

**Replies to supplementary questions raised by Finance
Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10**

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development

Session No. : 3

Reply Serial No.	Question Serial No.	Name of Member	Head	Programme
<u>S-CEDB(CIT)01</u>	S016	LI Wah-ming, Fred	152	Subvention: Consumer Council
<u>S-CEDB(CIT)02</u>	S015	LI Wah-ming, Fred	181	Support for Small and Medium Enterprises and Industries

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Head : 152 – Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Commerce and Economic
Development Bureau (Commerce,
Industry and Tourism Branch)

Programme : (5) Subvention: Consumer Council

Controlling Officer : Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development
(Commerce, Industry and Tourism)

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development

Question :

Please advise:

1. regarding Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2009-2010, what will be the budget for conducting the Weekly Price Survey, the Wet Market Survey and the Internet Price Watch by the Consumer Council (“the Council”)? Will there be an increase over that for 2008-2009?
2. whether the coverage of the existing surveys will be expanded. If yes, please provide the details; and
3. the current establishment of the Council involved in the above surveys; and whether it will be expanded in the coming year.

Asked by : Hon. LI Wah-ming, Fred

Reply :

- (1) From August to November 2008, the Consumer Council launched three price surveillance projects, namely “Weekly Price Survey”, “Internet Price Watch” and “Daily Wet Market Report”, for an initial duration of one year. The projects will end in the second half of 2009. In 2009-10, the estimated operating expenses for the “Weekly Price Survey” and “Internet Price Watch” amount to \$1.1 million (including sample costs, staff costs, office rental and computer equipment costs). The estimated monthly operating expenses for the two projects in 2009-10 are broadly the same as those in 2008-09. The Council contracted out the “Daily Wet Market Report” to a university-affiliated research institute for one year starting from November 2008, at a cost of about \$800,000, including the cost of survey design, as well as the sample and staff costs.

- (2) We are examining with the Council whether the three projects should be extended upon their completion in the latter half of this year, and if so, how they can be further improved.
- (3) Twelve staff members of the Council are currently responsible for the three projects. When we examine if the projects should be extended, we will also consider the manpower deployment.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Miss YVONNE CHOI

Post Title _____ Permanent Secretary for Commerce and
Economic Development
(Commerce, Industry and Tourism)

Date _____ 27.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Head : 181 Trade and Industry Department Subhead (No. & title) :
Programme : (3) Support for Small and Medium Enterprises and Industries
Controlling Officer : Director-General of Trade and Industry
Director of Bureau : Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development

Question :

With regard to the SME Loan Guarantee Scheme and Special Loan Guarantee Scheme, please advise:

- (a) in 2009-10, what measures will be implemented by the Trade and Industry Department to enhance the success rate of applications so as to facilitate SMEs to obtain capital;
- (b) if additional allocation has been provided for in the estimate to increase the commitments of the guarantee schemes when there is a further squeeze in the credit market, if yes, what are the details?

Asked by : Hon. LI Wah-ming, Fred

Reply :

- (a) The Trade and Industry Department (TID) will continue to promote the SME Loan Guarantee Scheme (SGS) and the Special Loan Guarantee Scheme (SpGS) through seminars and publicity. To facilitate SMEs' understanding of the loan application process, TID, the Hong Kong Association of Banks and the Hong Kong Association of Restricted Licence Banks and Deposit-taking Companies have jointly published a "Guide for SMEs in obtaining business loan from lending institutions". The Guide is available from the website of TID. Further, regular briefings are provided to the participating lending institutions (PLIs) to facilitate smooth and efficient operation of the schemes.
- (b) TID has been closely monitoring the operation of the two schemes. The loan guarantee commitments for the SGS and the SpGS now stand at \$12.6 billion and \$100 billion respectively. There has been a steady increase in the number of applications and amount of loans granted under both schemes. We will continue to monitor the market situation and utilisation of the schemes, before considering whether additional allocation is required.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Joseph Y T LAI

Post Title _____

Director-General of Trade and Industry

Date _____

27 March 2009