

For discussion
on 6 December 2011

Legislative Council Panel on Security

Replacement of Departmental Launch “Seaward” of the Correctional Services Department

PURPOSE

This paper consults the Panel on the proposal to replace the existing departmental launch “Seaward” of the Correctional Services Department (CSD) by a new vessel equipped with better functions and facilities.

BACKGROUND

2. At present, the CSD has two vessels, namely “Seaward” and “Seaway”. They are mainly used for transporting different types of persons in custody, CSD officers, documents and materials between correctional institutions on outlying islands and those in urban areas and CSD Headquarters. In case of emergency, the vessels would be used to convey staff and equipment for reinforcement purpose. Details of the functions and scope of responsibilities of the two vessels are set out in **Annex**.

3. The existing “Seaward”, which was commissioned in 1993, can convey 56 persons in custody, 16 CSD officers and 4 crew members. The vessel has two decks. The lower deck has 2 main cabins and 4 isolated cells. Designed with stronger security devices, it is the only vessel which can convey Category A persons in custody of high security grading (i.e. those sentenced to 12 years or above) and those required to be segregated. The upper deck has one cabin for CSD officers and visitors. Currently, the “Seaward” mainly conveys male adult persons in custody.

JUSTIFICATIONS FOR PROPOSED REPLACEMENT OF “SEAWARD”

4. The CSD proposes to replace “Seaward” on the following grounds:

(i) Approaching the end of serviceable life

The Marine Department (MD) advises that the designed life expectancy of the Government's steel-hulled vessel is 20 years in general. It will not be cost-effective to maintain a vessel after it has reached its serviceable life. MD has confirmed that "Seaward" will reach its 20-year serviceable life in 2013 and therefore proposes to replace it by a new vessel in 2013.

(ii) Extensive and costly repair

The functions of "Seaward" have been deteriorating notably due to ageing. To keep "Seaward" in good operating conditions, it is necessary to carry out more frequent repair, thus increasing the maintenance cost. Moreover, most of the components of "Seaward" have become obsolete, some of which are no longer available in market. The annual maintenance downtime of the vessel has increased from an average of 17 days in 2004 to around 34 days¹ this year. The annual average maintenance cost has also increased from around \$300,000 in 1993 when it was first commissioned to around \$600,000 to \$700,000 in recent years.

(iii) Operation affected by unsatisfactory functioning of the vessel

The routine annual overhaul conducted in mid 2011 revealed that the hull and deck plating of "Seaward" are aging and rusting away, which will continue to deteriorate in the coming few years and pose threat to the safety of the vessel, its passengers and crew members. Increasingly frequent minor machine breakdowns also cause inconveniences in daily operation and constitute security risk, which cannot fully meet CSD's operational need to detain persons in custody in a secure, safe and humane manner.

PROPOSAL TO PROCURE A NEW VESSEL

5. In view of the above problems, the CSD proposes to procure a new vessel as replacement. The maximum capacity of the new vessel is 80 persons (including 60 persons in custody, 16 CSD officers and 4 crew

¹ Up to end of October this year, apart from the routine annual maintenance of about 34 days, the "Seaward" had to suspend its service for 2 other days due to machine breakdown.

members). The new vessel will be equipped with the following enhanced features in terms of functions and facilities to meet today's operational requirements. Details are as follows:

- (a) The speed of the new vessel will increase to 18 knots from the existing 12.7 knots. The higher speed will help achieve higher efficiency in discharging escort and transport duties. It will also enable speedier arrival of reinforcement at correctional institutions on outlying islands in the event of emergency;
- (b) There will be two additional cells on the lower deck of the new vessel (providing four seats in total), and one of the cells will be equipped with facilities for the disabled;
- (c) CCTV facilities will be installed to enhance surveillance of persons in custody and thus ensure order and security on board;
- (d) Electronic locking system will be installed at all the gates of the two main cabins and six cells on the lower deck to strengthen security; and
- (e) Enhanced complementary facilities, such as additional air-conditioning and ventilation, will be provided to ensure air ventilation during navigation, and one additional set of generator will be provided to ensure sufficient power supply.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6. The total non-recurrent cost of replacing "Seaward", together with the necessary facilities on board, is estimated to be \$19.6 million. A detailed breakdown is as follows:

Item	HKD (\$ million)
(a) Hull with facilities (e.g. anchor, rudder and mooring facilities etc.)	6.86
(b) Machinery on board (including gearbox, main engine of the propulsion system and generator etc.)	9.80

Item	HKD (\$ million)
(c) Electronic equipment on board (including electronic navigational equipment and air conditioning equipment etc.)	1.96
(d) Project management services by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund	0.10
(e) Contingency	0.88
Total :	19.60

The costs required in 2012-13 and 2013-14 are estimated to be \$11.76 million and \$7.84 million respectively.

7. The estimated annual recurrent cost of the new “Seaward” is \$710,000, which will be slightly higher than the annual average maintenance cost of the existing “Seaward” in recent years. The higher maintenance cost is a result of the larger size and a more powerful engine of the new vessel. The CSD will absorb the additional recurrent cost from its existing resources. The proposal will not incur any additional staff cost.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

8. Subject to Members’ views on the proposal, we plan to seek funding approval from the Finance Committee (FC) in January 2012. If the funding approval is granted, we expect that the implementation timetable would be as follows:

Item	Target Completion Date
(a) Preparation of tender specifications	January 2012
(b) Invitation of tender	April 2012
(c) Tender evaluation and award of contract	September 2012
(d) Construction of vessel	July 2013
(e) Delivery of vessel	August 2013

ADVICE SOUGHT

9. Members are invited to comment on the proposal.

Security Bureau
Correctional Services Department
November 2011

Information on the two existing launches of CSD

Name	Year of commissioning	Features of the launch	Main Functions
Seaward	1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Double-decked (2 main cabins and 4 cells on the lower deck; 1 cabin on the upper deck) ● Equipped with facilities to escort Category A² persons in custody and those required to be segregated ● Maximum capacity of 76 persons (including 16 CSD officers, 4 crew members and 56 persons in custody) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To convey mainly adult male persons in custody (including Category A persons in custody, those required to be segregated and Drug Addiction Treatment Centre (DATC) inmates) between the outlying islands and urban areas ● In case of emergency, to convey staff and equipment to various institutions on outlying islands for reinforcement purpose ● To deliver documents and materials between correctional institutions on outlying islands and in urban areas/CSD Headquarters
Seaway	1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Single-decked, with 2 main cabins ● Maximum capacity of 54 persons (including 10 CSD officers, 4 crew members and 40 persons in custody) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To convey mainly female persons in custody and young inmates (including DATC inmates and Detention Centre inmates) between the outlying islands and urban areas

² Prisoners sentenced to 12 years or above

Name	Year of commissioning	Features of the launch	Main Functions
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The vessel cannot convey persons in custody of high security grading ● In case of emergency, to convey staff and equipment to various institutions on outlying islands for reinforcement purpose ● To deliver documents and materials between correctional institutions on outlying islands and in urban areas/CSD Headquarters