged to offer comments to the management direct or through their DCC representatives and/or staff unions/associations. Grade/departmental management concerned should facilitate them in making comments where appropriate and necessary.
- (e) Grade/departmental management should take account of all the feedback received from the relevant staff bodies and individual members of the grade concerned in finalising their returns to the job analysis questionnaire for onward transmission to us.

Consultation period

3.13 Grade/departmental management should allow sufficient time, say, at least two weeks, for the relevant staff bodies to comment on the draft returns. The exact time required for consultation with staff bodies will depend on the circumstances of individual grade and is up to the management to adjust as appropriate. For example, a longer consultation period, say, at least three weeks, may be required for a benchmark job with a very large establishment size or which encompasses a large number of departments.

Views received from staff representatives

3.14 There was a comment from staff representatives that not all staff unions/associations were represented on the relevant DCCs and staff unions/associations should therefore be consulted in the process. In the light of the comment, we have stipulated in the above guidelines that apart from DCCs, grade/departmental management should also consult staff unions/associations concerned in the process of collecting information on civil service benchmark jobs.

3.15 As regards staff's comment that sufficient time should be allowed for the consultation with staff bodies concerned, we have incorporated relevant requirement in paragraph 3.13 above to serve as a reminder to the grade/departmental management.

Preparation of draft job briefs

3.16 Based on the returns from grade and departmental management to the job analysis questionnaire, we will compile draft job brief for each civil service benchmark job and circulate it to all parties concerned (including the post-holder representatives, DCCs and staff unions/associations concerned) for reference in advance of the job inspection interviews. Information contained in the draft job briefs will be subject to closer examination in these interviews.

IV. Selection of Post-holder Representatives for Job Inspection Interviews

4.1 Following the collection of job-related information from grade/departmental management and staff bodies for the preparation of job briefs for civil service benchmark jobs, job inspection interviews will be conducted with post-holder representatives to ascertain the information collected. This section details the criteria and process by which post-holder representatives will be selected from the civil service benchmark jobs.

Selection of representative posts

4.2 The primary purposes of the job inspection interviews are to ascertain directly with post-holder representatives the information on civil service benchmark jobs collected from grade/departmental management and staff bodies and to provide another opportunity for post-holder representatives to furnish supplementary information, if any. It would neither be necessary nor practicable for the job inspection interviews to cover each and every post-holder of the benchmark jobs, provided that the post-holder representatives come from representative posts that are typical and reasonably representative of the benchmark jobs in terms of various job-related characteristics (i.e. job content, work nature, level of responsibility and typical requirements on qualification and experience).

Selection guidelines of representative posts

4.3 Having regard to the above principle and the typical distribution of civil service jobs in government departments, the following guidelines should be followed in the selection of representative posts from a civil service benchmark job -

- (a) the number of representative posts of the 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. As a general rule, a benchmark job typically embraces 2 to 4 most common job functions/streams/specialisations;
- (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 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 job 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.

Views from staff representatives and our responses

4.4 There were comments from staff representatives that the selection of representative posts should not be based on the establishment size only but should reflect the diversity and uniqueness of civil service jobs. We should clarify that prior to the job inspection interviews, job-related information on the benchmark jobs will have been collected from grade/departmental management and the relevant staff bodies. The diversity and uniqueness of civil service jobs should have already been reflected through this information collection process. The job inspection interviews are intended to ascertain directly from post-holder representatives sampled from the benchmark jobs the information collected and to provide another opportunity for these post-holder representatives to furnish supplementary information, if any.

4.5 The criteria seek to ensure that the post-holder representatives sampled for the job inspection interviews will come from posts that best represent the benchmark job in terms of various job characteristics. In order to reflect the different types of work undertaken by the benchmark jobs, we have included the selection guideline that representative posts should come from the most common job functions/streams/specialisations of the benchmark job. While it is envisaged that a job typically embraces 2 to 4 most common job functions/streams/specialisations, this can be suitably fine-tuned having regard to the individual circumstances of the job. For example, a benchmark job with exceptionally varied job duties may embrace up to 6 to 8 most common job functions/streams/specialisations. If grade/departmental management, in consultation with DCCs and staff unions/associations, consider that the inclusion of certain job functions/streams/specialisations that are not common in a benchmark job but yet important in enabling us to better understand the job for subsequent matching with private sector matches, we have stipulated in the selection guidelines that the management may select a small number of representative posts from these job functions/streams/specialisations (see guideline (d) in paragraph 4.3).

4.6 We have recommended that more representative posts should be sampled from benchmark jobs with a larger establishment size with a view to capturing more job functions/streams/specialisations. We wish, however, to clarify that the actual number of representative posts for a benchmark job depends not only on its establishment size but also its specific circumstances having regard to other criteria, e.g. the most common job functions/streams/specialisations that can be found in the benchmark job. In other words, more representative posts should be sampled from a job with more diversified duties than another job with similar establishment size (see guideline (c) in paragraph 4.3).

4.7 With the guidelines elaborated in paragraphs 4.4 - 4.6 above, we believe that the diversity and uniqueness of civil service jobs will be adequately addressed.

4.8 There were also comments that the representative posts of common/general grades should come from as many departments as possible. In this regard, we wish to point out that in selecting representative posts, the main focus is to identify the different jobs functions/streams/specialisations of the benchmark jobs. In most cases, jobs that are of the same job functions/streams/specialisations in different departments should share more or less the same job-related characteristics. There is therefore no need to stipulate that representative posts must come from different departments. Nevertheless, to further enhance the representativeness of the representative posts, we have recommended that representative posts should as far as possible come from different departments or divisions/units within a department (see guideline (f) in paragraph 4.3). In the case of common grades, reckoning that their job duties across different departments could be quite different, we had previously proposed that the representative posts should be selected from departments/management with a combined establishment of not less than 50% of the total of the benchmark job concerned. In the light of the staff's concern that this criterion may not be able to reflect fully the diversity of the jobs concerned, we now recommend to cast the net even wider by selecting representative posts from all departments with 100 or more posts of the benchmark grade concerned (or if no department fulfills this criterion, from departments with 10% or more of the total establishment of the grade). We further recommend that flexibility be exercised (e.g. in the case of the Technical Officer grade) 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 (including its own department) does not fall far short of 100 and the duties of such posts are distinctively different from those under the Nomination Departments (see guideline(g) in paragraph 4.3).

Number of representative posts for civil service benchmark jobs

4.9 Generally speaking, the larger the establishment size of the benchmark job, the higher the chance of the benchmark job having more different job functions/streams/specialisations. We have therefore recommended that the number of representative posts for each benchmark job should have regard to the establishment size of the benchmark job (see guideline (a) in paragraph 4.3). In this regard, we have worked out an indication of the number of representative posts for civil service benchmark jobs of varying establishment size (see the guidelines at **Annex F**). The exact number of representative posts for individual civil service benchmark jobs will depend on their specific circumstances having regard to other criteria, e.g. the number of most common job functions/streams/specialisations that can be found in the benchmark job concerned.

4.10 We estimate that a total of over 1,000 post-holder representatives will be interviewed in the job inspection process. Taking the two Workman grades (i.e. Workman I and Workman II) and the two Clerical grades (i.e. Clerical Officer and Clerical Assistant) as examples for illustration, around 80 to 120 representatives from each of them will be interviewed. This compares favourably with the sample size of the 1986 Pay Level Survey, in which 14 and 12 job-holders were interviewed respectively. We consider that by industry standard, the sample size is statistically more than adequate for the purpose of ascertaining job-related information on the civil service benchmark jobs. Nonetheless, we wish to point out that the figure does not serve to impose any constraint on the selection of representative posts for individual civil service benchmark jobs; it only presents an estimated figure of the post-holder representatives to be interviewed. In determining the actual number of representative posts to be drawn for each benchmark job, flexibility could be allowed after having due regard to the individual circumstances of the benchmark job concerned, especially for those grades/ranks with a very large establishment size (e.g.

Workman and Clerical related grades) or have a high diversity of job functions/streams/specialisation (e.g. Technical Officer grade).

Nomination of post-holder representatives

Nomination criteria

4.11 To help ensure that accurate and up-to-date information on the job characteristics of the civil service benchmark jobs will be collected, the post-holder representatives to be drawn from the selected 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.

Nominations by staff unions/associations

4.12 To further enhance the participation of staff bodies in the job inspection process, we have suggested that staff unions/associations should be invited to nominate the post-holder representatives for attending the job inspection interviews in accordance with the nomination criteria in paragraph 4.11 above. Grade/departmental management will then finalise the list of post-holder representatives having regard to the nominations from staff union/associations, whether the nominations match with the list of representative posts, and also the nomination criteria.

4.13 While we reckon that the more common industry practice is for management to nominate post-holder representatives for interview, we consider that the nomination of post-holder representatives by staff unions/associations in the current survey will not compromise the professionalism and impartiality of the survey because (a) the nominations would be made in accordance with objective criteria; and (b) grade/departmental management remains to be ultimately responsible for making a decision on the list of post-holder representatives in accordance with these objective criteria.

Number of post-holder representatives to be nominated

4.14 The number of post-holder representatives nominated should commensurate with the number of representative posts selected. To ensure a fair chance for making nominations, each staff union/association will be allowed to nominate post-holder representatives up to the number of representative posts selected for a benchmark job.

4.15 Grade/departmental management should ensure that only those nominations meeting the nomination criteria would be enlisted as the post-holder representatives, except where individual circumstances of the benchmark jobs require (see paragraph 4.19 below). In the event that the number of post-holder representatives in respect of a job function/stream/specialisation nominated by staff unions/associations in total exceeds the number assigned for that job function/stream/specialisation, the grade/departmental

management might have regard to relevant factors such as the length of service of the post-holder representatives in the representative posts in prioritising and deciding on those nominations. In prioritising the nominations received, the primary consideration is which of these nominations can best meet the objective of the job inspection interviews (i.e. to assist the consultants to ascertain the information collected on the civil service benchmark jobs) and in particular, the nomination criteria mentioned in paragraph 4.11 above. The staff union/association from which the post-holder representative is nominated should not be a relevant consideration.

4.16 Detailed guidelines to illustrate the steps involved in the selection of representative posts and post-holder representatives are at **Annex F**.

Views from staff representatives and our responses

4.17 There was a comment suggesting relaxation of the requirements that post-holder representatives should have served in the current post for at least two years and that they should be incumbent post-holders. In this regard, we are mindful that the main purpose of the job inspection process is to collect the most up-to-date information on the civil service benchmark jobs. This will lay the ground for identifying appropriate private sector job matches to facilitate the collection of private sector pay data in the next stage of work. We have therefore suggested that post-holder representatives should be incumbent post-holders and with two or more years of experience in the current rank and post so as to ensure that they will possess up-to-date knowledge about the civil service benchmark jobs. Having regard to the length of time that civil servants usually stay in a posting, we believe that the requirement for having incumbent post-holders with two years of service in the current rank and post is reasonable.

4.18 On the other hand, there were some comments that the two-year service requirement was too short for the post-holder representatives to get acquainted with the duties and requirements of the benchmark jobs. These comments seem to have stemmed from the misunderstanding that civil servants with just two years of experience in the service will be selected for comparison with private sector jobs that are of corresponding years of experience. We should clarify that the criterion stipulates the minimum length of service in the current **rank** and **post** rather than the length of experience in the civil service. Any post-holder representative sampled from the benchmark jobs should have already met the typical requirement on experience of the rank concerned. This criterion is an additional requirement to ensure that post-holder representatives will have at least two years of service in the **current post**. Similarly, private sector benchmark jobs to be selected should be broadly comparable with the corresponding civil service benchmark jobs in terms of typical requirement on experience.

4.19 There was a suggestion that instead of specifying the length of service, the nomination criterion should be made more flexible, e.g. by stipulating that the post-holder representatives should be experienced staff. We should emphasise that the nomination criteria are intended to serve as broad rather than rigid guidelines. Flexibility can always be exercised in handling special circumstances. For instance, if there is no suitable incumbent post-holder or post-holder with two years or more experience in the current rank and post, we do not rule out the possibility that grade/departmental management may, having regard to actual circumstances, consider post-holder representatives that can best meet the nomination criteria, such as job incumbents who have just been posted out or with less than two years of service in the current rank and post provided that all the other nomination criteria are met. On the suggestion that experienced staff be stipulated as a nomination criterion instead of specifying a certain length of service in the post concerned, we consider

that this suggestion does not provide a sufficiently clear and objective guideline for management and staff unions/associations to follow. Moreover, while some staff may have worked in a benchmark grade for a relatively long period of time, they may not necessarily be familiar with the work of the representative posts (e.g. they may not have worked for such posts throughout their careers). The suggestion is therefore not adopted.

4.20 There was a comment that those who were about to retire should not be selected as post-holder representatives. As a matter of principle, we consider that whether a civil servant is near the retirement age or not should not be a crucial consideration in the nomination of post-holder representatives. Nevertheless, to address staff's concern in this regard, we recommend that post-holder representatives should as far as possible be drawn from post-holders with varying years of service, subject to their meeting the other nomination criteria. We shall remind staff unions/associations of this guideline in making nominations of post-holder representatives.

4.21 We have also received comments that certain proportion of post-holder representatives should be set aside for nomination by staff unions/associations and that all post-holder representatives nominated by staff unions/associations should be accepted. Under the nomination process, staff unions/associations will be invited to nominate post-holder representatives for consideration by grade/departmental management, who will finalise the list of post-holder representatives in consultation with the DCCs. With such an arrangement and a set of clear nomination criteria to follow, we believe that the finalised list of post-holder representatives will likely be acceptable to both sides and there should be no need to set aside a certain number or percentage of post-holder representatives for the nominations from staff unions/associations. Nevertheless, in view of the staff's suggestion, we recommend that 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. This would ensure that the views presented to the consultants at the job inspection interviews would not be perceived as biased.

Consultation with staff bodies

4.22 Grade/departmental management should consult the relevant staff bodies in the selection of representative posts and post-holder representatives before providing the relevant lists to us for arranging job inspection interviews. To facilitate the participation of grade/departmental management and staff bodies in the process, we have drawn up some guidelines in paragraphs 4.23 – 4.27 below for their reference.

Guiding principles

4.23 Grade/departmental management should make use of their established consultation channels in seeking inputs from the relevant staff bodies. Grade/departmental management may also consider supplementing their established consultation channels with working groups or ad hoc briefing sessions, where necessary. To facilitate the collection of inputs from all staff bodies of the grade concerned, grade/departmental management should, where practicable, cast the consultation net as wide as possible.

Relevant staff bodies to be consulted

4.24 As for representative posts, the following staff bodies should be consulted in the selection process –

- (a) In the case where the benchmark job is a departmental grade, the departmental management should consult its Departmental Consultative Committee(s) (DCCs) and departmental staff unions/associations of the benchmark grade.
- (b) In the case where the benchmark job is a common grade, the management of the Nomination Departments ²¹ should, in accordance with their established consultation arrangement, consult their respective DCCs and/or departmental staff unions/associations of the benchmark grade.
- (c) In the case where the benchmark job is a general grade, the grade management should consult the staff unions/associations of the benchmark grade.
- (d) In addition to (a) – (c) above, grade/departmental management may, in accordance with their established consultation arrangement, consult any other staff bodies as the management considers it appropriate and practicable.

4.25 As for post-holder representatives, the following staff bodies should be invited to make nominations –

- (a) In the case where the benchmark job is a departmental grade, the departmental management should invite nominations from the departmental staff unions/associations of the benchmark grade.
- (b) In the case where the benchmark job is a common grade, the management of the Nomination Departments should invite nominations from their respective departmental staff unions/associations of the benchmark grade.
- (c) In the case where the benchmark job is a general grade, the grade management should invite nominations from the staff unions/associations of the benchmark grade.
- (d) In addition to (a) – (c), grade/departmental management may, in accordance with their established consultation arrangement, consult any other staff bodies as the management considers it appropriate and practicable.

Consultation Arrangement

4.26 To facilitate the consultation process, the following consultation arrangements should be followed –

- (a) Grade/departmental management should compile a draft list of representative posts and circulate it to the relevant staff bodies for comment. Grade/departmental management should also invite relevant staff unions/associations to nominate post-holder representatives for the representative posts concerned.
- (b) Grade/departmental management should make use of their established communications channels (e.g. via emails, letters, departmental Intranet or hard

²¹ For common grades, Nomination Departments refer to departments with 100 or more posts of the benchmark grade concerned (or if no department fulfills this criterion, departments with 10% or more of the total establishment of the grade).

copies) to communicate with the relevant staff bodies in circulating the draft list of representative posts and inviting nominations of post-holder representatives.

- (c) In addition to (a) – (b), to cast the consultation net wide, CSB will separately write to all staff unions/associations inviting them to comment on the draft list of representative posts and nominate post-holder representatives to the grade/departmental management concerned. Individual staff will also be encouraged to offer comments to the management direct or through their DCC representatives and/or staff unions/associations. Grade/departmental management concerned should facilitate them in making comments where appropriate and necessary.
- (d) Grade/departmental management should take account of all the feedback received from the relevant staff bodies and individual members of the grade concerned on the lists of representative posts and post-holder representatives. Before the lists are finalised and forwarded to us, grade/departmental management for departmental grade and common grade should consult its DCC and the relevant staff bodies, whereas grade management of general grade should consult the relevant staff unions/associations.

Consultation Period

4.27 Grade/departmental management should allow sufficient time, say, at least two weeks, for the relevant staff bodies to comment on the list of representative posts and make nominations of post-holder representatives. The exact time required for consultation with staff bodies will depend on the circumstances of individual grade and is up to the management to adjust as appropriate. For example, a longer consultation period, say, at least three weeks, may be required for a benchmark job with a very large establishment size or which encompasses a large number of departments.

Views from staff representatives and our responses

4.28 In drawing up the consultation guidelines in paragraphs 4.23 – 4.27 above, we have taken account of the staff's views that staff unions/associations, in addition to DCCs, should also be consulted in the relevant process and that sufficient time should be allowed for the consultation with staff bodies.

V. Job Inspection Interviews with Post-holder Representatives

5.1 Following the preparation of draft job briefs (Section III) and nomination of post-holder representatives (Section IV) for the civil service benchmark jobs, we will be ready to conduct job inspection interviews with the post-holder representatives concerned.

5.2 We should emphasise that the job inspection interviews are not the only means for us to collect information on the civil service benchmark jobs. In fact, prior to the conduct of job inspection interviews, we will collect job-related information on the benchmark jobs from grade/departmental management and staff unions/associations concerned. The main purposes of the job inspection interviews are 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 supplementary information, if any.

Interview arrangements

Group interview

5.3 Given that the main purpose of the job inspection interviews is to ascertain job-related information on the benchmark jobs collected in advance of the interviews and to provide an opportunity for further information to be made, we consider that there is no need for conducting separate interviews for individual post-holder representatives. The arrangement of group interview, which is the industry practice, will suffice. In addition, the group interviews arrangement has the merit of allowing a cross-section of representatives from the same benchmark grade/rank to present, in the same interview session where appropriate,²² a comprehensive picture of the benchmark grade/rank across different job levels and different departments or units to the consultants.

5.4 To ensure an effective communication under the group interview arrangement, we have stipulated the guideline that each interview will normally be held with 6-8 post-holder representatives and in any event, no more than 10 post-holder representatives under the normal circumstances. This size of interviewees, which is consistent with the industry practice, can help ensure fruitful exchanges and communication between the consultants and the interviewees.

Interview rundown

5.5 In line with the industry practice, 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.

5.6 In the introductory part, we will brief the post-holder representatives the purpose of, and the detailed arrangement for (e.g. rundown, information to be sought), the second part of the interview. The purpose is to help better prepare the post-holder representatives before proceeding to the actual interviews. Representatives of departmental/grade

²² If supervisor and his/her direct subordinates are involved in the same job inspection interview, consideration should be given to place them into different interviews so as to facilitate the candid exchange of information at the job inspection interviews in such cases.

management, CSB, DCCs and staff unions/associations may attend this introductory part of the interview session.

5.7 In the interview part, we will conduct face-to-face interviews with post-holder representatives in groups without the presence of any third parties. Through asking questions relating to the information contained in the draft job briefs, we will seek to ascertain the various job-related information on the civil service benchmark jobs. Post-holder representatives attending the interview will have the opportunity to provide further information, if any, on the civil service benchmark jobs.

Measures to help prepare post-holder representatives to attend the job inspection interviews

5.8 To ensure that the post-holder representatives will be adequately informed and prepared before attending the job inspection interviews, we will be distributing the draft job briefs concerned to them in advance so that they can comment on and provide any additional information to supplement the job briefs at the interviews.

5.9 Where necessary, we will also conduct a briefing session for, and provide pamphlets to, all post-holder representatives beforehand to explain the purpose and format of the interviews.

Views received from staff representatives and our responses

5.10 Some suggested that staff unions/associations should be allowed to send representatives to attend the job inspection interviews in the capacity as an observer to provide supplementary information where necessary. For the following reasons, we consider it neither necessary nor appropriate to invite staff unions/associations to send representatives to attend the job inspection interviews in the capacity as an observer –

- (a) First, staff unions/associations will be invited to nominate post-holder representatives to directly participate in the job inspection interviews. Members of staff unions/associations may also directly participate in the interviews as they will not be precluded from being nominated as the post-holder representatives provided that they meet the nomination criteria.
- (b) Second, under the job inspection approach, staff unions/associations would be participating closely in various stages of the job inspection process. Before the job inspection interviews, they will be invited to provide inputs in respect of job-related information concerning the benchmark jobs before the management provides such information to the consultant. After the job inspection interviews, they will have the opportunity to comment on the revised job briefs.
- (c) Third, the industry's long established practice for this kind of job inspection interviews is for the consultant (i.e. the interviewer) to meet with the post-holder representatives (i.e. the interviewees) in a neutral environment without the presence of any third parties. 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 maintain the public's confidence in the process as well as the results thus obtained.

5.11 We note that in the context of the 1986 Pay Level Survey, the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service (Standing Commission)

expressed a similar view that “it would be inappropriate for Staff Side representatives to be present during the interviews with job holders, since the interviews should be confined to interviewers and interviewees, and there should be no undue influence from either the Staff Side or the Administration. Staff side representatives should therefore not be present.”²³

5.12 Some suggested that we should take the earliest opportunity to explain to post-holder representatives the arrangements for the interviews and provide them with the relevant information in advance. We have taken note of the comment and have included measures to better prepare the post-holder representatives for the job inspection interviews as set out in paragraphs 5.8 and 5.9 above.

5.13 There was a concern that under the group interview arrangement, we might not be able to have in-depth inquiry of the work of the benchmark jobs. We should point out that the conduct of job inspection interviews will form only part of the process in collecting information on civil service benchmark jobs. Before the job inspection interviews, DCCs and staff unions/associations may provide inputs to the management on job-related information about the benchmark jobs. Based on the information provided by the management, we will prepare draft job briefs and distribute them to the post-holder representatives and other parties concerned (including DCCs and staff unions/associations) for reference before the job inspection interviews. The job inspection interviews are meant to ascertain the information collected from management and staff unions/associations and for providing supplementary information, we consider that the group interview arrangement should suffice for the purpose. In addition, the group interview arrangement has the merit of allowing a cross-section of post-holder representatives to present, at the same interview session, a comprehensive picture of the benchmark grade/rank across different job levels and different departments or units. To ensure effective communication under the group interview arrangement, we have already stipulated in paragraph 5.4 above that each interview session will normally be held with 6-8 post-holder representatives and in any event, no more than 10 post-holder representatives under the normal circumstances. This size of interviewees is consistent with the industry practice.

5.14 There was a suggestion that apart from conducting job inspection interviews, the consultants should make site visits so as to better understand the duties of the civil service benchmark jobs. Considering that an elaborate arrangement will be put in place to collect information on the civil service benchmark jobs, we are of the view that site visits to the workplace of the civil service benchmark jobs (which are rarely adopted by the industry for the purpose of job inspections) are not necessary. If more information about individual civil service benchmark jobs is required, we will consider arranging additional interviews as necessary.

Follow up to the job inspection interviews

5.15 With the first-hand and comprehensive information gathered from the job inspection interviews, we will be able to proceed to fine-tune the various documents relating to the civil service benchmark jobs in the documentation stage.

²³ See paragraph 4.3.1(c) of the Standing Commission Report No. 16 for details.

VI. Documentation of the Job Inspection Process

6.1 In the light of the information gathered from the job inspection interviews, we will refine the draft job briefs of civil service benchmark jobs prepared before the job inspection interviews and highlight those unique job duties of the benchmark jobs that may not be found in the corresponding private sector job matches. Where necessary and appropriate, we will fine-tune the list of civil service benchmark jobs, e.g. a benchmark job may need to be excluded from the list because further information collected from the job inspection interviews suggests that it does not have reasonable private sector job matches.

6.2 We will then circulate the following documents to the grade/departmental management, post-holder representatives and the relevant staff bodies (including the Consultative Group, DCCs and staff unions/associations) for comments before they are finalised –

- (a) the revised job briefs of the civil service benchmark jobs;
- (b) the list of civil service benchmark jobs (including any revisions as necessary); and
- (c) the job categorisation of the benchmark jobs by job family and job level.

6.3 In the process of finalising the above documents, where necessary, we may meet with the grade management and/or departmental management and post-holder representatives to seek further clarifications.

Job descriptions for the identification of private sector job matches

6.4 The finalised job briefs of civil service benchmark jobs will be turned into job descriptions after some minor 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 to identify private sector jobs that are broadly comparable with the civil service benchmark jobs in terms of various job-related information (including job content, work nature, level of responsibility and typical requirements on qualification and experience) in the next stage of work.

6.5 For illustration purpose, the Phase One Consultant has prepared some samples of the outcome of job inspection interviews and job descriptions.²⁴ We have reviewed these samples and are satisfied that they are generally in line with the industry practice and are fit for the purpose of making job matching in a pay level survey. To facilitate job matching with its private sector counterparts, more than one job brief and one job description may be prepared for a benchmark job in the circumstance where the benchmark job has distinctly different job functions/streams/specialisations. This would probably apply to common grades or general grades in the case of the civil service.

²⁴ See Annexes D and E of the Phase One Consultant's Final Report on the Methodology of a Pay Level Survey for the Civil Service for details.

Report on the result of job inspections

6.6 We will publish a report on the results of job inspections after the completion of the job inspection process. The report will cover, among other things, the list of civil service benchmark jobs, the list of representative posts for each benchmark job, the list of post-holder representatives for each benchmark job,²⁵ the job briefs and job categorisation of the benchmark jobs by job family and job level, the unique duties of the civil service benchmark jobs that may not be found in their corresponding private sector job matches, and the job descriptions for identification of private sector job matches.

6.7 The report will be provided to the grade/departmental management, Consultative Group and other staff bodies concerned so that interested parties will be fully informed of how the job inspection process has been carried out.

Views received from staff representatives and our responses

6.8 We have received a comment that the Consultative Group should be provided with the information collected at various steps of the process (e.g. list of representative posts, list of post-holder representatives, job categorisation of the benchmark jobs by job family and job level, draft and revised job briefs, unique duties of the civil service recorded, finalised list of civil service benchmark jobs, job description and the outcome of the job inspection process). Indeed, it has been our intention to carry out the pay level survey in a transparent manner and in close consultation with the Consultative Group and other staff bodies throughout the job inspection process. Except where information concerning commercial sensitivity or personal data is involved, we will, from time to time, seek the views of the Consultative Group and report progress on the work of the survey. In this report, we have detailed how the job inspection will be carried out. Upon completion of the job inspection process, we shall submit a report on the outcome of the job inspections covering necessary details as stated in paragraph 6.6 above.

6.9 There was a comment that staff unions/associations should be consulted on the preparation of the job descriptions. In this regard, we wish to point out that it has been our guiding principle to closely engage the Consultative Group and other staff bodies throughout the job inspection process. We will, from time to time, report progress to the Consultative Group on the work of the job inspection process, including the preparation of the job descriptions. It is relevant to point out that the job descriptions should, by and large, be the same as the corresponding job brief with only minor editorial changes and highlighting of those unique duties of the civil service benchmark jobs that may not be found in the corresponding private sector job matches. The preparation of job briefs (including the unique duties of the civil service benchmark jobs) is already subject to a very elaborate consultation arrangement with DCCs and staff unions/associations, from the provision of factual information on civil service benchmark jobs at the outset (see paragraphs 3.9 – 3.15 in Section III), to the preparation of draft job briefs before the job inspection interviews (see paragraph 3.16 in Section III) and then the finalisation of the revised draft briefs after the job inspection interviews (paragraph 6.2 above).

²⁵ We do not envisage any objections from individual post-holder representatives to the disclosure of their names but recommend to respect their wish if there are.

VII. Other Views on the Conduct of the Pay Level Survey

7.1 At and after the technical and briefing sessions conducted for the Consultative Group and other staff bodies in September 2005, apart from views on the approach of the job inspection process, we have also received other views relating to the conduct of the pay level survey.

7.2 These other views cover a wide range of topics, including *inter alia* the principle of broad comparability under the adopted survey methodology, the approach to be taken in the collection of private sector pay data, the accuracy and reliability of private sector pay data collected, how the length of service for promotion and experience in the civil service will be taken into account in the survey, the scope of pay data (e.g. overtime, year-end bonus, share option, etc) that will be covered in the survey, the selection criteria of private sector organisations for inclusion in the survey field, the timing of and the manner by which the survey results will be applied in adjusting civil service pay, etc. A summary of these views and our responses are included in **Annex B** of this report.

7.3 Most of these other views had been raised and addressed under the Phase One Consultancy.²⁶ We do not, therefore, repeat these views in this Section. Nonetheless, noting that quite a number of the views received relate to the survey timetable and the list of private sector job matches mentioned in the Phase One Consultant's Final Report²⁷, we have highlighted our responses below for easy reference by the staff bodies and staff representatives.

Survey timetable

7.4 We have received some comments from staff representatives that in the light of the experience of the past Pay Trend Surveys, we should proceed with data collection after April 2006 in order to take account of the private sector pay adjustments to be effected from 1 April 2006. There were some comments that the survey timetable might need to be postponed any way to allow sufficient time for consultation with departments and staff during the job inspection process. There were also comments suggesting that for the sake of consistency, this and subsequent pay level surveys should cover the same period of the year, with the collection of pay data from private sector organisations taking place in April, modeling after the Pay Trend Surveys.

7.5 We wish to point that there is no hard and fast rule in the industry insofar as the best timing for conducting a pay level survey is concerned. As a matter of fact, annual pay adjustments in the private sector take place at various times of the year. While the majority of private sector companies in Hong Kong adjust the pay of their staff in January, some others effect their annual pay adjustments with effect from April.

7.6 For this pay level survey, the reference date of the pay data to be collected from the private sector (i.e. the survey reference date) would depend largely on the progress of the impending job inspection process. Judging from the latest work progress, we project that the earliest timing we can complete the job inspection process and commence the collection of pay data from the private sector is February 2006. If more buffer is to be

²⁶ See the Addendum to the Report on Refined Recommendations published by the Phase One Consultant.

²⁷ See Annex C of the Phase One Consultant's Final Report on the Methodology of a Pay Level Survey for the Civil Service.

allowed for the job inspection process, the commencement date of data collection from the private sector will likely fall on late Q1 or early Q2 of 2006.

7.7 We note that it was the Government's long established practice to effect the annual civil service pay adjustments from 1 April of the year. If this practice is to be continued, the reference date of future pay level surveys should be set at 1 April. As for the upcoming pay level survey, depending on the actual progress of the job inspection process, we may commence data collection in February 2006 to capture private sector pay data up to, say, 1 January 2006 and then conduct a supplementary survey two months later with those companies that effect pay adjustments in April with a view to capturing pay data up to 1 April 2006. The alternative is to set the reference date of the upcoming survey at 1 April 2006. While there would be a slight difference in terms of the completion timing of the survey, both are feasible options from the technical point of view.

7.8 Having regard to the latest work progress and taking account of staff's comments, on balance, we recommend that the reference date for this survey should be set at 1 April 2006. If our recommendation to set the reference date of the pay level survey at 1 April 2006 is accepted, the survey will provide ready information for the Government to consider the 2006 civil service pay adjustment without the need to conduct a supplementary survey after the pay level survey or any pay trend survey up to 1 April 2006.

Matching with private sector jobs

7.9 There were comments that certain private sector job matches in Annex C of the Phase One Consultant's Final Report are not appropriate job matches of the corresponding civil service benchmark jobs (e.g. Motor Driver, Clerical Assistant, Liaison Officer, Valuation Officer, Foreman, Artisan, Building Services Inspector, Works Supervisor, construction professionals, Workman II, etc).

7.10 We wish to point out that as noted clearly in Annex C of the Phase One Consultant's Final Report²⁸, the job matching between civil service benchmark jobs and private sector jobs will be based on job content, level of responsibility, work nature and typical requirements of qualification and experience to be ascertained through the job inspection process. The job matching will not be made on the basis of job titles, which vary considerably within the private sector as well as between the private sector and the civil service. The private sector job matches on the list serve as broad reference of possible private sector job matches only. They are not meant to be the finalised private sector job matches for the civil service benchmark jobs concerned.

7.11 Following the job inspection approach, we will produce a finalised set of job briefs of the civil service benchmark jobs. Based on the finalised job briefs, we will compile the job descriptions for the identification of private sector benchmark jobs. Therefore, the private sector job matches for civil service benchmark jobs will only be determined after the completion of the job inspection process in the next stage of work. 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.

7.12 There was a comment that the requirement for civil servants in some grades (e.g. EO Grade) to have multi-skills across different job fields should be duly taken into account in the matching with private sector jobs in the pay level survey. In this regard, it should be noted that in the job inspection process, we will ascertain details of any requirement for

²⁸ See Note 1 on the first page of Annex C of the Phase One Consultant's Final Report.

staff to possess multi-skills across different job fields in the civil service benchmark jobs concerned. We will note and record such information and compare it with the prevalence or otherwise of similar multi-skills requirement in the private sector. In the event that this requirement is not common in the corresponding private sector job matches, the information so collected will be used as a reference by the Government in making any necessary adjustment to civil service pay after the pay level survey.

7.13 There was another comment that staff bodies should be allowed to participate in the matching of civil service jobs with private sector jobs to ensure a fair and comprehensive comparison while fully reflecting the uniqueness of civil service jobs. Upon completion of the job inspection process, we shall set out, among other things, the job descriptions for identification of private sector benchmark jobs and the unique duties of the civil service benchmark jobs in the report on the outcome of the job inspections so that parties concerned will be informed of how the job matching between civil service benchmark jobs and private sector benchmark jobs will be carried out. While the detailed arrangements for data collection from the private sector, including the job matching process, have yet to be worked out, we shall follow the principle of transparency except where commercial sensitive information is concerned, as we take forward this next stage of work. We shall, for example, consult the Consultative Group on the list of potential private sector organisations for inclusion in the survey field based on the selection criteria drawn up after intensive consultation with the Consultative Group under the Phase One Consultancy. We shall also seek the views of the Consultative Group on the draft final consultancy report before it is finalised. We shall in due course work out detailed proposals for the next stage of work, including how job matching and data collection will be carried out, for further consultation with parties concerned.