

## **NOTE FOR PUBLIC WORKS SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **Supplementary information on Block allocations Subheads 7014CX and 7015CX**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

At the Public Works Subcommittee meeting held on 15 December 1999, Members considered the proposed annual allocations for 2000-01 for the various existing and proposed new block allocations covered in the paper referenced PWSC(1999-2000)78. In response to Members' queries, the Administration undertook to provide supplementary information on the following -

- (a) the procedures for approving projects under the existing block allocation **Subhead 7014CX** - Rural Public Works (RPW) programme and the proposed new **Subhead 7015CX** - Urban Minor Works (UMW) programme, for which the Director of Home Affairs (DHA) has the delegated power to authorise expenditure; and
- (b) the rationale behind DHA's proposal to set the ceiling expenditure at \$15 million per item for projects under **Subhead 7015CX**.

#### **THE ADMINISTRATION'S RESPONSE**

##### **Procedures for approving projects**

2. The RPW programme covers improvement projects in the New Territories (NT) with the required funding met from **Subhead 7014CX**. DHA has established a two-tier administrative system to select and approve projects for implementation, namely, a system comprising the setting up of nine District Working Groups (DWGs) at district level and a Central Steering Committee (CSC) at regional level. The key steps leading to approval of projects are described in the following paragraphs.

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3. From time to time, various project proposals will come to the notice of NT District Offices (DOs) from various sources, including villagers, local personalities, village representatives and District Boards/District Councils (DCs). The DOs will collate the proposals to assess the feasibility and the estimated costs of the proposed projects, and consult relevant departments if necessary. They will then submit the projects to the DWGs for endorsement and prioritization. Each DWG is chaired by a District Officer, with local leaders and departmental representatives as members. Its major functions are to stimulate stronger local participation, to identify and prioritize local improvement needs, and to assist in resolving local objections to the proposed projects in the RPW programme. The DWGs will meet at quarterly intervals, examine each of the proposed projects and put forth recommendations in a composite paper to the RPW CSC for consideration. The District Works Sections of Home Affairs Department will provide technical advice on the proposed projects.

4. The RPW CSC is chaired by DHA. Its membership comprises all nine NT DC Chairmen, Heung Yee Kuk representatives and other senior representatives. Its main task is to oversee the general implementation of the programme and offer advice and assistance to expedite implementation. Upon the recommendation of the RPW CSC, DHA, the vote controller of **Subhead 7014CX**, will approve the selected projects for implementation.

5. The proposed UMW programme to be funded from **Subhead 7015CX** will follow the two-tier administrative arrangement for the RPW programme as described in paragraphs 2 to 4 above. The DWGs will be chaired by District Officers with local leaders and departmental representatives as members. The CSC at regional level will be chaired by DHA with the nine urban DC Chairmen and other local representatives as members, amongst others. The procedures for allocating funds under the proposed **Subhead 7015CX** will be equally transparent as those for **Subhead 7014CX**.

#### **Expenditure ceiling for projects under Subhead 7015CX**

6. Based on the experience of implementing **Subhead 7013CX** - District-based urban environmental improvement (UEI) projects, DHA considers that there is an increasing demand for minor environment improvements in the urban districts. However, the existing financial ceiling of \$2 million for UEI projects is somewhat restrictive and hampers the ability of the urban DCs in implementing larger scale projects worthy of serious consideration. To provide

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greater flexibility and to enhance the role of the urban DCs for the purpose of improving the local environment and eliminating hygiene blackspots, we plan to set the ceiling expenditure at \$15 million per item for projects under the proposed **Subhead 7015CX**. This is also in line with the per item ceiling under **Subhead 7014CX**.

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Home Affairs Bureau  
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