

ITEM FOR ESTABLISHMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

Head 139 – GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT : FOOD AND HEALTH BUREAU (FOOD BRANCH) Subhead 000 Operational expenses

Members are invited to recommend to Finance Committee the creation of the following supernumerary post in the Food Branch of the Food and Health Bureau in the third quarter of 2009 for a period of four years –

1 Administrative Officer Staff Grade B
(D3) (\$142,700 - \$151,200)

PROBLEM

The Food Branch of the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) needs to strengthen senior directorate support in taking forward the Food Safety Bill and related legislation, and launching other initiatives to further enhance food safety.

PROPOSAL

2. We propose to create one supernumerary post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (AOSGB) (D3) in the Food Branch of FHB in the third quarter of 2009 for a period of four years.

JUSTIFICATION

Present Situation

3. The Food Branch oversees the food safety and environmental hygiene portfolios and is responsible for the related policy formulation, monitoring

/and

and legislative work. It is headed by an Administrative Officer Staff Grade A1 (D8) officer, designated as the Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food), who is supported by a Deputy Secretary (DS) ranked at Administrative Officer Staff Grade B1 (D4) level, viz. DS(Food), and three Principal Assistant Secretaries (PASs) ranked at Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) level. At present, DS(Food) is the only DS in the Food Branch, and is responsible for overseeing a wide spectrum of policy issues under both the food safety and environmental hygiene portfolios as set out in paragraphs 4 to 11 below. The job description of DS(Food) is at Enclosure 1.

Encl. 1

Food Safety Portfolio

4. Under the food safety portfolio, FHB is responsible for all policy matters related to food safety, the prevention of the outbreak and spread of zoonotic diseases and diseases in animal and plants and the sustainable development of the agricultural and fisheries industries.

5. Food safety covers a wide scope of work as highlighted below –

- (a) to control the import of different kinds of food, including animals and animal products, aquatic products, food of plant origin and processed food as well as their inspection arrangements at border control points. Hong Kong imports some 95% of its food. Given the wide diversity of food that comes from around the world, the promotion of food safety in Hong Kong is a special and complicated task. This work involves close liaison with the Mainland and overseas food authorities, including the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine and its local Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureaux, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Agriculture;
- (b) to ensure that food available for human consumption is safe. At present, the top work priority is to formulate a new Food Safety Bill. The Bill will establish a comprehensive regulatory regime to safeguard food safety, including a mandatory registration scheme for food importers and distributors, enhance food traceability in case of food incidents and strengthen import control for individual food types. Our work also includes overseeing and providing the necessary policy steer to the work of the Centre of Food Safety (CFS) under the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) on food surveillance and reviewing various food safety standards (such as pesticide residues and veterinary drug residues, etc) having regard

/to

to international practices, the characteristics of the local situation and the need to further enhance our overall food safety regulatory regime. Other major tasks include the introduction of legislation to prohibit the abstraction of seawater from certain areas in Hong Kong for keeping live seafood for human consumption and preparing the trade and the public for the implementation of a food nutrition labelling scheme for prepackaged food in July 2010; and

- (c) to co-ordinate departmental efforts and provide the necessary steer to deal effectively with food incidents and food supply problems, including active discussions with the Mainland and overseas authorities and liaison with food traders to ensure a stable supply of safe food to the public.

6. With our recent history of Avian Influenza outbreaks in the territory, and confirmed cases of dead birds infected with H5N1 from time to time, we need to stay continuously vigilant against the threat of Avian Influenza. To prevent the outbreak and spread of zoonotic diseases and diseases in animals and plants, the most important work currently being undertaken by the Food Branch concerns the legal framework and development programme for a Poultry Slaughtering Centre which is a fundamental and long-term measure for the prevention of Avian Influenza and the implementation of the policy to separate humans from live poultry. The latest outbreak of human swine influenza has also called into question the safety of pork consumption and the Food Branch is responsible for closely monitoring the guidelines issued by international authorities in formulating the position and actions for Hong Kong, and overseeing the stepped up measures taken in local farms and slaughterhouses against the pandemic.

7. With regard to promoting sustainable development of the agricultural and fisheries industries, the Committee on Sustainable Fisheries is expected to release its report this year. Proposals being considered include a dedicated scheme to support research and development projects to promote sustainable fisheries operations; a ban on trawling activities in Hong Kong waters supported by initiatives to facilitate affected fishermen to switch to other forms of sustainable operations; and other initiatives related to the promotion of recreational fishing. High-level policy input and close collaboration and liaison with fisherman groups and other stakeholders are required to take forward the report of the Committee.

Environmental Hygiene Portfolio

8. The Food Branch is responsible for all policy matters related to environmental hygiene, regulatory control over food premises, and animal welfare/management.

/9.

9. The work on environmental hygiene includes matters relating to public markets and hawkers policies; public cemeteries, columbaria and crematoria; wholesale food markets; pest control and pesticides; and public cleanliness and street management. The on-going initiatives include: review of the hawker licensing policy, review of the public market policy and rental adjustment mechanism, formulation of strategies to enhance the provision of public cemeteries, columbaria and crematoria facilities, formulation of strategies to encourage the public to consider adopting options for ash disposal other than traditional ones, monitoring the anti-mosquito and anti-rodent efforts of various departments to prevent the outbreak of vector-borne diseases, monitoring the progress of constructing a new wholesale fish market at Tuen Mun by the Fish Marketing Organization, monitoring the progress of converting all aqua privies into flushing toilets and monitoring the provision of environmental hygiene services by the FEHD. The Food Branch together with the FEHD are undertaking a host of measures to follow up on the recommendations in the reports of the Director of Audit and Public Accounts Committee released recently on the management of public markets. The Panel on Food Safety and Environment Hygiene has also been taking a keen interest in the review of hawker licensing policy and we are considering the views and suggestions of Members in taking forward the conclusions of the review.

10. On the licensing of food business, the Food Branch is responsible for the regulation of food premises, liquor licensing policy, the secretariat work of the Licensing Appeals Board and the Appeal Board on Closure Orders (Immediate Health Hazard). Some of the on-going work in this connection includes legislative amendments for the introduction of a composite license/permit scheme for the manufacture and sale of various types of ready-to-eat food items to facilitate the operation of food business, follow-up on the recommendations of The Ombudsman on FEHD's procedures for prosecuting food premises which contravene the law and review of the policy on liquor licensing to control the proliferation of upstairs bars, etc.

11. As regards matters relating to animal welfare and management, the Food Branch is responsible for reviewing the legislation on the prevention of cruelty to animals.

Increasing Public Concern over Food Safety and Public Health in the Light of Various Food Incidents

12. As re-affirmed repeatedly by the Chief Executive in his Policy Addresses, the Government is fully committed to safeguarding the public against unsafe food and ensuring food safety is one of the key tasks of the Food Branch of

FHB. To this end, it is of utmost importance that the Bureau is equipped with appropriate manpower support to ensure a prompt and appropriate response whenever a food incident or an outbreak of Avian Influenza occurs, regardless of whether it is a local incident, insofar as it impacts on our food safety/supply and public health. Past experience has indicated that whenever there is a food incident or an Avian Influenza outbreak, full attention must be devoted to dealing with the crisis at hand. The normal work of the Permanent Secretary, the DS and PASs, including those whose work is not directly related to the crisis, must give way, in many cases for a sustained period of time. The progress in the work of the Food Safety Bill and other ongoing legislative work is often affected in this way. For instance, the melamine incident last year has caused serious concern in the community over the safety of dairy and related food products. As a result, an Expert Group on Melamine Incident (Expert Group) comprising experts in various related fields was formed shortly after the incident to consider the medium and long-term impact of melamine on food safety and people's health and to work out proposals to monitor cases arising from contaminated dairy products. Besides servicing one of the three sub-groups under the Expert Group, a lot of efforts of the Food Branch have been dedicated to monitoring developments on the incident, and devising an appropriate testing and communication strategy with the CFS to address the public's concerns at the time.

13. The Food Branch also took prompt action to enact legislation to regulate the use of melamine in food. The Harmful Substance in Food (Amendment) Regulation 2008 was gazetted on 23 September 2008 and took immediate effect. Furthermore, to prohibit import/sale and order a recall of problematic food products, the Administration had expedited work on the legislation on import ban and food recall, which originally formed part of the Food Safety Bill. In this connection, the Public Health and Municipal Services (Amendment) Bill 2008 was passed by the Legislative Council (LegCo) on 29 April 2009 and came into effect on 8 May 2009.

14. Similarly, for Avian Influenza, the detection of the Avian Influenza virus in retail outlets in June 2008 necessitated the immediate introduction of legislation to prohibit the overnight stocking of poultry at retail outlets and the launch of a Buyout Scheme for the poultry trade which was put to the Finance Committee (FC) for approval as a matter of urgency. The further incident of an outbreak of Avian Influenza at a local farm last December also necessitated the setting up of two investigation groups to conduct an epidemiological study into the cause of the outbreak and remedial measures and to look into the efficacy of the existing vaccine. The latter study, which has far-reaching implications on whether there is a need to switch to an alternative vaccine to offer better protection to poultry and minimise the risk of the Avian Influenza virus from attacking the public, is still being carried out.

15. In short, given the complexity and urgency of the wide range of issues under the food safety and environmental hygiene portfolios of the Food Branch, which have been further aggravated in the light of recent food incidents and events, it is beyond the capacity of the existing DS(Food) to continue to handle these issues properly while taking forward the work on the Food Safety Bill and the various related legislation at the same time.

Need for an Additional DS Post

16. In recent years, food incidents related to aquatic products, poultry eggs and dairy products, etc, have heightened public concern over the safety of food and highlighted the deficiencies of the existing food legislation. To address the public's rising concern over food safety and to improve our food safety standards, FHB has been actively working on a new Food Safety Bill and a number of related regulations to improve food safety standards, which are complex and controversial in both cases. The Food Safety Bill is a top priority of the Bureau as it will provide the necessary legislative support to underpin an effective food safety control system. However, as explained in paragraphs 12 to 15 above, there are often other urgent, unforeseen and pressing incidents and duties which have to be handled concurrently. Dedicated staffing support at a sufficiently senior level is therefore required to take forward the Food Safety Bill and related subsidiary legislation, and to handle the associated work of liaising with the relevant departments and the Mainland and overseas authorities in implementing an appropriate new regulatory regime.

17. Given the pressing need to take forward the Food Safety Bill, and taking into consideration the already heavy schedule of the existing DS(Food), it is imperative that an additional and supernumerary DS post at the AOSGB level should be created. Otherwise, the excessively heavy workload of the existing DS(Food) cannot be eased and the relevant legislative work cannot be undertaken by an officer at a sufficiently senior level. The proposed post, to be designated as DS(Food)2, together with the incumbent DS(Food)1 will assist the Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food) to steer and take forward the wide spectrum of initiatives of the Food Branch to ensure effective implementation of policies.

18. The new food safety control tools under the Food Safety Bill will include a mandatory registration scheme for food importers and distributors, a requirement for food traders to maintain proper transaction records to ensure food traceability and strengthened import controls on individual food types. The Food Safety Bill will also include subsidiary legislation setting out the import requirements of different food types.

19. The current timetable for the legislative work of the Food Safety Bill is as follows –

Period	Major Work
Now to late 2009	Preparation of the drafting instructions, drafting work, consultation with the public and stakeholders, submission of draft Bill to the LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Late 2009	Introduction of the Bill into LegCo
Late 2009 to mid 2011	Scrutiny of the Bill by LegCo (duration subject to the work of the Bills Committee)
Mid 2011 to mid 2013	Preparation of the subsidiary legislation (on import control for different food types), public consultation, drafting work, and passage through LegCo
Mid 2011 to mid 2013	Grace period for commencement of the Food Safety Bill, publicity work, and liaison with the trade on implementation issues, etc

20. The major tasks to be carried out by the proposed new DS(Food)2 in the coming four years will include –

- (a) Studying the interface, and ensuring consistency, between the new Food Safety Bill and the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132)

In drawing up details of the various proposals under the Bill, FHB needs to work closely with the CFS, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and the Department of Justice. Each of the proposals under the Bill involves complex legal issues. Furthermore, the existing control of food safety is mainly provided under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132), enacted in the 1960's, and its subsidiary legislation. The new Food Safety Bill will have a lot of interface with Cap. 132. It is of utmost importance that all the relevant provisions in Cap. 132 should be thoroughly examined and reviewed in order to ensure consistency between the two pieces of legislation. Any consequential amendments required of Cap. 132 arising from the new Food Safety Bill should also be made to ensure consistency between the new Bill and Cap. 132. These tasks are complicated and require input at a senior directorate level.

/(b)

(b) Consultation with Mainland and overseas authorities

To work out the import requirements for different food types, FHB, in consultation with CFS, needs to study the risk level of each food type. In devising the import protocol for the different food types, in-depth discussions and studies with the Mainland and overseas authorities are required to ensure that the requirements set are appropriate and practicable. Such studies and discussions should be led by a senior directorate officer.

(c) Consultation with the trade and stakeholders

During public consultation on the proposed Food Safety Bill, we note that there are different food trades in Hong Kong which are engaged in the import, manufacture and distribution of many different food types. We also note that the different food trades have their specific needs and trade practices to ensure food safety. It is important that the new food safety control tools to be included in the Food Safety Bill will take into account their existing trade practices. To assess fully the implications of the Bill for the trade, in particular small and medium enterprises, we have appointed a consultant to conduct a Business Impact Assessment on the Bill. The objective is to ensure that the interests of the stakeholders are not unduly compromised with the provisions in the Food Safety Bill. With the achievement of a justifiable balance, we aim to achieve the ultimate goal of gaining the support of the interested parties and stakeholders for the underlining spirit of the Bill and their full cooperation for its effective implementation for the well being of the community at large. The work on close communication and consultation with stakeholders should be steered by a senior directorate officer in the policy bureau to help achieve this goal.

(d) Introduction of the principal legislation into the LegCo and follow-up on the subsidiary legislation

The legislative work on the Food Safety Bill and the related subsidiary legislation is complex and controversial and therefore requires careful steering at AOSGB level. Even after the passage of the principal ordinance tentatively by mid-2011, there will still be an enormous amount of policy work and intensive follow-up actions which need to be taken for the subsidiary legislation.

(e) Implementation of the new legislation

The new DS(Food)2 is required to ensure the timely formulation of a strategic overview on the implementation plan of the new legislation,
/including

including the formulation of a comprehensive publicity and implementation plan with CFS to prepare for the smooth commencement of the food nutrition labelling law for the prepackaged food in July 2010. Also, one of the proposals under the Food Safety Bill is to empower the authorities to make orders to prohibit the import/supply of problem food items and order a recall of such food items. Given the immense public concerns over this matter after the melamine incident, we have expedited work on this part of the Food Safety Bill and have introduced and secured passage of the Public Health and Municipal Services (Amendment) Bill 2008 by LegCo, ahead of the introduction of the full Food Safety Bill. Following enactment of the Amendment Bill, the DS(Food)2 post will need to closely oversee the actual implementation of the new legislation in the initial years after its coming into force to ensure its smooth operation in the long term. The eventual incorporation of this part of the provisions in Cap. 132 into the Food Safety Bill will also be the work of DS(Food)2.

All the tasks above will need to be steered and implemented by a dedicated officer at a senior directorate level.

21. Apart from the legislative work, the proposed DS post will also be responsible for taking forward the following initiatives to further enhance our regulatory regime on food standards –

- (a) Review the safety standards for pesticide residues and veterinary drug residues in food and introduce regulations to govern the safe use of pesticides in vegetables and fruits and veterinary drugs in food animals. The work involved for these new regulations is rather substantial. For instance, we are currently working together with the CFS in devising 10 000 maximum residue safety limits for various types of food in respect of 400 types of pesticides. As we are conducting reviews on our various food standards (which include pesticides and veterinary drugs, etc.), the number, types as well as the complexity of food tests will increase significantly in the coming few years; and
- (b) Oversee the work of the Government Laboratory (GL), which will have an expansion in its scope of work in the coming years in the context of our work to promote the development of Hong Kong's food testing industry. We are also starting an outsourcing programme of GL which the DS(Food)2 post will closely oversee.

/Revision

Revision of Duties and Responsibilities of the Existing DS Post

22. Upon the creation of the new DS(Food)2 post, the existing DS(Food) post will be re-titled as DS(Food)1. After being relieved from the legislative work on the Food Safety Bill and the related subsidiary legislation, the incumbent will be better placed to focus on the proper management of inter-departmental response to food incidents to ensure food safety and prompt measures to mitigate any impact on food supply arising from the food incidents; as well as proper co-ordination of inter-departmental efforts in keeping up vigilance against the threat of Avian Influenza. In addition, DS(Food)1 will take forward the legislation to achieve the separation of poultry from humans in order to prevent the spread of Avian Influenza, as well as five related regulations to support the implementation of central slaughtering, for the purposes of licensing the public slaughtering facility and banning the sale of live poultry in private and public markets. DS(Food)1 will also oversee the development of the poultry slaughtering plant, and will continue to monitor the implementation of the various recommendations of the Investigation Group Report on the Epidemiological Study on the Yuen Long Farm Outbreak of December 2008 to enhance bio-security measures for all local farms, and the Vaccine Study to determine the need or otherwise to switch to an alternative vaccine to give better protection to the poultry reared in local farms against the threat of Avian Influenza.

23. The incumbent DS(Food)1 should also be able to focus more closely on other important policy issues such as –

- (a) the review on public market policy which includes providing policy steer to the FEHD with regard to implementation of the recommendations made in the Public Accounts Committee's report on the management of public markets. Some of the measures being implemented include conducting patronage and opinion surveys to assess the stakeholders' views on the value and management of public markets, identifying and executing the closure of non-viable public markets, and identifying measures to better tackle the problem of sub-letting of stalls;
- (b) the review on hawker licensing policy to better utilise the now vacated fixed pitches and to issue new licences for selected trades to meet public's expectation; and
- (c) increasing the provision of public cemeteries, crematoria and columbaria which includes overseeing the two crematorium re-provisioning projects at the Wo Hop Shek Crematorium and the Cape Collinson Crematorium and one public columbarium development project at Wo Hop Shek.

24. The majority of our fresh food is imported from the Mainland. To ensure food safety and a steady food supply, the incumbent DS(Food)1 will, together with the CFS, continue to maintain close liaison with the relevant Mainland authorities. In parallel, the incumbent DS(Food)1 will take charge of policies on pest control (including rodent and mosquitoes), sustainable fisheries (as detailed in paragraph 7 above) and tightening of control over pig farms, etc.

Alternatives Considered

25. The level and complexity of the legislative work on the Food Safety Bill and the related subsidiary legislation require the dedicated attention and input of a directorate officer at AOSGB level. There is however only one permanent DS post in the Food Branch. As explained above, it would be impossible for the incumbent to continue to effectively cope with the heavy workload arising from the policy and legislative issues under both the food safety and environmental hygiene portfolios while at the same time steering and overseeing the legislative work on the Food Safety Bill and the related subsidiary legislation.

26. Our current proposal aims to address the bottleneck situation at the DS level in handling a large volume of important and complex duties. The existing duties of the three PASs in the Food Branch will remain largely unchanged, except that PAS(Food)1, responsible for food safety matters, will mainly report to the proposed DS(Food)2 in taking forward the Food Safety Bill. With food safety and public health continuing to be the focus of public attention and also the emergency nature of the work, this work schedule will remain very heavy. PAS(Food)2, responsible for environmental hygiene matters, has a substantial schedule encompassing all policy issues related to environmental hygiene and regulatory control over food premises and takes charge of a number of major policy reviews such as the hawker licensing policy, public market policy and rental adjustment mechanism, etc. He/she will continue to report to DS(Food)1. PAS(Food)3 is responsible for policy issues related to the control over human infection of zoonotic diseases, including taking forward the policy of total separation of poultry from humans, and other subjects on local agriculture. It is of utmost importance that we stay continuously vigilant against the threat of zoonotic diseases and hence the priority of the duties of the post will continue. While mainly reporting to DS(Food)1, PAS(Food)3 will also work for the proposed DS(Food)2 on the legislation to control pesticides and veterinary drug residues in food.

27. In view of the above, our assessment is that it is operationally not possible for the existing directorate officers to take up the above-mentioned legislative work without adversely affecting the discharge of their current duties.

28. The revised job description of DS(Food)1 and the proposed job description of DS(Food)2 are respectively at Enclosures 2 and 3. The duties and responsibilities of the three existing PASs posts (reflecting the new channel of command where appropriate) are respectively at Enclosures 4 to 6. The existing and proposed organisation structures of the Food Branch are shown respectively at Enclosures 7 and 8.

Encls. 2&3

Encls. 4-6

Encls. 7&8

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

29. The proposal will bring about an additional notional annual salary cost at mid-point of \$1,763,400. The full annual average staff cost, including salaries and staff on-cost, is \$2,452,000. The proposed AOSGB post will be supported by the existing PASs and non-directorate staff in the Food Branch and one additional Personal Secretary I (PS I) post. The PS I post will also be created for a period of four years. The notional annual salary cost at mid-point for this PS I post is \$303,840 and the full annual average staff cost, including salaries and staff on-cost, is \$424,000. We have included the necessary provision in the 2009-10 Estimates to meet the cost of this proposal.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

30. We consulted the LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene on 14 April 2009. The majority of the Members supported the creation of the proposed supernumerary AOSGB post.

ESTABLISHMENT CHANGES

31. The establishment changes under Head 139 – Government Secretariat: Food and Health Bureau (Food Branch) in the past two years are as follows –

Establishment (Note)	Number of Posts			
	Existing (as at 1 May 2009)	As at 1 April 2009	As at 1 April 2008	As at 1 April 2007 [§]
A	7 [#]	7	7	6
B	14	14	12	10
C	23	23	22	19
Total	44	44	41	35

/Note

Note:

- A - ranks in the directorate pay scale or equivalent
- B - non-directorate ranks, the maximum pay point of which is above MPS point 33 or equivalent
- C - non-directorate ranks, the maximum pay point of which is at or below MPS point 33 or equivalent
- § - For comparison purpose, the establishment figures shown correspond to those under the food portfolio of the then Head 139 Government Secretariat: Health, Welfare and Food Bureau (Food and Environment Hygiene Branch) which was renamed Food Branch after the re-organisation of the Government Secretariat on 1 July 2007.
- # - As at 1 May 2009, there was no unfilled directorate post in the Food Branch of FHB.

CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU COMMENTS

32. The Civil Service Bureau supports the proposed creation of the supernumerary AOSGB post for four years to provide senior directorate support in taking forward the Food Safety Bill and related legislation, and launching other initiatives to further enhance food safety. The grading and ranking of the proposed post are considered appropriate having regard to the level and scope of the responsibilities required.

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

33. As the post is proposed on a supernumerary basis, its creation, if approved, will be reported to the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service in accordance with the agreed procedure.

Food and Health Bureau
May 2009

**Existing Job Description for the Post of
Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Food)**

Rank : Administrative Officer Staff Grade B1 (D4)

Responsible to : Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. To manage and co-ordinate inter-departmental response to food incidents to ensure food safety, the timely dissemination of information to the public concerning the incidents, and to liaise with relevant authorities to mitigate any impact on food supply arising from the food incidents.
2. To maintain close liaison with the Mainland and overseas food authorities on issues relating to imported foods to ensure food safety.
3. To co-ordinate inter-departmental efforts in keeping up vigilance against the threat of Avian Influenza, and inter-departmental efforts in culling operations and other follow-up work in the case of detection of Avian Influenza virus locally at retail, wholesale or farm level.
4. To review the efficacy of the existing vaccine to enhance the protection for poultry against Avian Influenza.
5. To introduce legislation to achieve the policy regarding separation of poultry from humans and the construction of the poultry slaughtering centre.
6. To review related polices in the context of the Food Safety Bill and to introduce the Food Safety Bill (including the Food Importers and Distributors Notification Scheme, a food tracing mechanism and other related regulations).
7. To introduce regulations to control pesticide residues in food and review their safety standards.
8. To introduce regulations to control veterinary drug residues in food and review their safety standards.
9. To oversee the follow-up work on the Public Health and Municipal Services (Amendment) Bill concerning the expanded power of the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene to deal with food incidents.

10. To formulate publicity and implementation plans to prepare for the commencement of the food nutrition labelling law.
11. To oversee a review on the work of the Government Laboratory and cultivating the capability of private laboratories to tie in with the enactment of various new food standard legislation.
12. To oversee and review various polices, including –
 - (a) food supply (non-staple food);
 - (b) local agriculture and livestock industry;
 - (c) sustainable development of fisheries industries;
 - (d) licensing of food premises, including formulation of measures to further streamline food business licensing
 - (e) liquor licensing
 - (f) provision of public cemeteries, columbaria and crematoria facilities;
 - (g) animal welfare;
 - (h) hawker licensing;
 - (i) public markets; and
 - (j) veterinary health.
13. To support and/or attend meetings of Legislative Council panels and represent the Bureau on boards and committees as may be required.
14. To steer and co-ordinate with the executive departments/agency(ies) in implementing policies and programmes.
15. To oversee the allocation of resources to executive departments and ensuring that the resources are used for the efficient and cost-effective delivery of services.

**Revised Job Description for the Post of
Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 1**

Rank : Administrative Officer Staff Grade B1 (D4)

Responsible to : Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. To manage and co-ordinate inter-departmental response to food incidents to ensure food safety, the timely dissemination of information to the public concerning the incidents, and to liaise with relevant authorities to mitigate any impact on food supply arising from the food incidents.
2. To introduce legislation to achieve the policy regarding separation of poultry from humans and the construction of the poultry slaughtering centre in order to minimise the risk of Avian Influenza to humans.
3. To maintain close liaison with the Mainland and overseas food authorities on issues relating to imported foods to ensure food safety.
4. To co-ordinate inter-departmental efforts in keeping up vigilance against the threat of Avian Influenza, and inter-departmental efforts in culling operations and other follow-up work in the case of detection of Avian Influenza virus locally at retail, wholesale or farm level.
5. To review the efficacy of the existing vaccine to enhance the protection for poultry against Avian Influenza.
6. To oversee implementation of the initiatives and recommendations of the Committee on Sustainable Fisheries to promote sustainable development of the local fisheries industry.
7. To oversee and review various polices, including –
 - (a) food supply (non-staple food);
 - (b) local agriculture and livestock industry;
 - (c) licensing of food premises, including formulation of measures to further streamline food business licensing;
 - (d) liquor licensing;

- (e) provision of public cemeteries, columbaria and crematoria facilities;
 - (f) animal welfare;
 - (g) hawker licensing;
 - (h) public markets; and
 - (i) veterinary health.
8. To support and/or attend meetings of Legislative Council panels and represent the Bureau on boards and committees as may be required.
 9. To steer and co-ordinate with the executive departments/agency(ies) in implementing policies and programmes.
 10. To oversee the allocation of resources to executive departments and ensuring that the resources are used for the efficient and cost-effective delivery of services.

**Proposed Job Description for the Post of
Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 2**

Rank : Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3)

Responsible to : Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. To review various polices in the context of the Food Safety Bill –
 - (a) a tracing mechanism of food to enhance food safety by tracing its origin through the supply chain;
 - (b) a registration system for food importers and distributors;
 - (c) import control of various food types; and
 - (d) review of the existing provisions in Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132) which are related to food safety.
2. To introduce the Food Safety Bill (including the Food Importers and Distributors Notification Scheme, a food tracing mechanism and other related regulations) and for this purpose to oversee and conduct consultation by engaging the trade and other stakeholders.
3. To introduce regulations to control pesticide residues in food and review their safety standards.
4. To introduce regulations to control veterinary drug residues in food and review their safety standards.
5. To oversee the follow up work on the Public Health and Municipal Services (Amendment) Bill concerning the expanded power of the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene to deal with food incidents.
6. To formulate publicity and implementation plans to prepare for the commencement of the food nutrition labelling law.
7. To oversee a review on the work of the Government Laboratory and cultivating the capability of private laboratories to tie in with the enactment of various new food standard legislation.
8. To support and/or attend meetings of Legislative Council panels and represent the Bureau on boards and committees as may be required.
9. To steer and co-ordinate with the executive departments/agency(ies) in the review of various policies and delivery of the policy initiatives.

**Proposed Job Description for the Post of
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 1**

Rank : Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2)

Responsible to : Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Food)2

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. To formulate and review policies on import and export control of aquatic products, food of plant origin and processed food.
2. To manage food incidents relating to aquatic products, food of plant origin and processed food.
3. To introduce the Food Safety Bill (including the mandatory registration scheme on food importers and distributors, record-keeping requirement on food transactions and strengthened import control on individual food types).
4. To oversee the implementation of the Public Health and Municipal Services (Amendment) Bill 2008 relating to prohibition of import/supply of problem food and food recall.
5. To oversee food safety policies and review the food safety regime and harmonise the operation of various departments, including Centre for Food Safety, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and Government Laboratory.
6. To take forward work related to food nutrition labelling to ensure that our local standards conform to those of the international community.
7. To oversee policies on preservatives in food.
8. To review the food inspection arrangements at border control points.
9. To oversee the policy of supply of non-staple food.
10. To liaise with our trading partners and the Mainland authorities on issues relating to imported foods (aquatic products, food of plant origin and processed food).
11. To oversee the outsourcing strategy of the Government Laboratory.
12. To oversee the housekeeping for Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (on agriculture and fisheries sides) and the Government Laboratory.

**Proposed Job Description for the Post of
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 2**

Rank : Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2)

Responsible to : Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Food)1

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. To formulate and review policies for hawkers and public market management.
2. To formulate and review polices and regulation standards for food premises.
3. To formulate and review liquor licensing policy.
4. To formulate and review policies related to public cemeteries, columbaria and crematoria facilities.
5. To steer the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in pest control; and formulate and review policies related to pesticide regulation.
6. To oversee the policies for wholesale food markets.
7. To formulate and review policies for promoting sustainable development of fisheries industries.
8. To formulate and review policies and legislation related to animal welfare.
9. To serve as secretary to the Licensing Appeal Board and Appeal Board On Closure Orders (Immediate Health Hazard).
10. To oversee the housekeeping for Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

**Proposed Job Description for the Post of
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 3**

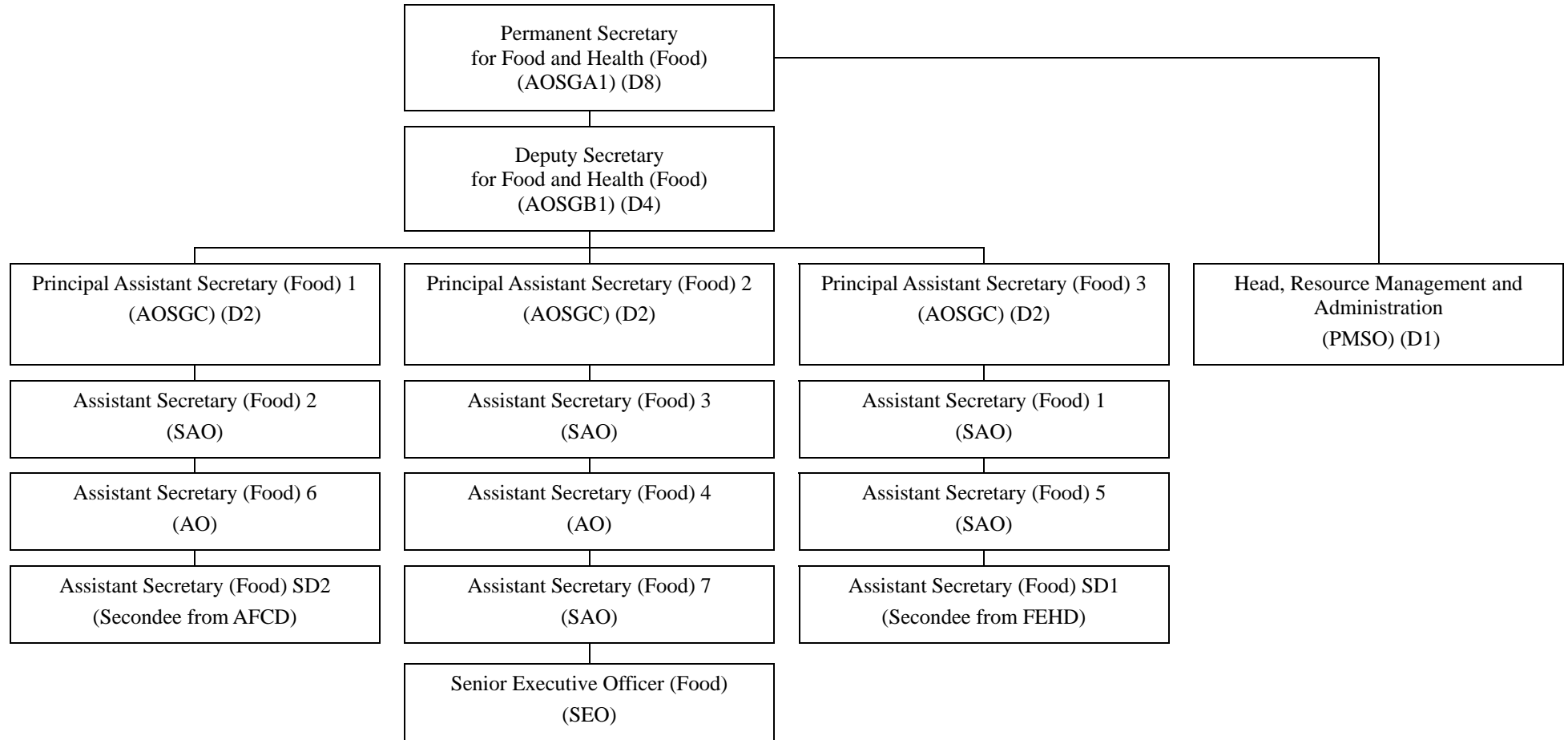
Rank : Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2)

Responsible to : Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Food)1

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. To formulate and review policies on import and export control of food animal and animal products.
2. To manage food incidents relating to food animals and animal products.
3. To formulate local agriculture policies and monitor the operation of local livestock industry.
4. To formulate policies for monitoring veterinary health in order to prevent and control zoonotic diseases.
5. To develop proposals and related legislation for a poultry slaughtering centre.
6. To formulate and review policies and legislation on regulating pesticide, veterinary drugs and to oversee policies on colouring matter in food and food animals.
7. To formulate and review policies on labelling of genetically modified food.
8. To examine initiatives including the use of technology for tracing the source of food.
9. To review measures to control water quality for keeping aquatic and fisheries products with a view to promoting seafood safety.
10. To liaise with our trading partners and the Mainland authorities on issues relating to imported foods (food animal and animal products).
11. To serve as secretary to the Advisory Council on Food and Environmental Hygiene.

Existing Organisation Chart of Food Branch of Food and Health Bureau

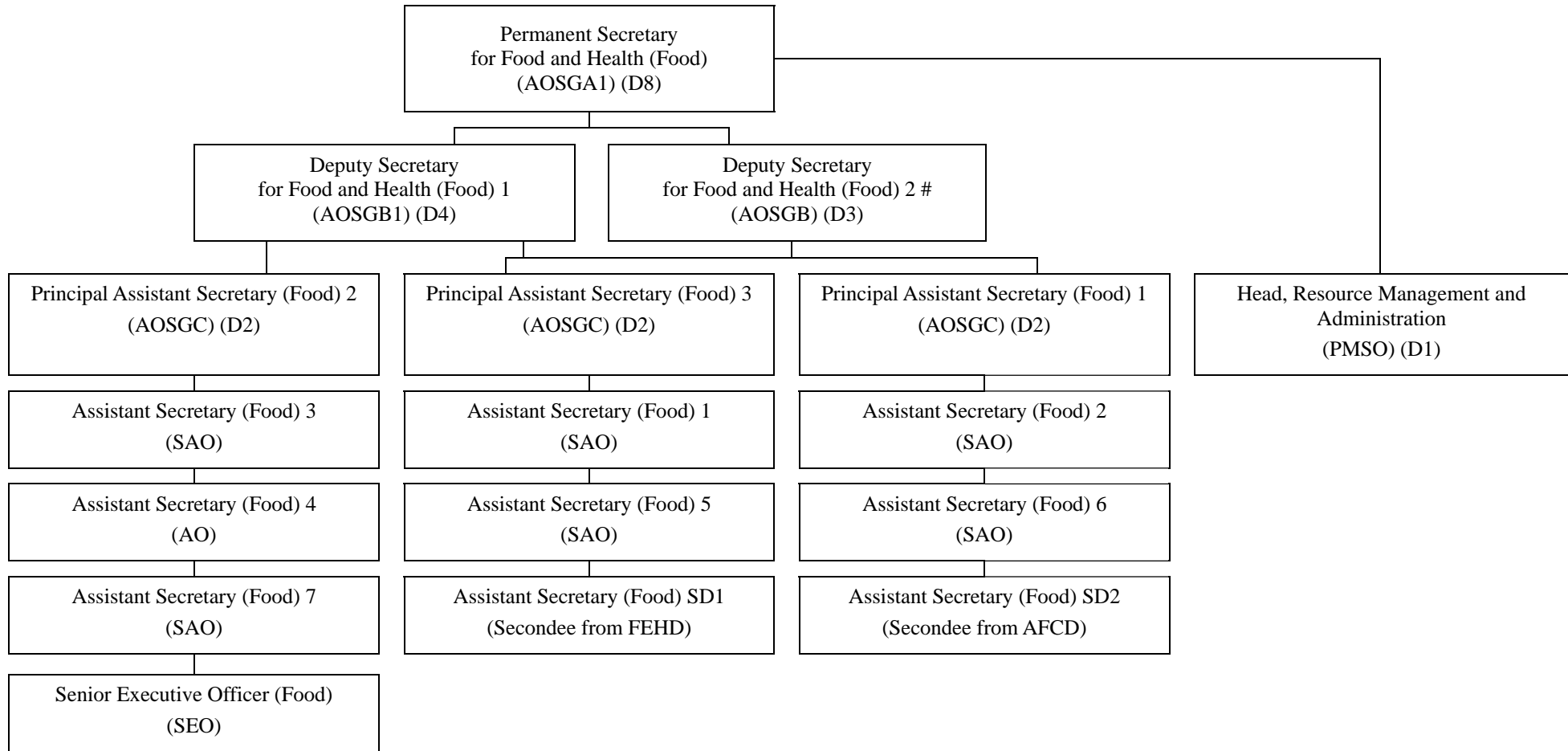


Legend: AFCD: Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
 AO: Administrative Officer
 AOSGA1: Administrative Officer Staff Grade A1
 AOSGB1: Administrative Officer Staff Grade B1
 AOSGC: Administrative Officer Staff Grade C

FEHD: Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
 PMSO: Principal Management Services Officer
 SAO: Senior Administrative Officer
 SEO: Senior Executive Officer
 SD: Special Duties

Note: Excluding an AOSGC serving as Administrative Assistant to Secretary for Food and Health

Proposed Organisation Chart of Food Branch of Food and Health Bureau



- Legend:**
- | | | | |
|---------|--|-------|---|
| AFCD: | Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department | FEHD: | Food and Environmental Hygiene Department |
| AO: | Administrative Officer | PMSO: | Principal Management Services Officer |
| AOSGA1: | Administrative Officer Staff Grade A1 | SAO: | Senior Administrative Officer |
| AOSGB1: | Administrative Officer Staff Grade B1 | SEO: | Senior Executive Officer |
| AOSGB: | Administrative Officer Staff Grade B | SD: | Special Duties |
| AOSGC: | Administrative Officer Staff Grade C | # | Proposed new post |

Note: Excluding an AOSGC serving as Administrative Assistant to Secretary for Food and Health