

For discussion on  
27 January 2014

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
PANEL ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**Promotion of Recycling Industry**

**Purpose**

At the last Panel meeting held on 16 December 2013, Members requested that supplemented information be provided by the Administration on measures to promote the sustainable development of the recycling industry and justifications for setting up the new Waste Reduction and Recycling Division in the Environmental Protection Department (EPD). The information requested is set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

**Effectiveness of the Community Recycling Network**

2. The Community Recycling Network (CRN) is a territory-wide district-based network established for promoting waste reduction and recycling. It seeks to raise public awareness by reaching out to individuals directly through face-to-face interactions and incentives (e.g. waste-gift exchange). It is estimated that in 2013 the promotion events and activities of the CRN have reached out to 650,000 individuals in total. To encourage more public participation and to nurture and sustain habits of waste reduction and source separation, the CRN also facilitates collection of recyclables with low market value, i.e. plastics, waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), glass bottles, etc., while those recyclables of higher value such as paper and metal are handled by commercial recyclers.

**Berthing Facilities for Use by Waste Exporters**

3. There are currently six Public Cargo Working Areas (PCWAs) in Hong Kong. Two of them are on Hong Kong Island (in Chai Wan and Western District) and four are in Kowloon and the New Territories (at New Yau Ma Tei, Rambler Channel, Stonecutters Island and Tuen Mun). Local waste material handlers engaged in recycling waste paper, metals and plastics are now renting about 1,000 metres of berth length in total in four PCWAs, namely Chai Wan, Rambler Channel, New Yau Ma Tei and Tuen Mun, and most of the paper recyclers rely on the PCWAs for exporting waste paper. The existing five-year Berth Licence Agreements of PCWA operators will expire in mid-2016.

4. While in general the provision of seafront for industrial uses is on a downward trend, it is recognised that the supply of sufficient berth places for waste exporters on a long-term basis is a key factor for sustaining local recycling operations. To ensure a stable provision of export facilities for recycling trade, the Government is committed to identifying suitable berths in PCWAs for bidding by the recycling industry for their exclusive use. EPD has met with representatives of the recycling sector to seek their views on the new policy initiative. A proposal is being worked out for formal consultation with the PCWA operators and other relevant stakeholders in 2014. Subject to further discussions with stakeholders, the Government aims to introduce the proposed measures at the next round of berth tender exercise in 2016.

### **Facilitating Source Separation of Waste in Single-block Residential Buildings**

5. With funding support from the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF), 15 ECF Community Recycling Centres have been set up at rented shop units in 13 districts. These Centres are operated by NGOs to promote and support source separation of waste. The centres also serve old/single-block buildings in older districts that do not have property management companies to oversee recycling programmes nor the required space for waste recovery facilities, and probably do not have enough quantities of plastic waste to attract collection by commercial recyclers. The Centres deploy small teams of Recycling Ambassadors to collect plastics and WEEE from these buildings, and offer waste-commodities exchange service for local residents who bring plastics, WEEE and glass bottles to the Centres. Plastics collected are compressed and baled to facilitate bulk transport. On average, each Centre is collecting 3 to 9 tonnes of plastics per month for recycling.

### **Monitoring the Use of the ECF**

6. There are clear guidelines and conditions for the use of ECF grants. ECF has an elaborate system of monitoring to ensure that projects meet funding requirements as well as their objectives. In applying for ECF grants, the applicants would need to submit a proposal with detailed information regarding the scope of work and planned deliverables including the types and quantity of recyclables to be collected, and the number of participants to be covered. After funding is approved, project proponents are required to submit regular progress reports summarising the effectiveness of the projects to the Secretariat of the ECF Committee for review. For evaluation of project results, the proposed and actual deliverables will be compared to assess the effectiveness of the projects in meeting the pledged targets. Payments to the project proponents are made by instalments upon receipt of progress reports proving satisfactory progress. The ECF Secretariat would closely monitor the projects and conduct inspections to

ensure compliance with the funding conditions. Final disbursement of funds will only be made after satisfactory completion of the project as supported by a completion report together with a duly certified statement of account.

7. On training programmes, the project applicants are expected to have possessed the knowledge and skills for handling the recyclable materials which they are planning to collect. Nevertheless, project applicants may include budgets for relevant training courses in their proposals if considered necessary. If the project involves recruiting volunteers for waste recovery, they may also organise training programmes for these volunteers.

### **Setting up a New Division in EPD**

8. Achieving the waste reduction targets in the ‘Hong Kong Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013-2022’ requires collaborated efforts on multiple fronts. To step up concerted efforts in reducing waste at source and promoting the development of the recycling industry, the Government set up the Steering Committee to Promote the Sustainable Development of the Recycling Industry (the Steering Committee) in August 2013. Since its establishment, the Steering Committee has engaged with the recycling trade and other stakeholders in exploring ways to promote the sustainable development of the recycling industry and support recycling operations. EPD has also commissioned a consultancy study on the detailed operation and situation of different types of recyclables and examine suitable means and points of intervention by the Government to support the sustainable development of the recycling industry. We need to strengthen the staffing support in EPD to take forward the various programmes and initiatives.

9. Following the announcement in the Chief Executive’s 2014 Policy Address of earmarking \$1 billion to set up a Recycling Fund in support of the sustainable development of the recycling industry, the Steering Committee will study in depth the specific uses of the fund in consultation with stakeholders. The formulation and implementation of the funding scheme in a sustainable, effective and equitable manner will require substantial manpower support in EPD.

10. To upgrade the safety and environmental standards of recycling operations, EPD is exploring with the Occupational Safety and Health Council the provision of tailor-made courses for the workforce of the recycling industry. We will also study, in consultation with stakeholders, the establishment of a certification scheme for recyclers. The necessary research, policy analysis, liaison, co-ordination and administration call for additional manpower.

11. In respect of green procurement to help recycling businesses by increasing the demand for recycled products, EPD will devote more resources to

monitoring market development and expanding the lists and specifications of green products for use by bureaux and departments. We will also step up promotion on the use of biodiesel in both the public and private sectors.

12. Other measures to promote recycling include stepping up public education and publicity, facilitating the supply of suitable locations (including short-term tenancy sites and berths in PCWAs) for recycling operations, etc. These measures will complement our efforts in introducing Producer Responsibility Schemes and MSW charging, improving the source separation of waste and collection network, setting up Community Green Stations, managing the EcoPark, developing Organic Waste Treatment Facilities and Integrated Waste Treatment Facilities etc. towards achieving the waste reduction targets as set out in the Blueprint.

13. At present, work relating to waste reduction and recycling is overseen by Assistant Director (Environmental Infrastructure) (AD(EI)). In addition, she is also responsible for the management of environmental infrastructure including landfills, refuse transfer stations, aftercare and after-use schemes of restored landfills, chemical waste treatment facilities and the development of the sludge treatment facility etc. As the three existing landfills are near exhaustion, extension for landfills has been very critical and the related planning and preparatory work has been excessively heavy. To enable her to focus on the above important tasks, and at the same time to reinforce our efforts on the waste reduction and recycling front as mentioned above, a new three-year supernumerary post of Assistant Director (Waste Reduction and Recycling) (AD(WRR)) (D2) is proposed to be created. The new AD(WRR) will take over the work in relation to waste reduction and recycling from AD(EI). Accordingly, the 33 posts in the Waste Reduction and EcoPark Group of the Environmental Infrastructure Division currently under AD(EI) will report to the new AD(WRR) instead upon creation of the latter post. The establishment and duty lists of the Waste Reduction and EcoPark Group are set out at **Annex**. In addition, 22 supernumerary posts will be created to strengthen work on recycling and waste reduction.

14. The Waste Reduction and EcoPark Group is currently headed by a Principal Environmental Protection Officer (PEPO) (D1). He is also responsible for work relating to management of some disposal facilities, such as waste diversion plan and retrofitting of refuse collection vehicles. Following the creation of the AD(WRR) post, he would report to AD(WRR) on waste reduction and recycling matters, and continue to report to AD(EI) on work relating to waste facilities. This arrangement would be further reviewed at a later stage having regard to the progress of various on-going and new initiatives.

15. Besides overseeing the Waste Reduction and EcoPark Group, the new AD(WRR) will take up the Secretaryship to the Steering Committee which is

temporarily taken up by Assistant Director (Cross Boundary and International), and be responsible for policy development and overseeing implementation of initiatives arising from the deliberation of the Steering Committee. These initiatives include establishing and managing the Recycling Fund, development of a certification scheme for recyclers, provision of training programmes for the recycling workforce in collaboration with relevant training bodies, co-ordination of public education and publicity campaigns, promotion of green procurement, facilitating infrastructural and land support for recycling operations including short-term tenancy sites, berths in PCWAs, etc.

16. The supernumerary posts in the new Division will be created on a three-year time-limited basis. Before the lapse of these posts, we will review the long-term manpower requirement for relevant areas of work taking into account the progress of on-going initiatives and new measures formulated by the Steering Committee.

### **Advice Sought**

17. Members are invited to note the content of this paper and provide any further comments. Subject to Members' views on the proposal to set up a Waste Reduction and Recycling Division in EPD (paragraphs 8-16), the Establishment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee will be invited to consider the proposed creation of a time-limited D2 post in the first quarter of 2014.

**Environment Bureau / Environmental Protection Department  
January 2014**

## **Duties and Staffing Support of the Waste Reduction and EcoPark Group**

### Team 1

Headed by: SEPO (Waste Reduction & EcoPark) 1

Supported by: 4 Environmental Protection Officers (EPO), 1 Assistant Environmental Protection Officer (AEPO), 3 Senior Environmental Protection Inspectors (SEPI), 8 Environmental Protection Inspectors (EPI)

Duties:

- Implementation of territory-wide Source Separation of Domestic Waste Programme and related publicity/promotion activities for housing estates
- Overall co-ordination of the Community Recycling Network and outlying islands waste recovery trial projects
- Management of Plastic Resources Recycling Centre at EcoPark
- Three-colour waste separation bins in public places
- ECF community waste recovery projects
- Knowledge base on outlets of recyclables (plastics, paper, textile and clothes)

### Team 2

Headed by: SEPO (Waste Reduction & EcoPark) 2

Supported by: 3 EPOs, 1 SEPI, 2 EPIs

Duties:

- Implementation of waste reduction programmes for commercial and industrial sectors and related publicity/promotion activities
- District Community Participation Programme
- Management of Material Transfer Centre at Kowloon Bay Waste Recycling Centre
- Short-term tenancy sites and berths in PCWAs for use by recyclers
- Liaison with recycling trade and support to Steering Committee to promote the sustainable development of the recycling industry
- School-based waste reduction and recycling education programmes, school green lunch
- Green measures in government department and community events

### Team 3

Headed by: SEPO (Waste Reduction & EcoPark) 3

Supported by: 3 EPOs, 1 AEPO, 2 SEPIs, 2 EPIs

Duties:

- Management of EcoPark and Visitor Centre
- EcoPark tenant support, business development and management
- Waste recovery surveys
- Waste recovery/recycling data management
- Support and maintenance of Waste Reduction Website and Hong Kong Second-hand Exchange Platform
- Recycling helpline