

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(1)314/13-14(06)

Ref. : CB1/PL/EA

**Panel on Environmental Affairs**

**Meeting on 25 November 2013**

**Updated background brief on  
"Producer responsibility scheme on glass beverage bottles"  
prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat**

**Purpose**

This paper provides updated background information on the introduction of a producer responsibility scheme ("PRS") on glass beverage bottles ("GBBs"), and gives a brief account of the views and concerns expressed by Members on the subject.

**Background**

2. In December 2005, the Administration published the Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014) ("the Policy Framework") to set out the strategy and measures to reduce waste generation and promote waste recovery, reuse and recycling. In line with the "polluter pays" principle, the Administration proposed in the Policy Framework to introduce PRSs which required manufacturers, importers, wholesalers, retailers and consumers to be responsible for what they produced and consumed.

3. The Policy Framework recommended the introduction of PRS for the following six types of products, which have significant impacts on waste disposal and have been a stable source stream of materials to develop and sustain local recycling industry –

- (a) Vehicle tyres;
- (b) Plastic shopping bags;
- (c) Electrical and electronic equipment;
- (d) Packaging materials;
- (e) Beverage containers; and
- (f) Rechargeable batteries.

4. To provide a legislative framework for the implementation of PRS in Hong Kong, the Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance (Cap. 603) was enacted in July 2008. It is an enabling legislation to provide for the shared core elements of all PRSs and the fundamental regulatory requirements in respect of individual types of products, with operational details to be set out in subsidiary legislation when the opportunity is ripe. Amongst the six types of products above, the environmental levy on plastic shopping bags is the first PRS under the Ordinance. The Administration is working on the introduction of a new PRS on waste electrical and electronic equipment. The Chief Executive also announced in the 2013 Policy Address that the Administration would continue to expedite the progressive implementation of mandatory PRSs, with priority accorded to glass beverage bottles.

#### Recycling of waste GBBs in Hong Kong

5. In 2011, Hong Kong generated about 55 000 tonnes of waste GBBs, over 85% of which was from alcoholic drinks. Given that local bottling industry has diminished and there is not any glass manufacturing industry in Hong Kong, at present, about 150 tonnes (about 2%) of waste GBBs are disposed of at the landfills each day.

6. Since 2008, the Administration has been promoting green procurement to encourage wider use of construction materials containing recycled glass (such as eco-pavers) in public works projects. For example, the Highways Department has mandated in their road maintenance contracts the priority use of concrete paving blocks with recycled glass. Other government departments have also started using these paving blocks in their suitable projects, thus helping to foster the local glass recycling industry.

7. The Administration has also been encouraging the community to participate in source separation of waste to minimize waste disposal and promote resources recovery. The Environmental Protection Department ("EPD") has liaised with the sectors concerned (e.g. hotels, catering and property management sector, etc.) and non-profit making organizations and provided support to them through the Environment and Conservation Fund in implementing various voluntary glass bottle recycling programmes in specific trade and at local districts. To encourage the general public to participate in the recycling of glass bottles, EPD, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Housing Authority, launched the Pilot Programme on Source Separation of Glass Bottles at six public rental housing ("PRH") estates in East Kowloon in late 2010. The Programme was then extended to cover a total of 29 PRH estates in East Kowloon in May 2012.

## Public consultation on a new PRS on GBBs in 2013

8. To enhance the management of waste GBBs, the Administration launched a 3-month public consultation on 7 February 2013 to consult the public on whether and how to introduce a mandatory PRS on GBBs. The consultation document proposed a government-led approach under which the Government would on the one hand appoint a glass management contractor ("GMC") to collect and recycle GBBs, and on the other hand would collect recycling fees from suppliers of glass-bottled beverages to cover PRS operation costs in line with the "polluter pays" principle. The public consultation ended on 6 May 2013.

### *Regulatory framework for the proposed PRS on GBBs*

9. To back up the operation of the proposed PRS on GBBs, the Government would serve as a regulator enforcing the following statutory elements of the proposed PRS on GBBs –

- (a) retailers of glass-bottled beverages would be required to provide consumers with information relating to the recycling of waste GBBs. The GMC would be required to produce and disseminate relevant publicity materials;
- (b) license control would be introduced for the treatment of waste GBBs; and
- (c) a recycling fee would be imposed on beverage suppliers who supply glass-bottled beverages for local consumption in Hong Kong. These beverage suppliers have to be registered, submit to the Government periodic returns on the quantities of glass-bottled beverages they supplied to the local market for the purpose of determining the recycle fees payable under the PRS and remit the fee income to the Government accordingly. They might recover the recycling fee wholly or partially from consumers and other stakeholders in the supply chain.

### *Coverage of the proposed PRS on GBBs*

10. Apart from GBBs, there are food/sauce, cosmetics, medicine and other glass bottles and they collectively accounted for about 37% of the overall waste glass generation in 2011. However, taking into consideration that these bottles might require additional cleansing and treatment process, the Administration considered it more appropriate to focus at waste GBBs under the proposed PRS at this stage.

11. The Government also proposed that where beverage suppliers had put in place alternative recycling arrangements on their own comparable to the proposed PRS such as a deposit-refund system, they might be excluded from the recycling fee so as to encourage them to continue with such arrangements. To tie in with the implementation of the PRS on GBBs, the Administration would provide more waste glass bottle recycle bins across the territory and enhance publicity and public education on waste glass bottle recycling.

12. As regards whether or not a landfill ban on GBBs should be introduced with reference to experience from the European Union and other jurisdictions, the Administration acknowledged the possible operational challenges and concerns. Given that GBBs were small in size and could be difficult to spot when mixed with ordinary trash, it would be operationally very difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish the targeted bottles from other bottles not included in the proposed PRS at landfills or other waste reception facilities. The Administration therefore invited public views on this question in the public consultation.

### **Deliberations by the Panel on Environmental Affairs**

13. The proposed PRS on GBBs was discussed by the Panel on Environmental Affairs ("the Panel") at its meeting on 25 February 2013. The Panel further held a meeting on 22 April 2013 to receive public views on the subject.

14. Some members supported that the recycling fee collected from the proposed PRS on GBBs be used to finance its operation under the "polluter pays" principle, while others saw a need for more information on the scheme, in particular the recycling fee to be levied and whether such would be sufficient to finance its operation. They also supported that the targeted bottles under the proposed PRS should be separated at source by consumers to facilitate recycling. In addition, more collection points should be provided at districts with prevalence of restaurants, bars and clubs, such as Wan Chai and Tsim Sha Tsui.

15. On the coverage of the proposed PRS, as the Administration had proposed not to include other types of beverage containers under the proposed PRS at this stage, some members were concerned that consumers would tend to shift to beverages which were sold in aluminium cans, plastic bottles and carton boxes with the levy of recycling fee on glass-bottled beverages. They urged the Administration to take the opportunity to include other GBBs under the proposed PRS.

16. As regards the appointment of the GMC, some members opined that to avoid monopolization of services, more than one GMC should be appointed to provide for the collection and treatment of GBBs, preferably one each in Hong Kong, Kowloon, the New Territories and outlying islands. The Administration should also put in place a monitoring mechanism to ensure a level playing field with other waste glass recyclers and to prevent monopolization of services. Some members considered that the Administration should take measures to assist waste glass recycling operators who might have to incur significant investments in terms of land and resources.

17. Members were also very concerned about the outlets for waste glass materials. They considered that given the limited usage of the recycled glass-containing paving blocks, there might not be sufficient demand for such blocks if produced on a large scale by the GMC under the proposed PRS. In order to provide a market for locally manufactured recycled products, members were of the view that priority should be given to the procurement of such products under the Government's procurement policy. There was also a need to promote the wider use of waste glass so that they would not only be used in public works but in private projects as well. Consideration should be given to developing an export market for such recycled materials.

### **Council questions**

18. Hon CHAN Kin-por, Hon KAM Nai-wai, Hon Andrew LEUNG and Hon Paul TSE raised questions relating to glass bottle recycling at the Council meetings on 21 October 2009, 3 February and 27 October 2010, 2 March and 7 December 2011, and 25 April 2012. Details of the Council questions are hyperlinked in the **Appendix** for ease of reference.

### **Latest development**

19. The Administration will report to the Panel on the consultation results and propose the way forward at the meeting scheduled for 25 November 2013.

### **Relevant papers**

20. A list of relevant papers is set out in the **Appendix**.

## List of relevant papers

Council/ Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Environmental Affairs	25 February 2013	<p>Administration's paper on "Public Consultation on a Producer Responsibility Scheme on glass beverage bottles" (LC Paper No. CB(1)569/12-13(04))  <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/ea/papers/ea0225cb1-569-4-e.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/ea/papers/ea0225cb1-569-4-e.pdf</a></p> <p>Background brief on "Introduction of a new producer responsibility scheme for glass beverage bottles" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(1)569/12-13(05))  <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/ea/papers/ea0225cb1-569-5-e.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/ea/papers/ea0225cb1-569-5-e.pdf</a></p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1066/12-13)  <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/ea/minutes/ea20130225.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/ea/minutes/ea20130225.pdf</a></p>
Panel on Environmental Affairs	22 April 2013	<p>Administration's paper on "Public Consultation on a Producer Responsibility Scheme on glass beverage bottles" (LC Paper No. CB(1)569/12-13(04))  <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/ea/papers/ea0225cb1-569-4-e.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/ea/papers/ea0225cb1-569-4-e.pdf</a></p> <p>Background brief on "Introduction of a new producer responsibility scheme for glass beverage bottles" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(1)569/12-13(05))  <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/ea/papers/ea0225cb1-569-5-e.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/ea/papers/ea0225cb1-569-5-e.pdf</a></p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1863/12-13)  <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/ea/minutes/ea20130422.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/ea/minutes/ea20130422.pdf</a></p>

Hyperlinks to relevant Council Questions:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Council Question</b>
21 October 2009	Council question raised by Hon CHAN Kin-por <a href="http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200910/21/P200910210264.htm">http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200910/21/P200910210264.htm</a>
3 February 2010	Council question raised by Hon KAM Nai-wai <a href="http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201002/03/P201002030176.htm">http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201002/03/P201002030176.htm</a>
27 October 2010	Council question raised by Hon KAM Nai-wai <a href="http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201010/27/P201010270175.htm">http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201010/27/P201010270175.htm</a>
2 March 2011	Council question raised by Hon Andrew LEUNG <a href="http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201103/02/P201103020202.htm">http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201103/02/P201103020202.htm</a>
7 December 2011	Council question raised by Hon Paul TSE <a href="http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201112/07/P201112070205.htm">http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201112/07/P201112070205.htm</a>
25 April 2012	Council question raised by Hon KAM Nai-wai <a href="http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201204/25/P201204250243.htm">http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201204/25/P201204250243.htm</a>