

For Information

**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**Supplementary Information of the Review of
Construction Waste Disposal Charging Scheme**

This note provides the supplementary information that Members of the Panel on Environmental Affairs (“EAP”) asked for at the meeting on 21 December 2015.

- (a) *supplementary information, apart from those given in paragraphs 11 and 12 of the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)299/15-16(04)), on the specific measures for promoting the reduction, reuse and recycling of construction and demolition materials, including encouraging the use of more reusable materials, such as non-timber formwork, etc. in public works and by the construction industry;*

2. The Government has long been promoting reduction and recycling of construction waste in public works projects through various measures. In respect of public works, the use of tropical hardwood in formwork and site hoarding etc. has been prohibited. The requirements on metallic hoardings and signboards are also stipulated in the General Specifications for public works to facilitate future reuse of the metallic components. In addition, more recycled construction materials have been used in public works projects. Apart from the use of eco-pavers (which contain recycled glass materials), there have also been pavement works in which reclaimed asphalt is used and roads that are built with recycled sub-base. Also, increasingly more projects have adopted green design in their site offices. Being built with reusable materials and modular accommodation units, such “green site offices” are designed to facilitate subsequent reuse thus avoiding the generation of additional construction waste.

3. We have also been maintaining close liaison with the Construction Industry Council and other professional bodies for sharing of experience. In respect of new private development projects, the Government has since 2011 required the submission of building

environmental assessment BEAM Plus issued by the Hong Kong Green Building Council as one of the prerequisites for granting gross floor area concessions. The BEAM Plus assessment sets out various standards for green construction design, building and management, etc. and encourages the construction industry to use recycled materials and precast units that are of low carbon content and generate less waste, and recover construction waste.

(b) the costs of the treatment of construction waste each year (in terms of cost per tonne of construction waste), including land/capital costs involved in the provision of landfill space, etc., and savings each year from using construction waste as a substitute for marine sand for filling materials for reclamation/earthworks; and

4. As explained in Paper No. CB(1)299/15-16(04), as a result of our costing review, the full costs incurred by the Government in handling construction waste at the landfills, the sorting facilities and the public fill banks are estimated to be \$200 per tonne, \$265 per tonne and \$71 per tonne respectively. In the costing review, we have already taken into account the expenses for hiring contractors to operate individual types of facilities (e.g. the landfills) and to arrange the reuse or disposal of the construction waste. We have also taken into account the related expenses in the administration of the charging scheme such as staff costs, departmental expenses, accommodation costs, depreciation, costs of services provided by other departments and central administrative overhead that may be incurred.

5. As a general reference, the average raw material cost of marine sand fill imported in recent years is about \$20 per tonne. However, due to the design requirements, site constraints and limited construction time, not every layers of the reclaimed land could be formed by public fill. Individual project offices will adopt suitable combination of marine sand, public fill and other filling materials for their reclamation works to suit their project needs. Hence, there are no statistics on the savings in respect of the use of construction waste¹ as substitute for marine sand as filling materials for reclamation and earthworks.

¹ More specifically inert construction waste (also known as public fill).

- (c) *information on cases of illegal land filling/fly-tipping of construction waste, including near Pui O beach on Lantau Island, and on rear lane and rooftops of buildings, etc. in urban areas, with details on the number of complaints received, enforcement actions taken and successful prosecutions made, if any, in each of the past two years.*

6. In 2014 and 2015, the Environmental Protection Department (“EPD”) received 1,695 and 1,841 complaints of suspected illegal land-filling/ fly-tipping of construction waste. These figures may include multiple complaints in respect of the same incident.

7. Upon receipt of complaints, EPD carries out investigations to ascertain whether there has been any contravention of the relevant requirements under the Waste Disposal Ordinance (“WDO”) (Cap. 354). When it is considered that there has been suspected contravention of the relevant requirements under the WDO, EPD will, subject to the availability of evidence, take appropriate actions, including issuance of warning letters (32 cases in 2014 and 19 cases in 2015) or instruction of prosecution (44 cases in 2014 and 60 cases in 2015). Overall, the quantity of construction waste fly-tipped and removed by the Government accounts for less than 0.05% of the total quantity of construction waste disposed of at the waste disposal facilities in the same period. Construction waste may be used as fill materials by depositing it on land for purposes of say levelling off uneven ground surfaces and forming site for development. Some cases are properly authorized by the land owners concerned, and do not breach any relevant laws.

8. As for the “Pui O case” which Members raised at the EAP meeting on 21 December 2015, we take that it was related to the series of complaints lodged with EPD between August and September 2014 about a number of depositing activities which took place at Pui O. EPD followed up the complaints in a similar way as outlined in paragraph 7. Some depositing activities were found to be unauthorized by the land owners concerned but no fly-tipper was caught in our subsequent surprise site visits. Some depositing activities were authorized by the land owners concerned and no breach of the relevant laws was found.

**Environment Bureau / Environmental Protection Department
April 2016**