

Environmental Affairs Panel Meeting on 24 June 2013
Monitoring the Outsourcing of the Collection of Recyclable Materials and
Promotion of the Recycling Trade – Supplementary Question

Question

The Administration is to advise whether it is feasible to expand the food waste treatment capacities of the Organic Waste Treatment Facilities at Siu Ho Wan, Lantau, and Shaling, North District, and if it is not, the reasons for that.

Reply

We plan to develop the Organic Waste Treatment Facilities (OWTF) in phases. Biological processes comprising anaerobic digestion and composting technologies will be employed to recycle source-separated food waste into biogas and compost as renewable energy and resource. The first phase of OWTF with a daily treatment capacity of 200 tonnes will be developed at Siu Ho Wan in North Lantau on a site with an area of about 2 hectares. The second phase of OWTF with a daily capacity of 300 tonnes will be developed at Sha Ling in the North District on a site with an area of about 2.5 hectares. On top of the main anaerobic digestion and composting treatment units, ancillary facilities such as waste pre-treatment system for removal of inert materials not suitable for biological treatment, environmental control and monitoring systems, visitors and environmental education centre, biogas cleaning and energy export systems, emergency vehicular access, weighbridge, etc. will have to be accommodated within the OWTF sites.

We completed the feasibility study and the EIA study for the first phase OWTF in 2010 and the EIA report for the proposed project was approved in February 2010. The feasibility and EIA studies for the second phase OWTF were commenced in 2011. The EIA report for the second phase OWTF was submitted to the authority in July 2013 and is currently under public inspection. We anticipate approval of the report by end 2013. Under these feasibility and EIA studies, the maximum plant size and treatment capacity for these two OWTFs have been thoroughly assessed with respect to the site and environmental constraints. It has been confirmed that further expansion of the OWTF treatment capacities at these sites will not be feasible.

In terms of site constraints, the Siu Ho Wan site is located on reclaimed land and has

a building height restriction of 25 metres. The height of building development at the site is therefore limited. On the other hand, expansion by underground excavation will not only affect the costs of construction and operation, but will also substantially lengthen the construction time and cause further delay in the plant commissioning which is not desirable. The Sha Ling site is located on top of a small hill surrounded by slopes and the usable area excluding the slopes is only 1.5 hectares, which has severely limited the development at the site.

Apart from site constraints, there are also environmental constraints that limit the expansion of the plants. It is also desirable to have regional facilities to serve different regions so as to shorten the transportation time. As indicated in the Hong Kong Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources which the Government unveiled in May 2013, we will look for sites for the third and more OWTFs.

Environmental Protection Department
28 October 2013