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APPENDIX 8

MARINE DEPARTMENT

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4 January 2021

Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Attn: Ms Wendy JAN)

Dear Ms JAN,

Public Accounts Committee

Consideration of Chapter 1 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 75 Collection and removal of marine refuse by the Marine Department

Thank you for your letter dated 23 December 2020. Our replies to the questions raised by the Public Accounts Committee are set out at **Annex**.

Yours sincerely,

(Tony C.S. CHAN)
for Director of Marine

Encl.

c.c. Secretary for the Environment (email: sen@enb.gov.hk)
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (email: sfst@fstb.gov.hk)
Director of Audit (email: john_nc_chu@aud.gov.hk)

Replies to questions raised in PAC's letter of 23 December 2020

Part 1: Introduction

- (1) With regard to the recurrent expenditure on the work of the Marine Department ("MD") in tackling marine refuse as mentioned in Table 2 of paragraph 1.9, please provide in tabular form the respective annual expenditures for collection and removal of marine refuse over the past ten years from 2011-2012 to 2020-2021, and the current establishment and actual number of staff responsible for various related duties.

Reply: The recurrent expenditure of the Pollution Control Unit of MD in tackling marine refuse over the past ten years is at Appendix A.

MD's marine refuse cleansing and disposal services have been fully outsourced since July 2005. The Pollution Control Unit of MD is primarily responsible for monitoring the collection and removal of marine refuse by contractors, and patrolling the sea to monitor its cleanliness. The establishment and strength of the Unit are 23 and 20 respectively. For details, please refer to Appendix B.

Part 2: Administration of marine refuse cleansing and disposal contracts

- (2) With regard to the tender process for the marine refuse cleansing and disposal services contracts administered by MD as mentioned in paragraph 2.6(c), will the Administration advise on the composition of the officers responsible in tender evaluation; the time when the tender evaluation mechanism started to be used; the time when the mechanism was last revised? Prior to a new round of tendering exercise, whether MD would conduct a thorough review of the outsourcing services as a whole before devising a new tender document; if yes, what are the mechanism and procedural guidelines?

Reply: Since the marine refuse cleansing and disposal services have been fully outsourced in 2005, MD has conducted open tender exercises for outsourced services in accordance with the tendering procedures as stipulated in the Stores and Procurement Regulations.

For the contracts for the whole of Hong Kong waters, they were approved by the Central Tender Board (“CTB”) in accordance with the tender procedures as stipulated in the Stores and Procurement Regulations. Tenders received would first be evaluated by the tender assessment panel (comprising five officers from MD and the Environment Bureau and chaired by an MD officer at Directorate Pay Scale Point 2) in accordance with the assessment criteria approved by the CTB. Assessment results and the tender recommended to be accepted would be submitted to the CTB for consideration and approval.

As for the contracts for Tai Po District, according to the tender process stipulated in the Stores and Procurement Regulations, depending on the value of contract, they would be approved by the Government Logistics Department Tender Board (“GLDTB”) or the Departmental Tender Committee (chaired by the Deputy Director of Marine). Tenders received would first be evaluated by the tender assessment panel (comprising three officers of MD and chaired by an officer at Directorate Pay Scale Point 1) according to the Stores and Procurement Regulations and tender requirements. Assessment results and the tender recommended to be accepted would be submitted to GLDTB or the Departmental Tender Committee (depending on the value) for consideration and approval.

MD has been monitoring the effectiveness and efficiency of the contractor’s performance as well as identifying areas for improvement through reviewing various returns and reports submitted by the contractor and conducting monthly contract management committee meetings with the contractor. In addition, MD will examine the arrangements under the existing contract and consider improvement measures prior to the conduct of the next round of tender exercise. For example, prior to the tender exercise for the whole of Hong Kong waters in 2011, MD reviewed the cost

effectiveness of maintaining two marine refuse cleansing and disposal contracts and came to the view that the two contracts should be combined to enhance the economy of scale in terms of operation and to encourage investment in more innovative service delivery approaches. Subsequently, the contracts for the Eastern area of the Hong Kong waters and the Western area of the Hong Kong waters were combined in the 2011 tender exercise. Moreover, MD also introduced a fuel price fluctuation adjustment mechanism so that the contractor and the Government would share the risk when there are huge fluctuations in fuel prices in the market. This mechanism would help promote competitive bidding and achieve better value for money.

Before conducting the tender exercise for the whole of Hong Kong waters in 2017, MD had reviewed the coverage of the marine cleansing and disposal services. With a view to enhancing the cleanliness of the Hong Kong waters, the number of priority areas was increased from 36 to 43 in the tender document for the 2017 tender exercise. In addition, a requirement that the contractor should provide not less than 60 scavenging and supporting vessels for the core services was also added in the said tender document to ensure that the successful bidder would possess the necessary fleet size to deliver the services. Furthermore, the number of cleansing teams to enhance scavenging floating refuse along the foreshore was also increased from two to three.

Part 3: Monitoring of marine refuse cleansing and disposal services

- (3) According to paragraph 3.13, the Audit Commission noted that there is room for improvement in marine refuse cleansing work of the contractor. Has MD set up monitoring mechanism for the services provided by the contractor as well as its performance; if yes, what are the mechanism and manpower involved in monitoring?

Reply: MD monitors the contractor's performance mainly by conducting daily cleanliness patrols on a surprise basis, reviewing the various returns and reports submitted by the contractor and conducting monthly meetings with the contractor.

With regard to the daily monitoring of the contractor's marine refuse cleansing work, MD will instruct the contractor to clean up the area concerned upon receipt of report of marine refuse, and inspect the cleanliness conditions of the waters again after completion of cleansing work by the contractor. In case of unsatisfactory cleanliness conditions after cleansing, MD will instruct the contractor to deploy resources and manpower to step up the cleansing work until the cleanliness conditions are up to the requirements.

In addition, MD will also conduct surprise checks at the "priority areas" during patrols in order to ensure their cleanliness conditions are up to the requirements.

The establishment and strength of the Pollution Control Unit of MD are 23 and 20 respectively.

Part 4: Other related issues

- (4) With reference to paragraph 4.12, the Audit Commission noted that the information relating to the MD's marine refuse cleansing work on the "Clean Shorelines" website was not entirely accurate. While the website was managed by the Environmental Protection Department ("EPD"), what is MD's mechanism for the update and management of information under its purview on the website?

Reply: The "Clean Shorelines" website is maintained by EPD, which regularly collects and uploads information such as marine refuse collected at different locations from various government departments onto the website for reference by the public. After noting that update of certain information on the "Clean Shorelines" website was required, MD provided latest information to EPD and the information was updated onto the website on 16 September 2020. MD will work with EPD and review and update the website regularly to provide the public with the latest information.

- (5) With reference to paragraph 4.17, MD informed the Legislative Council in May 2019 that a trial run of floating booms was planned to commence in 2019-2020. Will the Administration advise on the latest progress, the expected earliest completion date and any change in the estimated expenditure of the trial run?

Reply: The trial run aims to place floating booms in suitable waters which will not cause obstruction to vessel traffic to intercept floating refuse. The two sets of floating booms newly procured were received in May 2020. MD has placed the floating booms in Western District Public Cargo Working Area and Kwun Tong Typhoon Shelter in mid-October 2020 and late November 2020 respectively to test the effectiveness of intercepting marine refuse in different waters. It is expected that a more comprehensive assessment on its effectiveness will be available in late January 2021. The expenditure of the trial run has been included in the overall budget of the Pollution Control Unit.

- (6) With regard to paragraph 4.19 concerning the development of innovation and technology in tackling marine refuse, will MD advise on the number of projects incorporating innovation and technology in tackling marine refuse in recent years; the technological applications primarily involved in the respective projects, overall effectiveness, savings in expenditure and manpower, as well as innovative technologies to be introduced in the future and their related implementation schedules?

Reply: Apart from intercepting marine refuse with floating booms on a trial basis, MD has also acquired two drones to strengthen the monitoring of the cleanliness at sea. The drones are currently under trial run, and are expected to commence service in the second quarter of 2021. We will review the effectiveness of the drones half a year after the commencement of the service.

海軍處污染控制小組應對海上垃圾工作的經常開支 (2011-12 至 2020-21 年度)
 Recurrent Expenditure of the Pollution Control Unit of Marine Department in Tackling Marine Refuse (from 2011-12 to 2020-21)

性質 Nature	經常開支 (百萬元) Recurrent expenditure (\$ million)										預算 Estimate 2020-21
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
外判海上垃圾 清理及處置服務 Outsourcing of marine refuse cleansing and disposal services	34.43	36.27	37.30	38.08	39.90	39.95	58.40	84.14	90.56	94.98	
租賃小輪 Hire of launches	0.63	0.85	0.87	0.95	0.95	0.84	1.88	4.97	6.05	6.97	
總計 Total	35.06	37.12	38.17	39.03	40.85	40.79	60.28	89.11	96.61	101.95	

海事處污染控制小組編制和實際人員

(截至 2020 年 12 月 31 日)

Establishment and Strength in Pollution Control Unit of Marine Department

(As of 31 December 2020)

職級 Rank	編制 Establishment	實際人員 Strength
海事主任 / 助理海事主任 Marine Officer / Assistant Marine Officer	2	2
高級助理船務主任 Senior Assistant Shipping Master	2	2
一級海事督察 Marine Inspector I	3	3
二級海事督察 Marine Inspector II	10	10
助理文書主任 Assistant Clerical Officer	1	1
文書助理 Clerical Assistant	1	1
技工 Artisan	2	0
二級工人 Workman II	2	1
總數 Total	23	20