

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)37/15-16(06)

Ref. : CB1/PL/EA

Panel on Environmental Affairs

Meeting on 26 October 2015

**Background brief on Community Green Stations
prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat**

Purpose

This paper provides background information on Community Green Stations ("CGSs"), and gives a summary of the major views and concerns expressed by Members when related issues were discussed by the relevant committees of the Legislative Council in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 legislative sessions.

Background

"Hong Kong Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013–2022"

2. In May 2013, the Environment Bureau ("ENB") published "Hong Kong Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013–2022" setting out the target to reduce the per capita disposal rate of municipal solid waste by 40% by 2022. To achieve this target, the Administration stresses that Hong Kong people should make concerted efforts to put the new green culture of "Use Less, Waste Less" into practice and treasure the resources on earth. In parallel, the Administration has been taking forward initiatives to promote sustainable development of the recycling industries, including enhancing the network of community collection points for recyclables.

Community Green Stations

3. The Chief Executive announced in the 2014 Policy Address that the Government planned to develop a CGS in each of the 18 districts to enhance

environmental education and help collect different types of recyclables (especially those of low economic value recyclables including electrical appliances, computers, glass beverage bottles, compact fluorescent lamps/tubes and rechargeable batteries) in the local community. Materials collected by CGSs would be delivered to qualified recyclers for proper treatment and turning waste into resources. The Administration envisages that CGSs will help encourage more public participation in waste reduction and recovery to increase the quantity of materials recovered, and promote the "Recycle Clean" concept to enhance the quality of the recyclables collected. By focusing their services on the collection of low economic value recyclables, CGSs will also serve to supplement the existing services of local private recyclers.

4. The Environmental Protection Department ("EPD") is progressively developing CGSs in each of the districts in Hong Kong¹, at a capital expenditure of about \$400 million in total. EPD will appoint non-governmental and non-profit-making organizations ("NGOs") by way of open tender to operate CGSs and will provide funding for their operation. The specific operating expenditures will depend on the financial proposals submitted by individual operators in the tenders, while the handling capacity of CGSs will hinge on the performance of the operators.

Commissioning of Shatin CGS and Eastern CGS

5. Sha Tin CGS² and Eastern CGS³ have been opened to the public since 12 May 2015 and 23 September 2015 respectively. Apart from collecting recyclables, the CGS operators also promotes environmental education at the district level through various kinds of public education activities including exhibitions, seminars and workshops.

Major views and concerns expressed by Members

6. Issues relating to CGSs were brought up at the meetings of the Panel on Environmental Affairs ("the Panel") held on 27 January and 23 July 2014 when the Panel discussed promotion of the recycling industry. Questions relating to the development of CGSs were raised when Members examined the Estimates of Expenditures 2015-2016 at a special meeting of the Finance Committee on

¹ Since 2014, EPD has created 16 permanent posts and five time-limited posts for three years to implement the CGS initiative and monitor the operation of CGSs.

² Shatin CGS is operated by the Christian Family Service Centre.

³ Eastern CGS is operated by Po Leung Kuk.

30 March 2015. The major views and concerns raised by Members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Environmental impacts arising from operation of CGSs

7. While expressing support for the setting up of CGSs in each of the 18 districts to support recycling at the community level and promote environmental education, Members noted that some District Councils ("DCs") were concerned about the poor hygiene conditions of CGSs, and there were complaints from some members of the local communities against some roadside recycling shops. Members urged the Administration to take regulatory measures to address these concerns. Some Members, on the other hand, considered that CGSs should not be located far away from residential areas given the need for the CGS operators to leverage on local connections for the collection and processing of recyclables, and the role of CGSs in environmental education. Proximity of CGSs to residential areas would also reduce the transportation costs and travelling time in the delivery of recyclables and help enhance the business viability of the recycling industry.

8. The Administration advised that the proposal for CGSs to be developed by the Government and operated by NGOs was meant to address the unpopularity of some private recycling facilities in the local communities and to reach out to local residents and community groups to enlist their support for recycling initiatives. The Administration would render assistance to the NGOs concerned with a view to ensuring a smooth operation of CGSs while setting CGSs as a model for the operators of private recycling facilities to follow. When identifying locations for the development of CGSs, the Administration would strike an appropriate balance between facilitating collection of recyclables and minimizing possible environmental impacts on nearby residents.

Roles of CGSs and the recycling trade

9. Some Members were concerned about the cost-effectiveness of engaging NGOs to operate CGSs, and whether the public might perceive the Government as unwilling to engage the recycling trade directly in implementing environment-related initiatives. Members sought clarification about the role of the recycling trade in the operation of CGSs. The Administration stressed that the NGOs and the recycling trade served different functions and complemented each other's role on the recycling front, i.e. recyclables of higher values were more likely collected and processed by private recyclers under open market forces whereas CGSs provided logistical support in the collection of recyclables of lower commercial values which did not have sufficient market outlets (e.g. glass bottles).

The Administration further pointed out that as operators of CGSs, the NGOs concerned also played an important role in taking forward education programmes to arouse public awareness of waste recycling. The Administration assured Members that it would engage both NGOs and the recycling trade as appropriate in taking forward environmental initiatives, and maintain an open attitude in formulating new measures to support the recycling industry.

Progress of developing CGSs

10. Some Members expressed concern about the slow progress in establishing CGSs in the 18 districts. The Administration advised that following announcement of the initiative in the 2014 Policy Address, the Administration had been taking forward CGSs in phases taking into account the lead time required for identifying suitable locations for the facilities, consultation with the respective DCs and the construction schedules. Construction of the two CGSs in Yuen Long and Kwun Tong respectively was in progress and scheduled for completion by mid-2016. The remaining CGSs were in different construction or planning stages, and EPD would make announcements on the progress of these projects at suitable time.

Monitoring of the operation of CGSs

11. As regards some Members' concern about the potential differences in the mode of operation among CGSs as they would be operated by different NGOs, the Administration advised that the same objectives and requirements applied to all CGS operators. In gist, the operators were required to proactively support waste reduction and recycling work at the community level; support the collection of low-value recyclables (such as glass bottles) and pass them to local recyclers for recycling; complement the existing services provided by private recyclers; collaborate with property management companies, schools and other organizations; and organize publicity and public education activities on environmental education. It was specified in the operation contracts that the operators should provide services according to the technical proposals accepted by EPD. EPD would carry out inspection and monitoring work on a regular basis to ensure that the operators managed CGSs properly and complied with the contractual requirements (including operational requirements on environment, hygiene, occupational safety and health).

Latest development

12. At the meeting on 26 October 2015, the Administration will brief the Panel on the development of CGSs, and the commissioning of the first two CGSs in Sha Tin and the Eastern District.

Relevant papers

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

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
22 October 2015

Community Green Stations

List of relevant papers

Council/ Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Environmental Affairs	27 January 2014	<p>Administration's paper on "Promotion of recycling industry" (LC Paper No. CB(1)500/13-14(03))</p> <p>Administration's paper on "2014 Policy Address - Policy initiatives of Environment Bureau: Environmental protection" (LC Paper No. CB(1)744/13-14(01))</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1291/13-14)</p>
Panel on Environmental Affairs	23 July 2014	<p>Administration's paper on "Measures to promote the recycling industry and establishment of the Recycling Fund" (LC Paper No. CB(1)1814/13-14(03))</p> <p>Updated background brief on "Promotion of the recycling industry" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(1)1814/13-14(04))</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)61/14-15)</p>
Special meeting of the Finance Committee for examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2015-2016	30 March 2015	<p>Written questions raised by Members and Administration's replies (Reply serial numbers: ENB059, 090, 095, 146, 152, 175, 320 and 333)</p>

Government press releases

Date of issuance	Press release
11 May 2015	Press release on "Sha Tin Community Green Station open to public from tomorrow"
19 May 2015	Press release on "Steering Committee to Promote Sustainable Development of Recycling Industry visits Sha Tin Community Green Station and local recyclers"
23 September 2015	Press release on "Eastern Community Green Station open to public from today"