

**For discussion on
13 December 2016**

Panel on Environmental Affairs

Subcommittee on Refuse Collection and Resource Recovery

**Measures to promote and support waste reduction, source separation,
and collection of roadside recyclables**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the Government's current efforts in promoting and supporting waste reduction and source separation, as well as collection of recyclables from recycling bins in public places.

Provision of waste separation facilities

2. The Government attaches great importance to providing suitable waste separation facilities at convenient locations to cultivate a waste recycling culture and to encourage wider practice of waste source separation and recycling in the community.

Waste separation facilities near home and workplace

3. In 2005, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) launched the Programme on Source Separation of Waste (SSW programme) to encourage residents to participate in source separation of waste. Under the SSW programme, recycling bins are provided by the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) to the participating residential estates¹. Since September 2008, the SSW programme has

¹ To underpin the SSW programme, the Environmental Campaign Committee distributes one set of recycling bins free-of-charge to each residential block upon request. The owners' organisations concerned may apply for partial funding support from the ECF to purchase additional recycling bins to be placed on each floor of the residential block.

been extended to cover Commercial and Industrial (C&I) buildings. So far, a total of 7 400 sets of recycling bins have been given out under the SSW programme free of charge. The programme now covers around 80% of the population in Hong Kong.

4. To cater for the need of residents living in buildings not provided with any recycling bins or other waste separation facilities owing to the lack of proper building management and to promote clean recycling, we have established a Community Recycling Network (CRN) over the years, which includes 18 Community Recycling Centres with support from the ECF, as well as about 60 collection points located in different premises managed by non-profit-making organisations (NPOs). Members of the public residing in the target catchment areas are encouraged to bring recyclables to the multiple collection outlets under the CRN for recycling.

5. In addition, a network of Community Green Stations (CGSs) is being developed in each of the 18 districts to promote environmental education and enhance recycling support for the local community for low-value recyclables, such as electrical appliances, computers, glass beverage bottles, compact fluorescent lamps and tubes, rechargeable batteries, with a view to promoting green living at the community level. The first two CGSs, operated by NPOs, in Sha Tin and Eastern District, started operation in 2015. We expect that three more CGSs in Kwun Tong, Yuen Long and Sham Shui Po will commence their operation in the coming few months.

Material recovery room in new residential buildings

6. Following the amendment of the Building (Refuse Storage and Material Recovery Chambers and Refuse Chutes) Regulations in 2008, all new residential buildings and the domestic part of new composite buildings are required to provide a refuse storage and material recovery room of at least 1.5 metres x 1.5 metres on every floor. The provision of more convenient waste separation facilities on doorstep aims to facilitate residents to participate in source separation of domestic waste for material recovery. As in September 2016, over 200 housing developments have been equipped with the required refuse storage and material recovery rooms, serving some 52 000 flat units and 160 000 residents.

Recycling bins in public places

7. To provide recycling support for pedestrians and population not being covered by SSW, the Government has been providing about 2 850 recycling bins in public places including public streets, refuse collection points, public markets, bus termini and other venues frequently patronised by the public such as Government clinics and school². Through its contractors, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) is currently collecting recyclables from these recycling bins. The EPD has launched a free mobile application "WASTE LESS" that locates recyclable collection points at public places all over the territory, and provides the latest news and useful knowledge about waste treatment, reduction and recovery to facilitate public participation.

8. The FEHD has put in place a robust contract management mechanism under which the FEHD staffs conduct regular and surprise checks to monitor the performance of the contractors who collect recyclables from the recycling bins. Among all obligations, these contractors are strictly prohibited from disposing of the collected recyclables at landfills or other waste treatment facilities. To enhance the quality of the collection service, the FEHD has imposed required additional obligations (at **Annex**) on these contractors since August 2014.

9. In the event of any breach of contract provisions, these contractors will be subject to punitive actions including verbal warnings, written warnings and default notices. In the past three years, no serious non-compliance on the part of the contractors has come to the attention of the FEHD. In collaboration with the EPD, the FEHD will continue to closely monitor the performance of the contractors and keep the monitoring regime under review with a view to identifying the need and room for enhancement to the recyclables collection service.

² There are also a number of green groups and NPOs operating programmes to collect other types of recyclables, including used clothes and glass beverage bottles, in public places.

Publicity and education efforts

10. The Government appeals to the community to adopt behavioural change to reduce waste and practice waste source separation and recycling through various publicity and educational programmes.

Environment and Conservation Fund projects

11. The ECF has been supporting the NPOs to organise education and promotion activities relating to waste reduction and recycling. In 2016/17, the ECF has earmarked \$85 million to support waste reduction projects, including \$20 million for food waste reduction projects and \$65 million for general waste reduction projects in the community. Separately, the ECF has earmarked \$25 million to support general education projects, of which \$5 million will be used to support, as a priority, projects using innovative means to drive behavioral change towards waste reduction and clean recycling, and another \$10 million to support food wise-related initiatives. Furthermore, the ECF has earmarked \$30 million for research, technology demonstration and conference projects, with waste reduction and recycling being one of the priority research areas.

Clean Recycling Campaign

12. In collaboration with the EPD, the Environmental Campaign Committee (ECC) has launched the Clean Recycling Campaign since 2015 to promote source separation of waste for clean recycling. A series of activities to raise awareness have been launched, including roving exhibitions and TV episodes. The ECC has engaged NPOs to carry out education and promotional activities on clean recycling at around 100 private housing estates to raise residents' awareness about, and to encourage them to practice clean recycling. More intensive training and information sharing activities have been provided to frontline staff of property management offices and residents' associations to enhance their capability to commit and sustain long-term efforts in clean recycling.

Food waste reduction and recycling

13. The EPD has continued to disseminate food wise messages to the community through Big Waster (大嘍鬼) Facebook and the website of Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign (<http://www.foodwisehk.gov.hk/en/>). A series of publicity, educational and supporting activities have been carried out to promote food waste avoidance and reduction, including launching of APIs, conducting roving exhibitions, organizing training seminars, production of publicity materials and Good Practice Guides. As in October 2016, about 620 organisations and companies have signed the Food Wise Charter to demonstrate their commitment to food waste reduction. About 650 eatery outlets have enrolled in the “Food Wise Eateries” scheme and pledged, among other things, to offer portioned meals so that customers may order the right amount of food according to their appetites. Since 2010, we have been working with the C&I sectors through the Food Waste Recycling Partnership Scheme to prepare them for large-scale collection and delivery of source-separated food waste to the Organic Waste Treatment Facilities (OWTFs) which are being developed. Under the scheme, over 250 C&I establishments and their front-line staff have received training on food waste source separation and collection.

District collaboration

14. The 18 District Councils (DCs), the Home Affairs Department, the EPD and the ECC have been collaborating to implement the Community Participation Programme (CPP) to jointly promote environmental protection at the district level. In 2015/16, the EPD provided \$3.5 million to the DCs for implementing district promotional activities on waste reduction and recycling according to the needs of DCs. Over 37 local organizations and NPOs were invited to co-organise the activities participated by more than 100 000 members of the public. In 2016/17, \$3.6 million have been provided to the DCs for implementing the CPP.

One-stop information portal

15. We have set up the Waste Reduction Website (<https://www.wastereduction.gov.hk/en/index.htm>) as a one-stop information portal about waste generation, reduction, recycling and management. Timely information and education materials are posted for reference by the general public, students, the C&I sectors, public agencies and the recycling industry. The topics cover consumption reduction, waste avoidance, purchase of more environmentally-friendly products, and recovery of products and materials for reuse and recycling.

Government taking the lead

16. The Government is committed to taking the lead and setting an example in adopting “green” practices. Government bureaux and departments are encouraged to take initiatives to enhance staff awareness about environmental protection and waste reduction and to implement, as far as possible and practicable, green housekeeping measures, such as to reduce paper consumption in the first place and recycle paper products as much as possible; to exercise care in choosing materials used in events such that they can be reused in future occasions; and to avoid using disposable tableware and containers when hosting meetings, conferences or receptions.

17. To promote waste reduction and recycling, all new Government office buildings are required to provide a material recovery room and associated facilities on every floor of the building for separation of waste, sorting of reusable and recyclable materials and temporary storage of such materials. Moreover, since 2015, all new Government buildings with canteens or catering facilities have to allow adequate space for installation of food waste composting systems or temporary storage of food waste for off-site treatment.

Green procurement

18. The Government has been taking the lead to adopt a green procurement policy for promoting waste reduction and recycling. We

have encouraged Government departments to purchase green products as far as possible and where economically rational. The Government's Green Procurement List now covers 150 items with updated green specifications and is being promoted to quasi-government organizations as well as the private sector. In 2015, the Government consumed over 3 800 tonnes of B5 diesel in replacement of convention diesel, contributing to the recycling of around 210 tonnes of locally-generated waste cooking oil. We have also encouraged a wider use of recycled and other green materials in public works projects whenever the technical performance of the green products is proven to be satisfactory, subject to adequate market supply e.g. the Highways Department has mandated the use of paving materials with 10% to 30% of reclaimed asphalts pavement by weight for road maintenance applications, contributing to the avoidance of some 20 000 tonnes of asphalts waste in 2015.

19. Looking ahead, the Government will continue to lead by example, review the above measures timely, and step up efforts to promote an environmentally-conscious and sustainable culture in delivering public service.

Conclusion

20. The Government has undertaken a multi-pronged approach, as promulgated under the "Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013-2022" published in May 2013, to drive behavioural change to reduce waste and promote recycling. We will continue to keep the provision of waste separation and recycling support under review and maximise the impact of our publicity campaigns, with a view to boosting public participation in reduction, source separation and recycling of waste.

Environmental Protection Department
December 2016

**Additional obligations imposed on FEHD's contractors
in collecting recyclables from recycling bins in public places**

- (a) To use transparent plastic bags for collection of recyclables to facilitate on-site monitoring. Moreover, the bags must be printed with the words "used for collecting recyclables". Notices showing "FEHD contractor providing collection service for recyclables" must be displayed on both sides of the body of its collection vehicles;
- (b) To nominate up to two local recyclers to receive and recycle plastic recyclables when submitting their bids for the contracts. In addition, each recycler nominated shall have independent capability and experience to properly process plastic at a designated recycling site. Since August 2016, the bidder can nominate up to six local recyclers to receive and recycle plastic, paper and metal recyclables when submitting its bids for the contracts. Each recycler nominated shall have independent capability and experience to properly process plastic, paper and / or metal recyclables at a designated site;
- (c) To acknowledge that the FEHD has the right to direct the contractor to change its recyclers if their performance is not satisfactory; and
- (d) To submit the ultimate yield of collected recyclables for FEHD's reference.