

Foreshore, Seabed and Roads (Amendment) Bill 2003

**Supplementary Note on the Measures to
Expedite Public Works and the Benefits of the Bill**

Measures already taken to expedite public works

In the past two years, Government has endeavored to streamline the delivery of public works projects. We have already implemented the following measures –

- (i) simplifying the requirements for preliminary project feasibility assessments in project inception;
- (ii) allowing the gazettal of projects in parallel with environmental impact assessment;
- (iii) allowing parallel action on tendering and funding applications;
- (iv) extending the delegated authorities for Bureau Secretaries and Works Directors on creation of minor works items;
- (v) simplifying the procedures for inviting straightforward tenders for small-sized projects; and
- (vi) expediting administrative actions for land resumption.

2. By implementing the above measures, we have shortened the time period for undertaking pre-construction activities of average-sized civil engineering projects from six years to less than four years.

3. However, we cannot further accelerate our programme in response to the public's demands without shortening the periods spent on the raising and resolving of objections to gazetted projects, which are some 11 to 17 months allowed under the existing legislation.

Benefits of the statutory amendments

4. We estimate that the proposed statutory amendments will help advance 100 road, reclamation and sewerage projects in the coming five years by some six to nine months. Apart from earlier completion of infrastructure facilities, thousands of jobs associated with the projects can be advanced.

5. Regarding the shortening of the two-month period for raising objections to one month, it should be noted that objectors are only required to submit to the Government brief statements of their objections and their interests during the objection period. Substantiations of objections can still be submitted after the objection period but during the period for resolving objections.

Enhancement Measures

6. We have planned to implement the following collaborative measures to enhance public consultation and publicity of gazettals, to ensure that the objections can be effectively dealt with within the shortened timeframes –

- (i) earlier consultations with District Councils;
- (ii) earlier sounding out of a project with concerned bodies and the locals before project gazettal;
- (iii) notices of the projects will be put on the relevant bureau/department's internet web sites;
- (iv) works departments will set up steering groups to expedite the handling of objections and revisions to schemes; and
- (v) works departments will improve dialogues with objectors and consult them on the seeking of time extensions for resolving objections if genuinely found necessary.

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
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