

Standardization of a Government Department Code List

1. In January 2003, a survey was conducted to identify data elements for inclusion in an attempt to standardize the data elements that are frequently exchanged between Bureaux and Departments (B/Ds). Government department code ranked 14 in the list of frequently exchanged data elements. This paper analyses the issues related to the standardization of government department code.

The use of government department codes in existing application systems

2. Different applications may have different interpretation and use of government department code, depending on the business requirements behind the application.
3. After the survey, we asked those survey respondents who selected government department code as a frequently exchanged data element what they use the code for. More than half of the respondents indicated that the code is used in financial reporting.
4. In respect of financial reporting, a government department may be represented as more than one “logical” organization units. For example, the financial data reported by trading fund organization units are recorded separately. Hence, “Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund” and “Electrical and Mechanical Services Department” appear as different organization units under the Treasury’s book keeping system. These logical organization units are created to fulfill accounting business requirements.
5. Similarly, other applications have their own domain of concerned government organization units, which may be logical or functional organization units.
6. The logical organization units required for financial reporting may not be

useful to other applications. Similarly, the organization units required by another application may not be useful to financial reporting. For example, one application may regard each overseas Economic and Trade Office as a separate 'department', but for financial reporting, their financial data are reported as one single department : Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices.

7. The current practice is that each application owner will define and publish the list of concerned government organization units (which are usually called 'government departments' in the context of the application) and their corresponding codes used by the application. One example of such code list can be found at the Treasury's Intranet (access <http://try.ccgo.hksarg/> and select "Department List" under "General Information"). This is a pragmatic approach because each application has its domain of concerned 'government departments'.
8. Since the codes are defined by different application owners, the code representing a department in one application may be different from the code used in another application.

Is there a need to standardize government department codes ?

9. With the drive to provide joined-up services, there is an increasing need to share information between application systems. Government department code is a commonly used data element in Government-to-Government (G2G) and Government-to-Employee (G2E) applications. Since the sharing of information across G2G and G2E applications are usually based on government department code, using a consistent code to represent a 'government department' will facilitate the sharing of information across G2G and G2E applications. Therefore, there is value in standardizing a list of government department codes.

What purpose will the standardized government department code list serve ?

10. As described earlier, different applications have different domains of concerned 'government departments'. Should we develop a government department code list that is suitable for all G2G and G2E applications ?

11. To answer this question, let us first analyse what code lists are for. A code list usually serves two purposes :
- to provide a list of code values (representing their underlying semantic) that may be consistently used in multiple applications; and
 - to list out all the acceptable values in a business context.
12. While the standardized government department code list (the standardized list) can provide a list of code values for use consistently across multiple applications, it cannot serve as a list of acceptable values for specific applications because different applications have different domains of concerned 'government departments'.
13. Each application owner should continue to define application specific department code list, but the application specific code list should adopt the code values defined in the standardized list if the semantic of the 'government department' (government organization unit) matches. If no government organization unit with matching semantic is found in the standardized list, the application owner should define a new code value. If the application owner anticipates that the newly defined government organization unit may be applicable to other G2G and G2E applications, the B/D that owns the application should contribute the code value (and its associated semantic description) to the Interoperability Framework Coordination Group (IFCG) Standing Office for inclusion in the standardized list.
14. The standardized list cannot replace the application specific department code lists, but it will provide code values for the application owners to define application specific department code lists.

Principles guiding what government organization units to be included in the standardized list

15. In principle, a government organization unit may be considered for inclusion in the standardized list if it has potential to be used in multiple G2G/G2E applications, and therefore has potential to serve as a unit base on which information is exchanged between two G2G/G2E applications.

16. Each government organization unit included in the list must be clearly defined and semantically differentiated from all other organization units in the list.

Maintenance of the standardized list

17. As the standardized list aims to serve G2G and G2E applications, we propose the initial list of 'government departments' to cover B/Ds as they are defined in the 'Organization Chart of the Government of the HKSAR' (http://www.info.gov.hk/govcht_e.htm), plus a few additional government-related organizations that are involved in the Treasury's government payroll system or the Civil Service Training and Development Institute (CSTDI)'s Cyber Learning Centre (CLC) Plus system, these organizations include :

- Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation;
- Hong Kong Export Credit Insurance Corporation;
- Hospital Authority;
- Independent Police Complaints Council;
- Judiciary;
- Legal Aid Services Council;
- Legislative Council Secretariat;
- Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data;
- Vocational Training Council.

18. The 'government departments' we propose to cover are listed in Appendix A, along with a 8-character code proposed for each department, as well as the codes used to represent that department in some existing application systems.

19. The IFCG Standing Office will monitor changes to the Government Communication Network (GCN) mailing list "&All_GR" (i.e. the General Registry of all B/Ds) in relation to the addition or deletion of government departments and will initiate changes to the standardized list as necessary.

20. B/Ds that are the owner of G2G/G2E applications may initiate change requests at any time. For those government organization units included into the standardized list based on a request from a B/D, the IFCG Standing

Office will consult the original requester annually to check whether there is any change.

- 21.If a government organization unit is removed from the list, its code value will not be reused for new entries, unless the nature of the new government organization unit is close to the removed organization unit, which is often the case when a government organization unit is renamed.

Centralized administration of the standardized list

- 22.The standardized list will be administered by the Department Code Common Schema Task Force (CSTF), which is convened by the IFCG Standing Office. As the standardized list aims to serve G2G and G2E applications, all B/Ds that are the potential owner of G2G and G2E applications have been invited to join the Department Code CSTF. This CSTF will persist and Members of this CSTF will be involved in discussions related to any proposed change to the standardized list, including the addition and removal of organization units, and the assignment of code values, etc.
- 23.The Common Schema Liaison Officer of B/Ds will be consulted on all changes to the standardized list. Consensus among Members of the CSTF will be built before the CSTF recommends changes to the XML Coordination Group (XMLCG) for approval.
- 24.The standardized list will be published in the registry (www.xml.gov.hk) for reference by project teams serving B/Ds.

**Information Technology Services Department
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Government organization units proposed to be included in the standardized department code list

Government Organization Unit	Proposed code (8 characters)	Abbreviation suggested by D of Adm	Treasury's Payroll Code (also used in Employer Tax Return)	Abbreviation suggested to B/Ds for implementation of e-Leave	Abbreviation used in CSTDI's CLC Plus System
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department	AFCD	AFCD	11	AFCD	AFCD
Architectural Services Department	ARCHSD	Arch SD	72	ARCHSD	ASD
Audit Commission	AUD	Aud C	12	AUD	AUD
Auxiliary Medical Service	AMS	AMS	18	AMS	AMS
Beijing Office	BO	BO	E1	BJO	BO
Buildings Department	BD	BD	A5	BD	BD
Census & Statistics Department	CENSTATD	C&SD	59	CENSTATD	CandS
Central Policy Unit	CPU	CPU			CPU
Chief Executive's Office	CEO	CE's Office	10	CEO	CEO
Chief Secretary for Administration's Office (Administration Wing)	ADMWING	Adm Wing		CSO	CSOFF
Chief Secretary for Administration's Office (Efficiency Unit)	EU	EU		EU	EU
Chief Secretary for Administration's Office (Hong Kong Guangdong Cooperation Coordination Unit)	HKGDCCU	-			
Chief Secretary for Administration's Private Office	CSPO				
Civil Aid Service	CAS	CAS	19	CAS	CAS
Civil Aviation Department	CAD	CAD	13	CAD	CAD
Civil Engineering Department	CED	CED	73	CED	CED
Civil Service Bureau	CSB	CSB	B1	CSB	CSB

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Civil Service Training & Development Institute	CSTDI	CSTDI	22	CSTDI	CSTDI
Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau	CITB	CITB	B9 (CIB), 02 (CTB)	CIB CTB	CITB
Companies Registry	CR	CR	A4	CR	CR
Constitutional Affairs Bureau	CAB	CAB	B2	CAB	CAB
Correctional Services Department	CSD	CSD	40	CSD	CSD
Customs & Excise Department	CUSTOMS	C&ED	15	CUSTOMS	CandE
Department of Health	DH	DH	41	DH	DH
Department of Justice	DOJ	D of J	33	DOJ	DJ
Drainage Services Department	DSD	DSD	87	DSD	DSD
Economic Development and Labour Bureau	EDLB	EDLB	B3	EDLB	EDLB
Education and Manpower Bureau	EMB	EMB	E9 (EMB), D5 (EMB Provident Fund Unit)	EMB	EMB
Electrical and Mechanical Services Department	EMSD	E&MSD	77 (EMSD) D2 (EMS Trading Fund)	EMSD	EMSD EMSTF
Environment, Transport and Works Bureau	ETWB	ETWB	E2 (ETB) 71 (WB)	ETWB	ETWB
Environmental Protection Department	EPD	EPD	69	EPD	EPD
Financial Secretary's Private Office	FSPO			FSO	FSOFF
Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau	FSTB	FSTB	B6 (FSB) B5 (TRY BR)	FSB FSTB	FSTB
Fire Services Department	FSD	FSD	25	FSD	FSD
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department	FEHD	FEHD	E3	FEHD	FEHD

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Government Flying Service	GFS	GFS	16	GFS	GFS
Government Laboratory	GOVTLAB	Govt Lab	66	Govt LAB	GL
Government Logistics Department	GLD	-	06 E8 (Supplies Services)	GLD	GLD
Government Property Agency	GPA	GPA	01	GPA	GPA
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau	HWFB	HWFB	B7	HWFB	HWFB
Highways Department	HYD	HyD	79	HyD	HYD
Home Affairs Bureau	HAB	HAB	36	HAB	HAB
Home Affairs Department	HAD	HAD	C4	HAD	HAD
Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (2)	HKCAA				HKCAA
Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices	HKETO	-	64		OO
Hong Kong Export Credit Insurance Corporation (2)	HKECIC				HKECIC
Hong Kong Monetary Authority	HKMA	HKMA	A2	HKMA	HKMA
Hong Kong Observatory	HKO	HKO	48	HKO	HKO
Hong Kong Police Force	HKPF	HKPF	37	HKPF	HKPF
Hospital Authority (1)	HOSPITAL	-	03	HA	HA
Housing Department	HOUSING	HD	47	HD	HD
Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau	HPLB	HPLB	C2	HPLB	HPLB
Immigration Department	IMMD	Imm D	28	Imm D	IMM
Independent Commission Against Corruption	ICAC	ICAC	65	ICAC	ICAC
Independent Police Complaints Council (1)	IPCC	IPCC	86	IPCC	IPCC
Information Services Department	ISD	ISD	26	ISD	ISD
Information Technology	ITSD	ITSD	70	ITSD	ITSD

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Services Department					
Inland Revenue Department	IRD	IRD	27	IRD	IRD
Innovation and Technology Commission	ITC	ITC	E5	ITC	ITC
Intellectual Property Department	IPD	IPD	04	IPD	IPD
Invest Hong Kong	INVESTHK	InvestHK	E6	InvestHK	IHK
Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service	JSSCS	JSSCS	80	JSSCS	JSSCS
Judiciary (1)	JUD	-	29	JUD	JUD
Labour Department	LD	LD	31	LD	LD
Land Registry	LR	LR	A3	LR	LR
Lands Department	LANDSD	Lands D	74	Lands D	LANDS
Legal Aid Department	LAD	LAD	61	LAD	LAD
Legal Aid Services Council (1)	LASC		D3		
Legislative Council Secretariat (2)	LEGCO				LEGCO
Leisure & Cultural Services Department	LCSD	LCSD	E4	LCSD	LCSD
Marine Department	MD	MD	34	MD	MD
Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data (2)	PCO				PCO
Office of the Commissioner of Insurance	OCI	Office of the C of I			OCI
Office of the Ombudsman	OMB	-	D9	OFOMB	OMB
Office of the Telecommunications Authority	OFTA	OFTA	A1	OFTA	OFTA
Official Receiver's Office	ORO	ORO	09	ORO	ORO
Planning Department	PLAND	Plan D	89	PlanD	PLAN
Post Office	PO	PO	38	PO	HKPO

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Public Service Commission	PSC	PSC	42	PSC	PSC
Radio Television Hong Kong	RTHK	RTHK	43	RTHK	RTHK
Rating and Valuation Department	RVD	RVD	44	RVD	RandV
Registration and Electoral Office	REO	REO	A7	REO	REO
Secretariat, University Grants Committee	UGC	UGC	58	UGC	UGC
Security Bureau	SB	SB	B8	SB	SB
Social Welfare Department	SWD	SWD	51	SWD	SWD
Student Financial Assistant Agency	SFAA	SFAA	05	SFAA	SFAA
Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority	TELA	T&ELA	68	TELA	TELA
Territory Development Department	TDD	TDD	75	TDD	TDD
Trade and Industry Department	TID	TID	83	TID	TID
Transport Department	TD	TD	60	TD	TD
Treasury	TRY	Try	53 (TRY) D6 (TRY Provident Fund Branch)	Try	TRY
Vocational Training Council (1)	VTC		81		VTC
Water Supplies Department	WSD	WSD	76	WSD	WSD

Remarks :

- (1) Not in the Organisation Chart of the Government of the HKSAR (http://www.info.gov.hk/govcht_e.htm) but involved in the Treasury's Payroll System
- (2) Not in the Organisation Chart of the Government of the HKSAR (http://www.info.gov.hk/govcht_e.htm) but involved in the CSTDI's Cyber Learning Centre (CLC) Plus System