

ITEM FOR ESTABLISHMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

HEAD 48 – GOVERNMENT LABORATORY

**HEAD 49 – FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE
DEPARTMENT**

**HEAD 149 – GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT :
HEALTH, WELFARE AND FOOD BUREAU**

Subhead 000 Operational expenses

Members are invited to recommend to Finance Committee the following proposals with effect from 2 May 2006 –

**under Head 49 – Food and Environmental Hygiene
Department**

(a) the creation of the following new grade and rank –

Controller, Centre for Food Safety
(D4) (\$145,150 - \$149,600);

(b) the creation of the following permanent posts –

1 Controller, Centre for Food Safety
(D4) (\$145,150 - \$149,600)

2 Principal Medical and Health Officer
(D1) (\$92,650 - \$98,300)

/to

to be offset by the deletion of the following permanent post –

1 Deputy Director of Health
(D3) (\$127,900 - \$135,550);

**under Head 149 – Government Secretariat : Health,
Welfare and Food Bureau**

(c) the creation of the following permanent post –

1 Administrative Officer Staff Grade A1
(D8) (\$181,050);

(d) the retitling and redistribution of duties and responsibilities of the Permanent Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food post, Administrative Officer Staff Grade A1 (D8) (\$181,050);

under Head 48 – Government Laboratory

(e) the deletion of the following permanent post –

1 Chief Chemist
(D1) (\$92,650 - \$98,300); and

(f) the retitling and redistribution of duties and responsibilities among the directorate posts in the Analytical and Advisory Services Division.

PROBLEM

A post in a new grade and rank of Controller, Centre for Food Safety (Controller, CFS) is required to underpin the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (DFEH) to ensure smooth functioning and operation of the new CFS to be

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established under the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). The Controller, CFS requires the support of two Principal Medical and Health Officers (PMO) to strengthen the food surveillance and food incident management functions and risk communication and assessment work.

2. At the bureau level, the operation of the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau (HWFB) has fully demonstrated that the wide spectrum of policy responsibilities and sheer amount of work is clearly beyond the reasonable demand on the Permanent Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (PSHWF). One additional Administrative Officer Staff Grade A1 (AOSGA1) (D8) post is required to oversee the Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene portfolios.

PROPOSAL

3. We propose that with effect from 2 May 2006 –

under FEHD

- (a) a post in a new grade and rank of Controller, CFS (D4) be created to oversee the operation of the CFS to be established under FEHD. The creation will be offset by the deletion of one Deputy Director of Health (D3) post in FEHD;
- (b) two PMO (D1) posts be created under the CFS to enhance food surveillance and food incident management, risk assessment and communication work;

under HWFB

- (c) one permanent post of AOSGA1 (D8) be created and designated as Permanent Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Food and Environmental Hygiene) (PSFEH) in HWFB to oversee the Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene portfolios;
- (d) the existing PSHWF post, ranked at AOSGA1 (D8), be retitled as Permanent Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Health and Welfare) (PSHW) and its duties be redistributed to oversee the Health, Welfare and Women's Interests portfolios; and

under Government Laboratory

- (e) one Chief Chemist (CC) (D1) post in the Government Laboratory (GL) be deleted.

/JUSTIFICATION

JUSTIFICATION

Proposed Establishment of a CFS

4. Ensuring food safety is one of the major policy objectives of HWFB. The recent food incidents on fish and pigs raise public concern over the safety of imported foods and call for the need to enhance our food safety control functions for meeting public expectations. Given the increasing public concern within the community to scrutinise the safety of food products from the Mainland and elsewhere, there is an urgent need to rationalise the existing structure to facilitate strengthening of our food safety control functions.

5. Pending the finalisation of the reorganisation plan for the food safety regulatory framework, we propose to establish, as the next step, a new CFS under FEHD to perform the imminent tasks of enhancing the existing food safety regulatory functions including strengthening food surveillance work at the import, wholesale and retail level to ensure the food products supplied by the Mainland and overseas countries are safe to consume, and efficient handling of increasing food incidents and food complaints.

6. The CFS will consist of two functional divisions to be transferred from the existing Food and Public Health (FPH) Branch of FEHD as set out below –

(a) Food Surveillance and Control (FSC) Division

This Division will be responsible for enforcement work on food safety under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinances, Cap 132. It will conduct enhanced surveillance of all food products including meat, seafood, live fish, fruits, vegetables at various points along the food chain, ensuring pre-packaged food for sale is properly labeled and tracing sources of unwholesome food in food incidents. It will conduct regular and ad hoc food sampling for microbiological and chemical testing, investigate food complaints, exercise import control on certain high-risk food products such as meat and milk, and coordinate all food-related incidents including investigation of food-borne illness outbreaks at food premises, coordination of food recalls and management of food safety crises. It will be responsible for the import control of live food animals from the Mainland as well as prevention and control of diseases from these animals that have public health implications. This includes audit inspections to Mainland farms exporting food animals to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to ensure compliance with agreed import protocols. It will also be responsible for liaising with international food regulatory authorities, food traders and other parties for

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effective food safety control, promulgating, monitoring and enforcing food labeling and other legislative requirements, as well as issuing export food certification (including food of animal origin).

(b) Risk Assessment and Communication (RAC) Division

This Division will be responsible for conducting risk assessment studies on food to address health risks associated with food-borne chemical and biological contaminants, conducting scientific research on food safety and developing food-related and nutrient database. Apart from operating a Food Research Laboratory, the Division will be responsible for reviewing food standards and safety harmonisation efforts, organising education and communication strategies to promote food hygiene and safety and healthy eating, promulgating risk-reduction measures, liaising with international food agencies and authorities responsible for food standard setting and scientific risk assessment work, and monitoring international standards and practices on food safety for strengthening food safety programmes. The Division will continue to be responsible for formulating strategies and providing professional advice on the prevention and control of pests of public health importance.

Encl. 1 7. Currently, the above functions are overseen by a Deputy Director of Health (Food and Public Health) (DD(FPH)) pitched at D3 level. The job description of this post is at Enclosure 1.

8. Compared with the existing FPH Branch, the CFS will perform more work on the following aspects –

- (a) enhancing food surveillance and sampling – in addition to the some 61 000 samples collected per annum, it is anticipated that about 2 000 additional samples will be collected in 2006;
- (b) more efficient and effective handling of food incidents and complaints – additional staff are deployed to handle the increasing number of food complaints (increased from about 2 700 cases in 2002 to some 5 200 cases in 2004);
- (c) strengthening liaison with the Mainland and overseas authorities – in addition to the regular liaison with the Mainland's import-export inspection and quarantine bureaux and food regulatory authorities overseas, the CFS will also establish liaison and communication with

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the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Shenzhen Municipal Government for more effective exchange of information on food safety matters including major food incidents;

- (d) establishing international communication network – building on the established channel of communication, the CFS will maintain regular liaison with international food organisations and authorities on the updated development of contingency plans and food standards;
- (e) reviewing and updating food standards – dedicated staff will be deployed to studying the international food standards and regulations and update the local regulations accordingly; more risk assessment studies will be conducted;
- (f) enhancing risk communication – the CFS will disseminate information to the public and the food trade more rapidly and frequently through different channels to address the public concern on food safety;
- (g) overseeing the management of local slaughterhouses; and
- (h) providing support to the Food Safety Committee to be set up (see paragraph 9 below).

9. To strengthen the existing consultative framework, a Food Safety Committee will be set up within the CFS. The Committee will consist of academics, professionals, food experts and trade representatives and be responsible for advising the CFS in the formulation of food safety measures and review of food safety standards in light of international practices, trends and developments. Under this Committee, there will be several specialist sub-committees to address different issues, such as food standards and risk communication strategy. The CFS will also strengthen the communication and exchanges with the relevant stakeholders including academic institutions, professional bodies and trade organisations through seminars, meetings, newsletters, websites, etc. More food related researches will be conducted.

Staffing Arrangements for CFS

10. The proposed CFS will be operationally headed by a Controller, CFS who will report to the DFEH. The Controller will be responsible for the overall management of the Centre, overseeing enforcement work on food safety, making day-to-day management, professional and operational decisions, identifying objectives and formulating strategies to implement food safety measures. The Controller will have to lead high level negotiations and liaison with the

Mainland and overseas food authorities on food safety matters that have cross-border implications. The Controller will also take up the responsibility for overseeing the management of the local slaughterhouses to ensure that the slaughtering methods and procedure and meat hygiene at the slaughterhouses meet the required standards. He/she will continue to plan and direct the implementation of policies on the control of pests of public health significance. Following the setting up of the Food Safety Committee, there will be a lot of additional work on risk assessment studies and review of food standards. The Controller is expected to be personally involved in the design of the studies and to provide the necessary steer. He/she will also be responsible for identifying new areas of work and developing new food safety measures to enhance Hong Kong's food safety programme. It is expected that the Centre will gradually diversify in its scope of work, bestowing more responsibility on the incumbent. A job description of the proposed Controller post is at Enclosure 2.

Encl. 2

11. In view of the prominent role the Controller has to play in fulfilling the missions of CFS, his/her duty to lead high level negotiations and liaison work with the Mainland and overseas food regulatory authorities, and the wide range of CFS's activities, we propose that the new post be pitched at D4 level, which is on par with the ranking of the Controller, Centre for Health Protection (Controller, CHP) and senior consultants of medical specialties. As the main task of the CFS is to protect human health which involves risk assessment in relation to chemical, biological and nutritional hazards, a medical specialist in public health is needed to head the CFS. The post should therefore be filled by selection of Medical and Health Officers and Consultants with the relevant specialist qualifications and experience in food safety control, public health and contacts with the Mainland and overseas food authorities. The Controller post must be of a sufficient rank to enable him/her to lead negotiations and liaison with the Mainland and overseas regulatory authorities. The present ranking of DD(FPH) at D3 level is not sufficient and as a result, very often, DFEH has to be personally involved in negotiations and liaison with the Mainland and overseas regulatory authorities. As most of the foods (96%) consumed in Hong Kong are imported from the Mainland and other countries, the Controller will have to make difficult decisions (e.g. banning of food products when there are food safety incidents occurring in the Mainland and overseas) within very short period of time having regard to not only the relevant science and the impact on human health, but also the community's reactions and the impact on the affected traders and the import/export business.

12. The aim for setting up the CFS and the Food Safety Committee is to strengthen food surveillance, food incident management functions and risk communication and assessment work. We propose to create two PMO posts, one each under the FSC and RAC Divisions of the CFS to provide the necessary professional support to the Assistant Director (Food Surveillance and Control) (AD(FSC)) and the Consultant (Community Medicine) (Risk Assessment and Communication) to cope with the expanded scope of work of the two Divisions.

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13. The existing set-up of the two Divisions is in line with the principles and guidelines of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the international body for setting food standards, where there should be a functional separation between risk assessment and risk management in conducting risk analysis activities. Two PMOs are therefore considered functionally essential to provide support to the two Divisions which have clear delineation of responsibility between risk assessment and risk management.

14. With the increasing number of food incidents, rising expectation of the community on food safety and public health and the increasing needs of global collaboration, the lack of adequate senior professional support at the appropriate level has adversely affected the existing FPH Branch in the efficient and effective delivery of its services particularly in risk assessment, management and communication. The PMO post proposed to be created in the FSC Division will assist the AD(FSC) to cope with the expanded scope of work of the Division. He/she will be responsible for, among others, formulating risk management strategies to address the increasing concerns of the community over food safety, handling food incidents and crises, coordinating contingency plans and emergency response, and liaison with the public health and risk managers in the Mainland and overseas. Similarly, the PMO post proposed to be created in the RAC Division will be responsible for overseeing the conduct of additional risk assessment studies and development of food standards and helping to build up the capacity of the trade in meeting the required standards. In addition, he/she will provide and coordinate the necessary professional support to the Food Safety Committee as well as strengthen our contact and cooperation with the relevant Mainland and overseas authorities. Having regard to the expertise and the required experience as well as the span of work, the proposed level and ranking of the two PMO posts are considered necessary. The job descriptions of the two proposed PMO posts are at Enclosures 3 and 4.

Encls.
3 & 4

15. The existing AD(FSC) at the rank of Assistant Director of Health (D2) and the Consultant (Community Medicine) (Risk Assessment and Communication) at the rank of Consultant (D4/D3/D2) under the FPH Branch will be transferred to the CFS to continue to head the FSC Division and RAC Division respectively. Their job descriptions are at Enclosures 5 and 6. In addition, we plan to create 69 additional non-directorate posts for professional and technical staff initially in 2006-07. More non-directorate posts will be created after further vetting by the relevant bureaux and departments according to the established procedures. The existing and proposed organisation charts of FEHD after the establishment of CFS are at Enclosures 7 and 8.

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7 & 8

/Deletion

Deletion of Deputy Director of Health post in FEHD

16. Following the transfer of food safety control functions from the existing FPH Branch to the CFS, there will no longer be a functional need to retain the post of DD(FPH) (D3) in the FEHD and it can be deleted.

Creation of a Permanent Secretary (Food and Environmental Hygiene) (D8) Post in HWFB

17. We have also reviewed the organisational structure of HWFB to explore ways to better meet the operational needs and improve the effectiveness and efficiency in achieving the policy objectives. At present, there is only one Permanent Secretary at AOSGA1 (D8) level in HWFB assisting the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (SHWF) in overseeing a vast portfolio of health, social welfare, women's interests, food safety and environmental hygiene policy areas. The issues under these policy areas are all livelihood-related, crises-prone and of great concern to the community. Apart from being responsible for formulating, coordinating and implementing policies for the four policy areas, the Permanent Secretary needs to coordinate with relevant executive departments/agencies to ensure smooth and timely delivery of the agreed policies and programmes and to address public concerns under these policy areas. As the Permanent Secretary for the four policy areas and being the Controlling Officer of Head 149 including HWFB and the Hospital Authority, she has to assist SHWF in managing a huge budget of about \$70 billion which takes up over one-third of the total recurrent government budget.

18. Since the establishment of HWFB in July 2002, there has been a significant increase in the responsibilities of the Permanent Secretary on various fronts. With the emergence and recurrence of infectious and zoonotic diseases, ageing population and increasing food safety incidents, new long-term policy initiatives have been added to the Permanent Secretary's duty list. Examples of major long-term policy initiatives being formulated or implemented include: strengthening our infectious disease emergency responsiveness and enhancing preparedness for influenza pandemic; reviewing strategies on health care services development and health care financing options under the auspices of the revamped Health and Medical Development Advisory Committee (HMDAC); further improving the model of residential care for frail elders and strengthening home-based services for elders in the community to face up to the challenges of population ageing; developing a proactive and comprehensive regulatory system to strengthen food safety; examining the feasibility of developing a medium-sized poultry slaughtering plant to reduce the risk of human infection of avian influenza etc.

19. The wide spectrum of policy responsibilities and the sheer volume and complexity of work of such a vast portfolio is clearly beyond the reasonable demand on one Permanent Secretary. Given that each of HWFB's policy areas deals with important livelihood issues of public concern, and the need to tackle the increasing and complex food safety issues both locally, cross-border and overseas, it is necessary to strengthen support at the top policy making level. We propose to create an additional Permanent Secretary post at the rank of AOSGA1 (D8) to focus on food safety and environmental hygiene matters, and to support SHWF in risk communication matters including public education strategies and dissemination of information, leading and coordinating government response to major food incidents and veterinary public health incidents, and networking and liaison work with the Mainland and overseas food authorities on food safety development. He/she will also oversee the operations of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), FEHD and GL. Three additional non-directorate posts will be created in HWFB to support his/her work. A chart showing the proposed organisation structure of HWFB and its executive departments/agency is at Enclosure 9. The new post will be designated as Permanent Secretary (Food and Environmental Hygiene) (PSFEH). The job description of the proposed PSFEH post is at Enclosure 10.

Encl. 9

Encl. 10

Retitling and Revision of Duties and Responsibilities of the Existing Permanent Secretary (D8) Post in HWFB

20. With the proposed PSFEH focusing on food safety related matters, the existing Permanent Secretary in HWFB will focus on overseeing matters under the health and social welfare policy areas and will be retitled as Permanent Secretary (Health and Welfare) (PSHW). He/she will support SHWF in leading and coordinating Government's preparation for and response to major health incidents and disease outbreaks, steering the Interdepartmental Action Coordinating Committee in preparedness, protection and publicity programmes in the fight against infectious diseases, networking and liaison work with the Mainland and overseas to foster cooperation in respect of medical, health, welfare and women matters with counterparts in the Mainland and other territories. He/she will also oversee the operations of the Department of Health, Hospital Authority and Social Welfare Department. In view of the level of responsibility and the importance and wide span of duties involved, we consider it necessary that the post should continue to be pitched at AOSGA1 (D8) level. The job description of the PSHW is at Enclosure 11.

Encl. 11

21. The creation of the new PSFEH post will put HWFB on par with other multi-department type of bureaux with two Permanent Secretary posts at D8 level. There will be a balanced spread of power and responsibilities in the HWFB as each of the two Permanent Secretaries will oversee no less than two major departments headed by a D6 officer and other departments/agencies. More focused support can be provided to SHWF on the respective portfolios of the two Permanent Secretaries.

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22. To better reflect the different portfolios of the two Permanent Secretaries, we propose to split the HWFB into a Food and Environmental Hygiene Branch to be headed by PSFEH and a Health and Welfare Branch to be headed by PSHW. The existing and proposed organisation charts of the HWFB upon creation of the PSFEH post are at Enclosures 12 and 13.

Deletion of Chief Chemist post in GL

23. The Government Chemist (GC) has reviewed the existing organisation structure of the GL and considers that there is scope to streamline the existing directorate structure of the Analytical and Advisory Services (A&AS) Division for better efficiency and economy by deleting the existing Chief Chemist (Environmental Chemistry and Other Scientific Services Group) (CC/ECOSS) post.

Encl. 14

24. The GL comprises two Divisions: the A&AS Division and the Forensic Science (FS) Division, each of which is headed by an Assistant Government Chemist (AGC) at D2 level. The A&AS Division provides advisory and analytical services to support government policies on the protection of public health, the environment and consumers. The FS Division provides investigative and analytical services to government departments involved in the enforcement of law and order. For the two AGCs heading the A&AS Division and the FS Division, they are each underpinned by two Chief Chemists (CC) at D1 level. Each CC is responsible for supervising the operation of five to seven specialist Sections each with its own unique range of duties. Currently, the A&AS Division is headed by AGC(A&AS) who is underpinned by CC/ECOSS and Chief Chemist (Health Science Services Group) (CC/HSS). The existing organisation chart of GL is at Enclosure 14.

25. The CC/ECOSS post, created in May 1994, is mainly responsible for leading the ECOSS Group of the A&AS Division which at present comprises six specialist Sections in providing analytical and advisory services to client departments. Details are contained in EC(94-95)1.

26. Under the supervision and guidance of the CC/ECOSS, the ECOSS Group has established many new methods and approaches to meet clients' requests, and the work has become daily routines over the years. The demand for input at the D1 level is diminishing. Following a review of the workload and activities of the A&AS Division, GC considers that through restructuring of the organisation, the CC/ECOSS post can be deleted and its duties and responsibilities can be shared among AGC(A&AS) and CC/HSS without affecting the overall efficiency of the

/A&AS

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15-17

A&AS Division. Upon the redistribution of duties of the CC/ECOSS post amongst AGC(A&AS) and CC/HSS, the existing ECOSS Group will be retitled as the Environment and Quality Management (EQM) Group, and the existing CC/HSS post will be retitled as Chief Chemist (Health and Other Scientific Services Group) (CC/HOSS) to better reflect the revised schedules of duties. The revised and expanded schedules of duties of AGC(A&AS) and CC/HOSS are at Enclosures 15 and 16. The proposed organisation chart of GL is at Enclosure 17.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

27. The proposed changes in directorate posts will bring about an additional notional annual salary cost at mid-point (NAMS) of \$3,531,600 as follows –

	NAMS \$	No. of Posts
New permanent posts		
AOSGA1 (D8)	2,172,600	1
Controller, CFS (D4)	1,795,200	1
PMO (D1)	2,288,400	2
<i>Sub-total (a):</i>	6,256,200	4
Less : Posts to be deleted		
DD of Health (D3)	1,580,400	1
Chief Chemist (D1)	1,144,200	1
<i>Sub-total (b):</i>	2,724,600	2
Net additional cost (a)-(b):	3,531,600	2

The net additional full annual average staff cost of the proposal, including salaries and staff on-cost, amounts to \$4,979,000.

28. In recent years, as part of our ongoing programme to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the public service, the Administration has been making efforts to contain the civil service establishment and to reduce it wherever practicable. In November 2005, the Administration reported to the Establishment Subcommittee (ESC) an overview of the directorate establishment position and

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informed Members of the planned creation and deletion of civil service directorate posts (including our proposal as mentioned in paragraph 3) in the 2005-06 legislative sessions vide Information Note ECI(2005-06)6. As reflected in the information note, the Administration has proposed to the ESC/Finance Committee a net deletion of 71 permanent and 33 supernumerary directorate posts since January 2002. While we will continue our drive to identify savings and optimise the use of staffing resources, the need to create new posts including directorate posts where justified on a case by case basis cannot be precluded.

29. We have not made provision in the draft 2006-07 Estimates to meet the costs of the proposal. Subject to Members' approval, FEHD and HWFB will endeavor to absorb the additional expenditure within the appropriations for Head 49 and Head 149 respectively for 2006-07 and will seek supplementary provision when required. For 2007-08 and beyond, we shall include the necessary provision in future Estimates.

30. The Controlling Officer for Head 149 Government Secretariat: Health, Welfare and Food Bureau has all along been PSHWF. Subject to Members' approval of the proposal to retitle PSHWF as PSHW, we will re-designate PSHW as the Controlling Officer for Head 149 for 2006-07. As an interim measure PSHW will be accountable for expenditure under the Health and Welfare Branch as well as that under the Food and Environmental Hygiene Branch. We will seek Finance Committee's endorsement of a proper split of Head 149 into two expenditure heads for the two Branches no later than the 2007-08 Estimates.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

31. Ensuring food safety is a major policy objective of HWFB. At present, responsibilities for veterinary public health and food safety functions are separated in two separate government departments, namely FEHD and AFCD. FEHD is responsible for performing food surveillance and import control functions including control and regulation of food, live food animals and poultry from the Mainland, vegetables, fruits, fish and seafood, cooked food, and food products, management of food incidents including food poisoning outbreaks at food premises, and performing risk assessment and communication functions such as public education and liaison with international food authorities. AFCD is responsible for inspection and quarantine of imported live animals and birds for non-food purposes, imported plants, and local food animals and licensing of livestock and mariculture farms. To certain extent, the duties and responsibilities between the two Departments overlap with each other, and often cause confusion to the relevant sectors, the Mainland and overseas authorities. We need to streamline the existing food safety control functions currently performed by FEHD and AFCD with a view to enhancing food safety and protecting public health.

32. We have proposed to reorganise FEHD and AFCD to form the Department of Food Safety, Inspection and Quarantine (DFSIQ) and the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Hygiene and to integrate AFCD's nature conservation functions with the Environmental Protection Department. One of the key features in this reorganisation proposal is the setting up of a CFS within the DFSIQ which will be the functional body to identify objectives and formulate strategies on food safety. The establishment of a dedicated department to regulate food safety functions will allow the Administration to be more focused on our approach by pooling together dedicated teams of professional staff from multi-disciplines on controlling and regulating food safety under one organisation.

33. The Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene and the Panel on Environmental Affairs held two joint meetings on 15 December 2005 and 6 January 2006 to listen to deputations from staff of affected departments, academic institutions, professional organisations and the relevant trade associations on the Administration's reorganisation proposal. There was a lack of consensus among the stakeholders on whether the regulatory and facilitation functions should be performed by two separate departments. Nevertheless, there was general support for the speedy establishment of a CFS. We have carefully considered the views expressed on the reorganisation proposal. In view of the imminent need to enhance our existing food safety regulatory functions and the general support for the speedy establishment of the CFS, we propose to establish the CFS within FEHD as the next step to meet the growing public expectation for better food quality and safety standards. In the longer term, it is still our intention to establish a dedicated department responsible for food safety control. We will continue our discussion with the stakeholders on the best way forward. The CFS under FEHD will be subsumed under the new department when it is formed.

ESTABLISHMENT CHANGES

34. The establishment changes in FEHD, GL and HWFB for the last two years are as follows –

Establishment (Note)	Number of posts			
	Existing (as at 1 January 2006)	As at 1 April 2005	As at 1 April 2004	As at 1 April 2003
GL				
A	7#	7	7	7
B	108	108	118	123
C	246	246	259	266
Total	361	361	384	396

/FEHD

Establishment (Note)	Number of posts			
	Existing (as at 1 January 2006)	As at 1 April 2005	As at 1 April 2004	As at 1 April 2003
FEHD				
A	13#	13	13	13
B	210	246	257	262
C	11 194	11 420	11 996	12 214
Total	11 417	11 679	12 266	12 489
HWFB				
A	19#	19	19	20
B	40	40	42	41
C	89	89	92	92
Total	148	148	153	153

Note:

A – ranks in the directorate pay scale or equivalent

B – non-directorate ranks the maximum pay point of which is above MPS Point 33 or equivalent

C – non-directorate ranks the maximum pay point of which is at or below MPS Point 33 or equivalent

– As at 1 January 2006, there was no unfilled directorate post in FEHD and HWFB. There was one unfilled directorate post in GL, which is the CC post now proposed for deletion.

CONSULTATION WITH LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL

35. We consulted the LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene and the Panel on Environmental Affairs on 17 January 2006 regarding the proposed organisational and staffing changes. Some Members supported the proposal while other Members requested for a comprehensive plan for reorganising the food safety framework. Despite the diverse views expressed at the meeting, there was no objection to the setting up of the CFS. Given the lack of consensus among the various stakeholders, including staff of the affected departments, academics, professional associations and the relevant trade associations on the interface between the food safety regulatory functions and the trade facilitation functions, we would require more time for conducting detailed consultations and further discussions with the stakeholders. We propose to set up the CFS as the next step to enhance food safety. Meanwhile, we will continue our discussion with the stakeholders on the best way forward.

CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU COMMENTS

36. Having regard to the justification put forward in this paper, the Civil Service Bureau supports the proposed creation of the new grade and rank of Controller, CFS and the four directorate posts together with the deletion of two other directorate posts. It considers that the grading and ranking of the proposed posts are appropriate having regard to the level and scope of responsibilities and professional input required.

ADVICE OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DIRECTORATE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

37. The Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service has advised that the grading proposed for the posts would be appropriate if the proposal were to be implemented.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
January 2006

**Job Description for the post of
Deputy Director (Food and Public Health)**

Rank : Deputy Director of Health (D3)

Responsible to : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. to plan and direct the implementation of policies on food safety control, veterinary public health and pest control; and to set standards having regard to research results and practical experience;
2. to make policy and legislative proposals in the light of operational experience on food safety control, veterinary public health and pest control;
3. to oversee surveillance at various points of the food supply chain to ensure food are fit for human consumption and to ensure appropriate and speedy response to food incidents;
4. to oversee the assessment of health risks on the food safety front and devise a strategy on how best these can be communicated to the industry and the community as a whole;
5. to liaise with local and international organisations, academics, medical professionals and trades to foster the best application of established policies in the light of the changing environment;
6. to provide professional input to public health education programmes on food safety; and
7. to attend meetings of Legislative Council panels and the Advisory Council on Food and Environmental Hygiene as needed.

**Job Description for the proposed post of
Controller, Centre for Food Safety**

Rank : Controller, Centre for Food Safety (D4)

Responsible to : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Major Duties and Responsibilities –

1. to advise the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene in the formulation, development and review of policies and strategies for effective food safety control in Hong Kong;
2. to plan and direct the implementation of policies on food safety control, veterinary public health and control of pests of public health significance;
3. to be responsible for the overall management of the Centre for Food Safety;
4. to oversee all regulatory functions over food, imported live food animals and poultry, vegetables, fish/seafood and slaughterhouse management;
5. to oversee and develop regular inspection and audit programmes to live food animal and fish farms as well as meat and food processing plants in the Mainland;
6. to lead high level negotiation and liaison with the Mainland and overseas food authorities on food safety matters that have cross-border implications;
7. to establish and maintain an active network with local stakeholders, Mainland and international food safety and public health organisations as well as academics, medical professionals and experts in the field in promoting effective food safety control;
8. to oversee the assessment of health risks on the food safety front and development of food standards and communication strategies for dissemination to the industry and the community;
9. to oversee surveillance and control at various points of the food supply chain to ensure food are fit for human consumption;

10. to manage the consultative structure comprising of the Food Safety Committee and its specialist sub-committees and other liaison network;
11. to provide professional input to public health education programmes on food safety; and
12. to attend meetings of the Legislative Council panels and Advisory Council on Food and Environmental Hygiene as needed.

**Job Description for the proposed post of
Principal Medical Officer (Risk Management)**

Rank : Principal Medical and Health Officer (D1)

Responsible to : Assistant Director (Food Surveillance and Control)

Major Duties and Responsibilities –

1. to devise and coordinate the implementation of risk management strategies and public health measures for food incidents and food safety crisis;
2. to assist Assistant Director (Food Surveillance and Control) in the formulation and review of food safety control measures, guidelines and programmes using local epidemiological information as well as other sources of data and intelligence;
3. to plan and coordinate departmental initiatives on the investigation, control and management of food incidents;
4. to plan and oversee the implementation and coordination of contingency plans and emergency response related to food incidents within and outside the department;
5. to collaborate with the Mainland and overseas food regulatory authorities, the local food trade and other government departments and agencies to ensure effective management of food incidents;
6. to work with the Risk Assessment and Communication Division to devise, implement and coordinate risk communication strategy in the management of food incidents and crisis;
7. to represent the Department in meetings related to food incidents and food safety crisis; and
8. to assist and support Assistant Director (Food Surveillance and Control) in the administration of the Food Surveillance and Control Division.

**Job Description for the proposed post of
Principal Medical Officer (Risk Assessment and Communication)**

Rank : Principal Medical and Health Officer (D1)

Responsible to : Consultant (Community Medicine) (Risk Assessment and Communication)

Major Duties and Responsibilities –

1. to formulate risk communication strategies to address the concerns of the community over food safety, working together with the risk managers in the event of food incidents and crises;
2. to develop proactive and effective risk communication partnership with major stakeholders and the media;
3. to map out and prioritise risk assessment plans to meet the needs of the risk managers in addressing food safety problems in the local and international arenas;
4. to oversee the conduct of newly introduced risk communication programmes and activities such as the monthly Risk Communication Digest, risk perception of food-related hazards seminars, etc.;
5. to oversee the conduct of risk assessment studies and to ensure that they are carried out in a coordinated manner;
6. to provide professional and logistic support to new programmes including food consumption database, exposure assessment computer system, total diet studies, nutrition risk assessment studies;
7. to provide and coordinate professional support to the Food Safety Committee;
8. to provide professional input to other government bureaux and departments regarding food safety issues in meeting international obligations and addressing local public health concerns;

9. to build up the capacity of the Centre for Food Safety and stakeholders with respect to risk assessment and risk communication;
10. to liaise with national and international counterparts in relation to his duties;
and
11. to assist and support Consultant (Community Medicine) (Risk Assessment and Communication) in the administration of the Risk Assessment and Communication Division.

**Job Description for the post of
Assistant Director (Food Surveillance and Control)**

Rank : Assistant Director of Health (D2)

Responsible to : Deputy Director (Food and Public Health)

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. to devise and supervise the implementation of a territory-wide food surveillance programme to ensure food is fit for human consumption;
2. to oversee food import control and export certification;
3. to direct the management of all food incidents, including investigation of food borne illness outbreaks at food premises, management of food safety crises and coordination of food recalls; and to liaise with international food authorities, food traders and other parties to ensure effective food safety control;
4. to formulate measures to prevent and control diseases originating in live food animals which have a public health angle, including liaison with Mainland and overseas authorities;
5. to supervise the conducting of chemical tests at Man Kam To Food Control Office on imported food from Mainland; and
6. to attend meetings of the Legislative Council panels and the Advisory Council on Food and Environmental Hygiene as needed.

**Job Description for the post of
Consultant (Community Medicine) (Risk Assessment and Communication)**

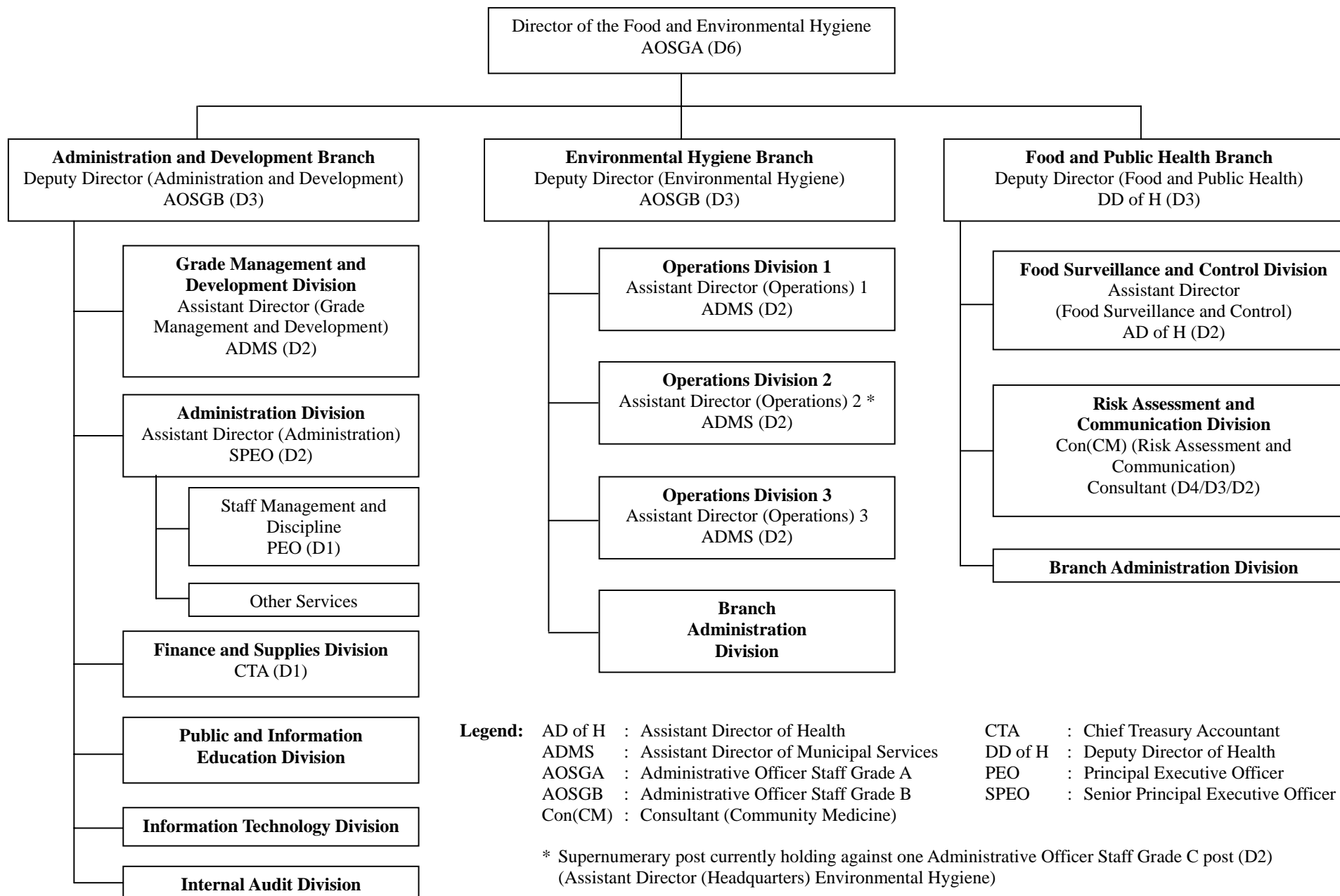
Rank : Consultant (D4/D3/D2)

Responsible to : Deputy Director (Food and Public Health)

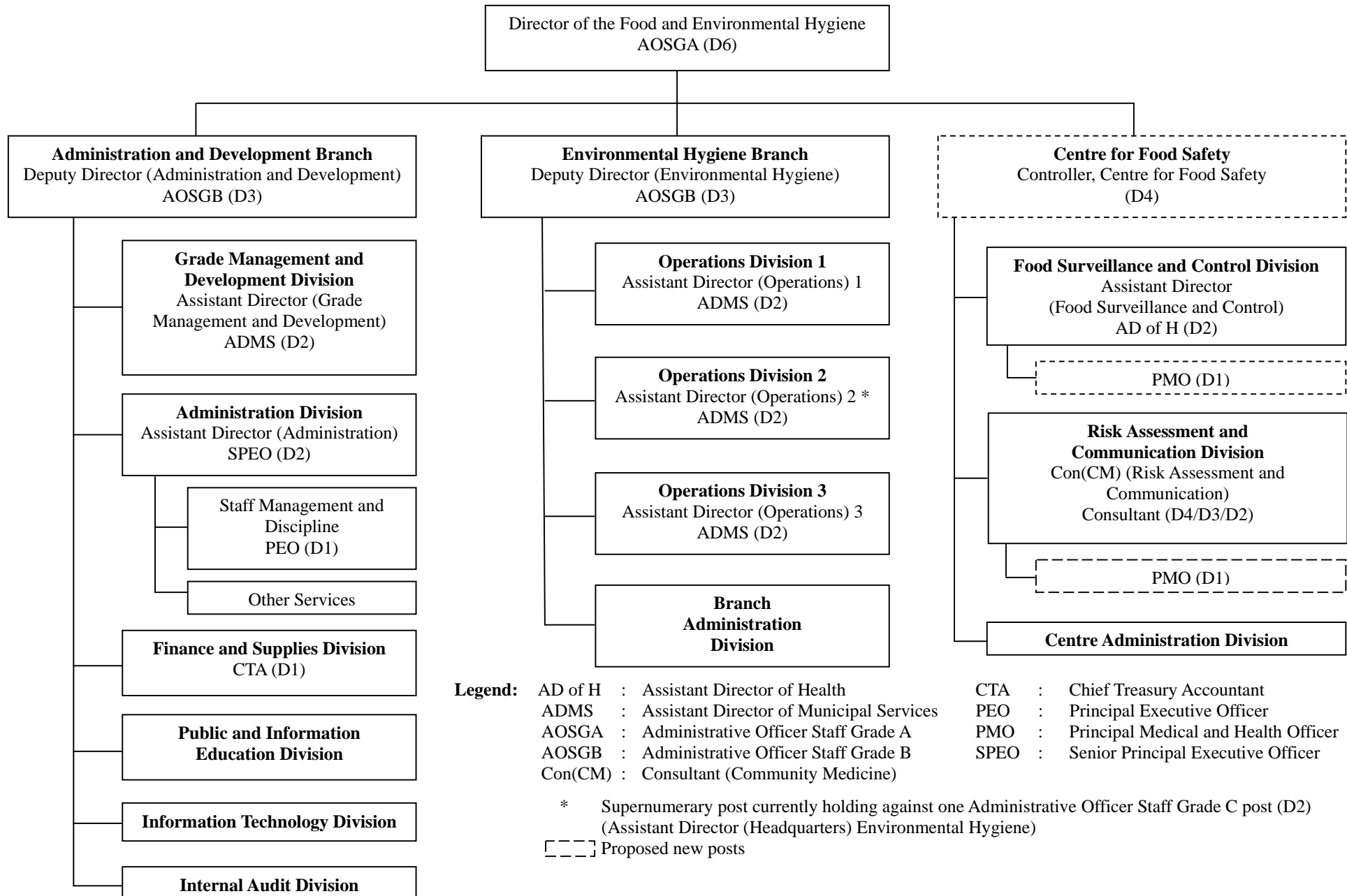
Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. to oversee risk assessment studies providing scientific basis for risk management;
2. to supervise the conduct of population-based food consumption surveys and laboratory studies on food hazards and nutrients to support risk assessment work;
3. to advise on food standards based on local risk assessment results and international experience;
4. to devise and oversee risk communication activities on food safety including “Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point” approach aiming to promote tripartite collaboration of the Government, the trade and the public;
5. to conduct stakeholder consultation, scientific researches and regulatory impact assessments in support of new food safety regulation and legislation;
6. to provide professional advice on pest control and organisation of pest control campaigns and education activities;
7. to liaise with international bodies, professional fraternities and interest groups to strengthen food safety and pest control programmes; and
8. to attend meetings of the Legislative Council panels and the Advisory Council on Food and Environmental Hygiene as needed.

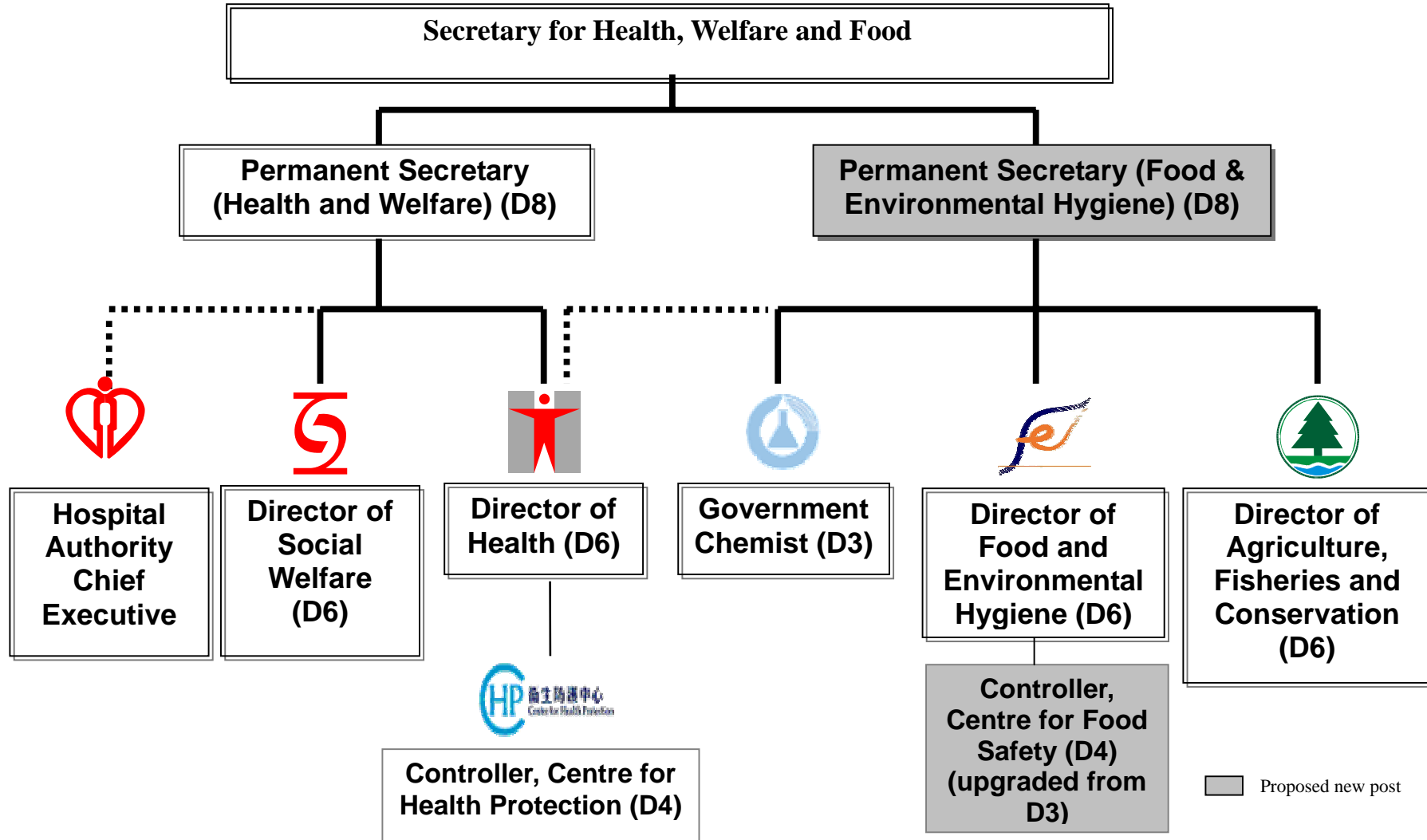
Existing Organisation Chart of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department



Proposed Organisation Chart of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department



Proposed Organisation Structure of HWFB and its Departments / Agency
Upon Creation of Permanent Secretary (Food & Environmental Hygiene) Post



**Job Description for the proposed post of
Permanent Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
(Food and Environmental Hygiene)**

Rank : Administrative Officer Staff Grade A1 (D8)

Responsible to : Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (SHWF)

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. to assist SHWF in formulating, coordinating and implementing policies on agriculture, fisheries, food safety, veterinary public health and environmental hygiene;
2. to support SHWF in explaining policies, in securing support of the public and Legislative Council (LegCo), and in dealing with LegCo business;
3. to support SHWF in ensuring ongoing and new initiatives under Chief Executive's Policy Address are taken forward and completed within specified timeframes;
4. to support SHWF in risk communication matters including public education strategies and dissemination of information;
5. to support SHWF in networking and liaison work with the Mainland and overseas food authorities to keep abreast of food safety development;
6. to ensure the development of a proactive and comprehensive regulatory system to strengthen food safety; and to lead and coordinate Government response to major food incidents and veterinary public health incidents;
7. to steer and coordinate with the executive departments/agency including the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and Government Laboratory, and liaise with the Centre for Health Protection of Department of Health and other concerned bureaux to achieve smooth, timely and effective implementation of the agreed policies and programmes;

/8.

8. to assist SHWF in acquiring and deploying resources to support the implementation of policies and delivery of services;
9. to monitor the needs and aspirations of the community and having regard to the fundings, to undertake timely review and to develop proposals for necessary changes to the established policies and services;
10. to review policies related to the provision of markets, cemeteries, columbaria and crematoria facilities to meet future demand;
11. to conduct organisation reviews of Health, Welfare and Food Bureau (HWFB) and its departments/agency with a view to further streamlining the organisational structure and enhancing efficiency;
12. to uphold the reliability and professional standards in the delivery of services by the executive departments/agencies;
13. to be the Controlling Officer for the expenditure head of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Branch of HWFB, and to ensure proper use of the financial and human resources;
14. to coordinate overall budgetary requirement of HWFB and to advise on the overall priorities of policy agenda and initiatives; and
15. to manage civil servants and other staff in the Food and Environmental Hygiene Branch of HWFB.

**Job Description for the retitled post of
Permanent Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
(Health and Welfare)**

Rank : Administrative Officer Staff Grade A1 (D8)

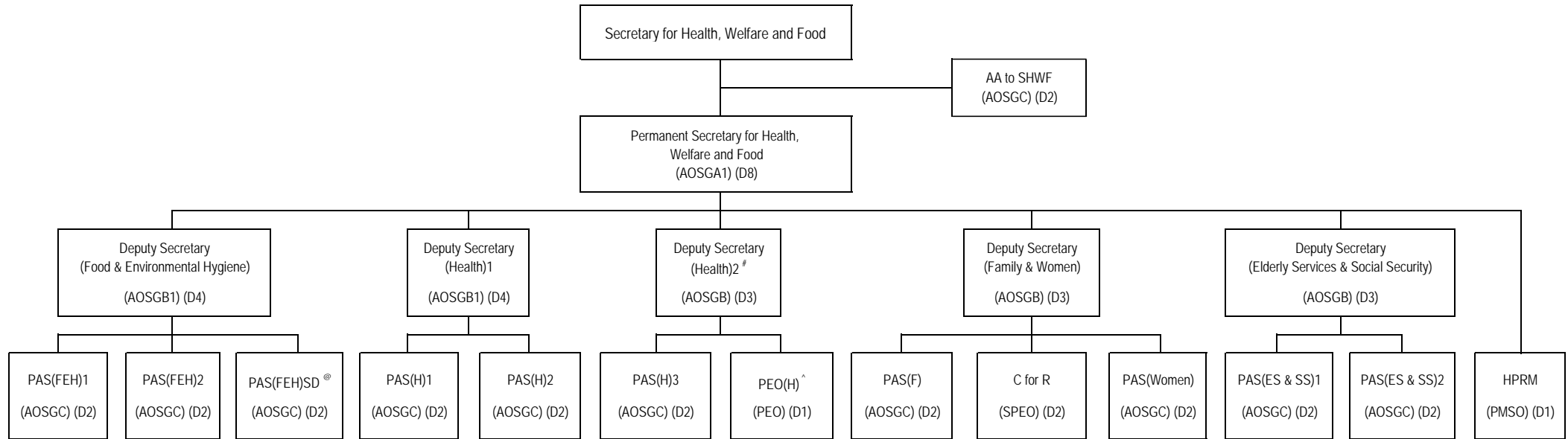
Responsible to : Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (SHWF)

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. to assist SHWF in formulating, coordinating and implementing policies on medical, health, social welfare and women's interests;
2. to support SHWF in explaining policies, in securing support of the public and Legislative Council (LegCo), and in dealing with LegCo business;
3. to support SHWF in ensuring ongoing and new initiatives under Chief Executive's Policy Address are taken forward and completed within specified timeframes;
4. to lead and coordinate Government's preparation for and response to major health incidents and disease outbreaks;
5. to steer the Interdepartmental Action Coordinating Committee in preparedness, protection and publicity programmes in the fight against infectious diseases such as SARS and avian influenza;
6. to support SHWF in risk communication matters including public education strategies and dissemination of information;
7. to support SHWF in networking and liaison work with the Mainland and overseas to foster cooperation in respect of medical, health, welfare and women matters with counterparts in the Mainland and other territories;
8. to support SHWF in international and Mainland collaboration programmes covering research, laboratory, expert exchange etc.;

9. to steer and coordinate with the executive departments/agency including Department of Health, Hospital Authority and Social Welfare Department, and liaise with other concerned bureaux to achieve smooth, timely and effective implementation of the agreed policies and programmes;
10. to assist SHWF in acquiring and deploying resources to support the implementation of policies and delivery of services;
11. to monitor the needs and aspirations of the community and having regard to the funding, to undertake timely review and to generate proposals for necessary changes to the established policies and services;
12. to conduct organisation reviews of HWFB and its departments/agency with a view to further streamlining the organisational structure and enhancing efficiency;
13. to uphold the reliability and professional standards in the delivery of services by the executive departments/agency;
14. to be the Controlling Officer for the expenditure head of the Health and Welfare Branch of HWFB and the Hospital Authority, and to ensure proper use of the financial and human resources; and
15. to manage civil servants and other staff in the Health and Welfare Branch of HWFB.

Existing Organisation Chart of Health, Welfare and Food Bureau (HWFB)



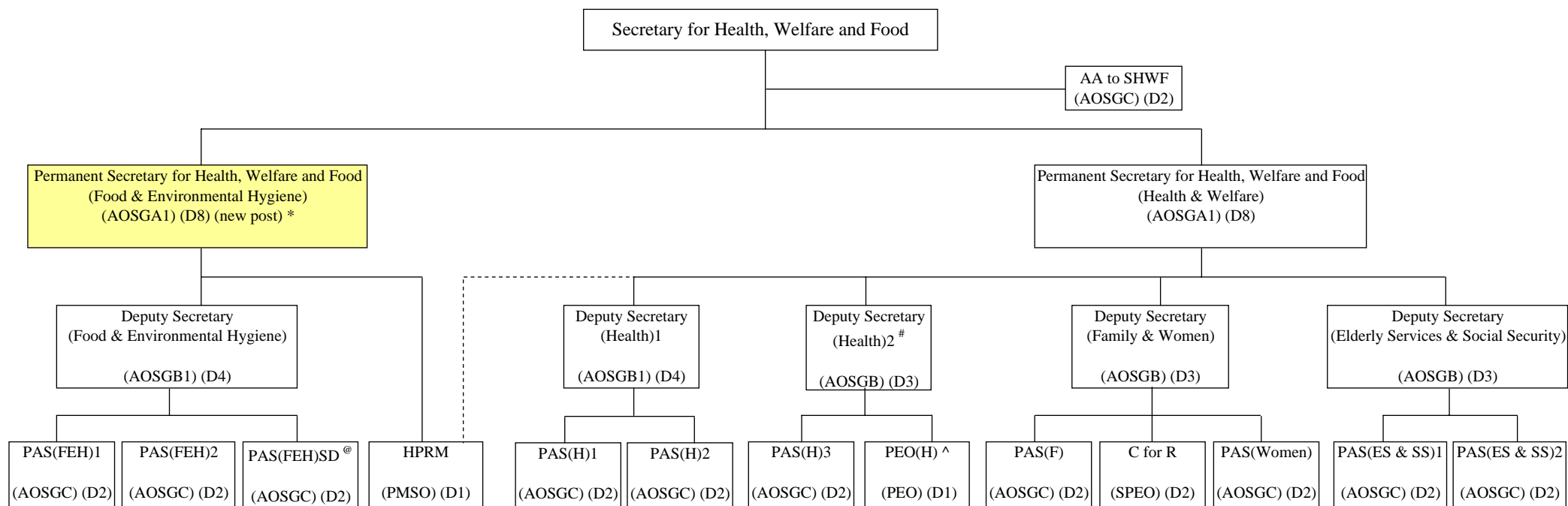
Legend

- AOSG = Administrative Officer Staff Grade
- PAS(FEH)1 = Principal Assistant Secretary (Food and Environmental Hygiene) 1
- PAS(FEH)2 = Principal Assistant Secretary (Food and Environmental Hygiene) 2
- PAS(FEH)SD = Principal Assistant Secretary (Food and Environmental Hygiene) Special Duties
- PAS(H)1 = Principal Assistant Secretary (Health) 1
- PAS(H)2 = Principal Assistant Secretary (Health) 2
- PAS(H)3 = Principal Assistant Secretary (Health) 3
- PEO(H) = Principal Executive Officer (Health)
- PAS(ES & SS)1 = Principal Assistant Secretary (Elderly Services and Social Security) 1
- PAS(ES & SS)2 = Principal Assistant Secretary (Elderly Services and Social Security) 2
- PAS(F) = Principal Assistant Secretary (Family)
- C for R = Commissioner for Rehabilitation
- PAS(Women) = Principal Assistant Secretary (Women)
- HPRM = Head, Planning and Resource Management
- PMSO = Principal Management Services Officer

- # A supernumerary post held against a vacant AOSGB post.
- ^ A supernumerary post held against a vacant PEO post.
- @ A supernumerary post held against a vacant Consultant post in Department of Health.

Proposed Organisation Chart of HWFB

Upon Creation of Permanent Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Food & Environmental Hygiene) Post

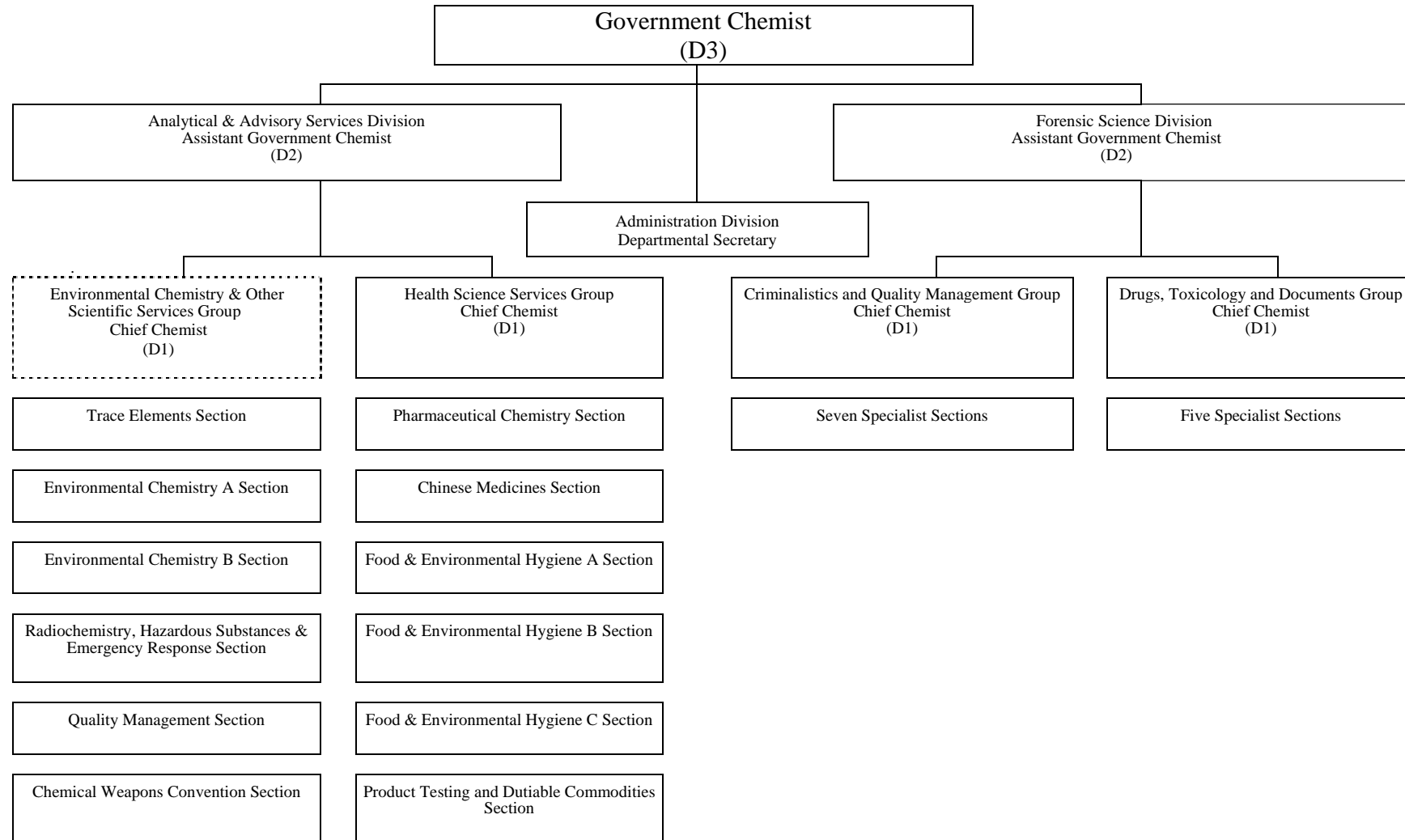


Legend

- AOSG = Administrative Officer Staff Grade
- PAS(FEH)1 = Principal Assistant Secretary (Food and Environmental Hygiene) 1
- PAS(FEH)2 = Principal Assistant Secretary (Food and Environmental Hygiene) 2
- PAS(FEH)SD = Principal Assistant Secretary (Food and Environmental Hygiene) Special Duties
- PAS(H)1 = Principal Assistant Secretary (Health) 1
- PAS(H)2 = Principal Assistant Secretary (Health) 2
- PAS(H)3 = Principal Assistant Secretary (Health) 3
- PAS(ES & SS)1 = Principal Assistant Secretary (Elderly Services and Social Security) 1
- PAS(ES & SS)2 = Principal Assistant Secretary (Elderly Services and Social Security) 2
- PAS(F) = Principal Assistant Secretary (Family)
- C for R = Commissioner for Rehabilitation
- PAS(Women) = Principal Assistant Secretary (Women)
- SPEO = Senior Principal Executive Officer
- PEO(H) = Principal Executive Officer (Health)
- HPRM = Head, Planning and Resources Management

- * Proposed new post
- # A supernumerary post held against a vacant AOSGB post.
- ^ A supernumerary post held against a vacant PEO post.
- @ A supernumerary post held against a vacant Consultant post in Department of Health.

Existing Organisation Chart of Government Laboratory



 Post proposed for deletion

**Job Description for the post of
Assistant Government Chemist (Analytical and Advisory Services)**

Rank : Assistant Government Chemist (D2)

Responsible to : Government Chemist (GC)

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. to be responsible for the direct administration of the Analytical and Advisory Services Division, formulating overall objectives, policies and plans;
2. to assist the GC in all matters relating to the provision of a laboratory service in order to discharge the statutory duties of the GC;
3. to represent the Government Laboratory and/or act for the GC on all matters relating to scientific analytical and advisory services;
4. to supervise the work of the Chief Chemist/Health and Other Scientific Services Group to ensure the efficient operation of the Group;
5. to take responsibility for the day-to-day operational management of the Environment and Quality Management Group, which consists of four specialist sections (namely, Trace Elements Section, Environmental Chemistry A Section, Environmental Chemistry B Section and Quality Management Section) each headed by a Senior Chemist;
6. to supervise and provide advice to professional staff of the Environment and Quality Management Group and to carry out staff audits, material control and evaluate progress towards approved objectives of the Group;
7. to plan long term training strategy for professional and technical staff to meet the growing demands for analytical services and to keep abreast of scientific developments;
8. to evaluate research and development proposals in the Division and to oversee their implementation;

9. to assist in policy formulation and reviewing legal schedules in relation to the activities of the Division, such as the Dangerous Goods Ordinance, the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance and the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance;
10. to liaise with other government departments and private sector on matters relating to the functions of the Division and to evaluate, where required, the performance of local and international laboratories in collaborative testing programmes;
11. to oversee and monitor Divisional expenditure in respect of stores and equipment, and to assess the overall capabilities of the staff under his control in order to achieve effective deployment of resources;
12. to be responsible for administrative planning and to ensure that standards of service are established and maintained, to evaluate progress towards approved objectives for the Division and to take appropriate action where necessary;
13. to take overall responsibility for the implementation of quality assurance programmes within the Division and represent the GC on all matters relating to the accreditation of activities of the Division under the Hong Kong Laboratory Accreditation Scheme; and
14. to assume the role of Environmental Manager of the Division.

**Job Description for the post of
Chief Chemist (Health and Other Scientific Services Group)
(Formerly Chief Chemist (Health Science Services Group))**

Rank : Chief Chemist (D1)

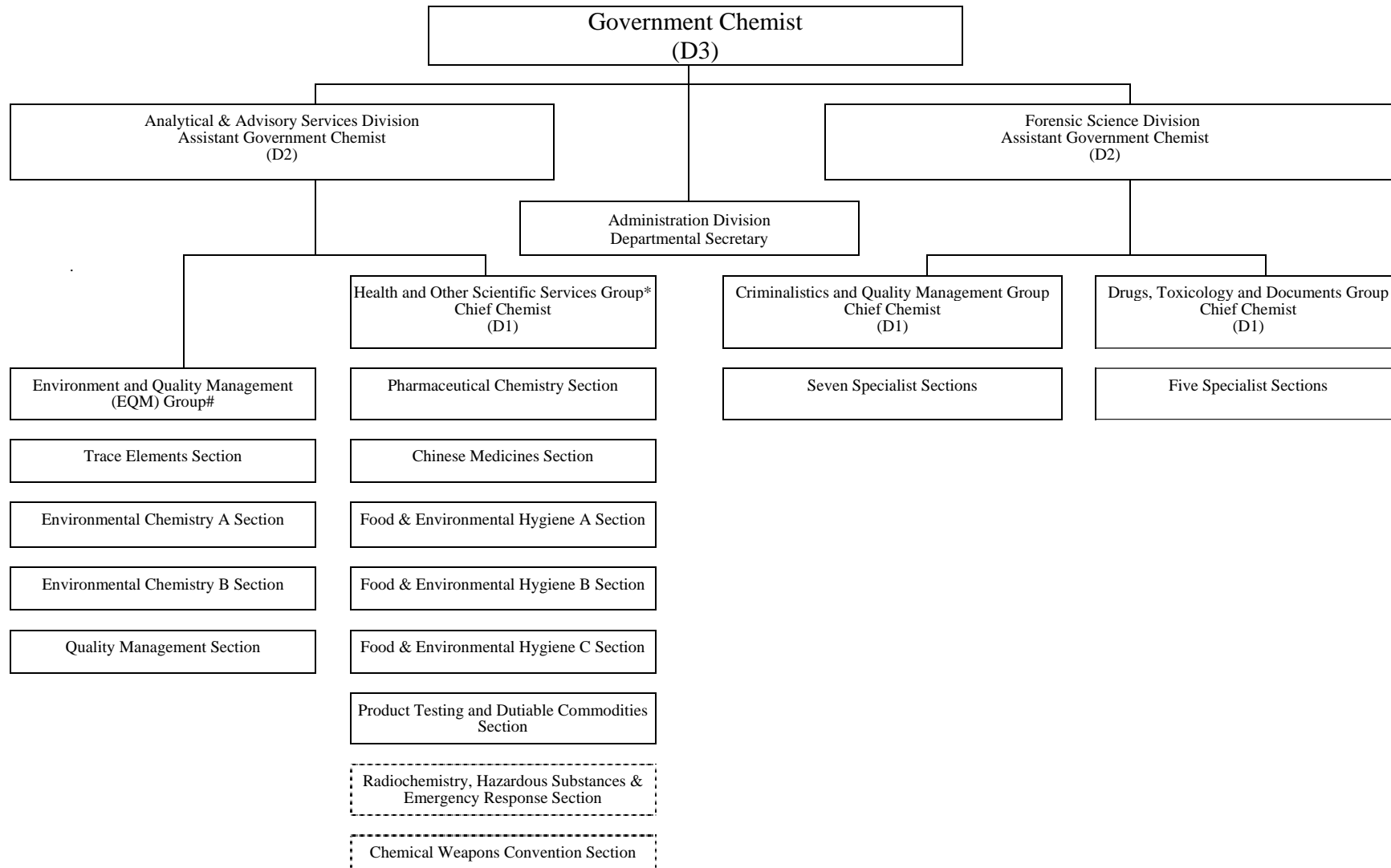
Responsible to : Assistant Government Chemist (Analytical and Advisory Services)

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. to be responsible for the direct supervision of the specialist work of eight Senior Chemists in the Group and to ensure the provision and maintenance of efficient and effective laboratory services to the clients by training, periodic inspections, introduction of improvements where necessary and continuous review of performance and adequacy in all activities of the Group;
2. to make recommendations to the Division head on, and to advise and assist in, the development and formulation of objectives and policies in relation to those scientific disciplines that come within the ambit of the Group;
3. to be responsible for administrative planning, financial control and monitoring and control of supplies activities within the Group;
4. to advise professional staff of the Group on complex questions and complaints arising in connection with their cases, and on the best tactics to employ;
5. to organise and lead the scientific research and development work of the Group and to plan and develop projects to meet the clients' special needs;
6. to carry out staffing audits, material control and evaluate progress towards approved objectives that come within the ambit of the Group;
7. to approve the implementation of new test methods in Analytical Methods Manuals (AMMs), amendments of AMMs and Sectional Work Manuals as proposed by the Section Heads under his Group as he deems fit;

8. to oversee the implementation of committed quality assurance programmes within the Group as required by accreditation bodies like the Hong Kong Laboratory Accreditation Scheme;
9. to liaise with client departments on the efficient use of laboratory services;
10. to assist the Assistant Government Chemist (Analytical and Advisory Services) in the management of staff seconded to other government departments, including posting and transfer, career development, and provision of technical guidance; and
11. to represent the Assistant Government Chemist (Analytical and Advisory Services) as spokesman for activities undertaken by the Health and Other Scientific Services Group, and at meetings, etc.

Proposed Organisation Chart of Government Laboratory



* Formerly the Health Science Services Group
 # Formerly the Environmental Chemistry and Other Scientific Services (ECOSS) Group
 [Dashed Box] Specialist Sections taken over from the former ECOSS Group.