

**LegCo Panel on Planning, Lands and Works  
Meeting between Members of Legislative Council and Members of  
Kowloon City District Council on 24 November 2005**

**Comments by Environment, Transport and Works Bureau on  
Issues Raised by LegCo**

**Question (a)** What measures the government has adopted to manage underground public utilities?

**Answer (a)** Underground utilities are owned and managed by individual utility undertakers (except water pipes, drainpipes and traffic signal control cables, which are owned and managed by government).

Each utility undertaker lays its network according to the space available at the time of laying, and technical standards and requirements peculiar to the utility concerned. Government has stipulated certain technical standards about the depth of burying of utilities in the excavation permit from an excavation safety point of view. Due to the high density of population and economic activities in Hong Kong, utility undertakers here have been used to adopting a flexible and accommodating attitude towards each other. The multi-tier joint utility management structure comprising representatives from all utility undertakers under the auspice of Highways Department (HyD) has been operating effectively to resolve conflicts between space and engineering requirements of different utilities.

The excavation permit issued by HyD requires utility undertakers to maintain an accurate record of their newly laid utilities. Such records are based on a standardized format agreed in the utility industry. Utility undertakers who are the owners of their utility information have the legal right to decide whether to disclose the information and we should respect this right. However, utility undertakers have agreed to exchange information within an agreed time frame through the electronic mark plant circulation system or via other suitable mode on request.

**Question (b).** What is the progress regarding the provision of common utility enclosure systems and the Electronic Mark Plant Circulation System?

**Answer (b).** A consultancy let by HyD in March 2002 concluded that most common utility enclosures (CUEs) are much more expensive than conventional method of laying utilities, and the extra expenses can only be justified on the intangible benefits which are highly controversial. More consultation with the industry will be required.

HyD is carrying out a trial implementation of small scale CUEs to accommodate power and telecommunication cables at two locations to gain experience on the technical aspects. One is at junction between Horizon Drive (海天徑) and Chung Hom Kok Road (春磡角道) in Hong Kong to be completed in May 2006. Another one is located at Yan Cheung Road (欣翔道) in Kowloon to be completed in June 2006. HyD is actively liaising with interested utility undertakers about using these two trial CUEs.

The Electronic Mark Plant Circulation System, which was rolled out in September 2002, currently covers most utility undertakers. The few remaining utility undertakers not belonging to the system are actively considering joining.