

ITEM FOR ESTABLISHMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

**HEAD 159 – GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT :
DEVELOPMENT BUREAU (WORKS BRANCH)
Subhead 000 Operational expenses**

Members are invited to recommend to the Finance Committee the following proposal to regrade two one-rank grade directorate posts to multi-disciplinary directorate posts in the Works Branch of the Development Bureau with effect upon the approval of the Finance Committee –

- (a) the creation of the following two permanent multi-disciplinary directorate posts to be filled by an officer from any of the following five grades, namely Engineer, Forestry Officer, Geotechnical Engineer, Landscape Architect and Leisure Services Manager –

1 Head of Greening, Landscape and Tree
Management Section
(D2) (\$179,350 - \$196,050)

1 Head of Tree Management Office
(D1) (\$150,950 - \$165,200)

/ (b)

- (b) to be offset by the deletion of the following two permanent one-rank grade posts –

1 Head of Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section
(D2) (\$179,350 - \$196,050)

1 Head of Tree Management Office
(D1) (\$150,950 - \$165,200)

PROBLEM

We need to select suitable candidates within the civil service for filling the posts of the Head of Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section (H/GLTMS) (D2) and the Head of Tree Management Office (H/TMO) (D1) in the Development Bureau (Works Branch) (DEVB(WB)) to meet the operational needs of the Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section (GLTMS) and its Tree Management Office (TMO) respectively and implement the greening, landscape and tree management initiatives more effectively.

PROPOSAL

2. We propose to regrade two one-rank grade directorate posts of the H/GLTMS (D2) and the H/TMO (D1) to multi-disciplinary (MD) directorate posts to be filled by officers from any of the following five grades, namely Engineer, Forestry Officer, Geotechnical Engineer, Landscape Architect and Leisure Services Manager. The two new MD directorate posts will be offset by the deletion of the two permanent one-rank grade posts of H/GLTMS (D2) and H/TMO (D1).

JUSTIFICATION

Creation of the two one-rank grade directorate posts

3. Upon the establishment of GLTMS in DEVB(WB) in 2010, two one-rank grade directorate posts, namely H/GLTMS (D2) and H/TMO (D1) were created to head GLTMS and its TMO respectively. GLTMS, with the support of two offices, namely the Greening and Landscape Office (GLO) and TMO, is responsible for the Government's overall policy regarding greening, landscape and tree management matters in Hong Kong. While GLO is tasked with formulating

/landscape

landscape policies and guidelines, TMO is the central authority to lead and coordinate the implementation of the “integrated approach” on tree management^{Note}. GLO is led by the Head of GLO pitched at Chief Landscape Architect (D1) level and the post has been filled from within the civil service since its creation in 2010.

4. H/GLTMS oversees GLTMS in formulating policy strategies on a greener urban environment and spearheads the formulation of tree management regime. As for H/TMO, he/she is responsible for a wide range of tasks relating to tree management including the overall policy formulation, standard-setting and strategic planning work. Under the leadership of H/GLTMS and with the inputs of H/TMO, GLTMS has made major progress in the following areas of work since its establishment in 2010 –

- (a) GLTMS has promulgated a total of 40 more internal circulars/guidelines/practices/technical notes covering a wide spectrum of issues including provision of space and minimum requirements on planting in new government infrastructure projects, tree preservation, management and maintenance, yard waste treatment, compensatory planting arrangement, skyrise greenery, and selection of plants and trees;
- (b) in addition to the aforesaid internal documents, GLTMS has promulgated the “Guidelines for Tree Risk Assessment and Management Arrangement” for tree management departments within the Government to identify and mitigate tree risks. It also published the “Handbook on Tree Management” to provide guidance and advice to tree owners and property managers to take care of trees located on private land. Recognising the benefits brought by smart technology to tree management for keeping our urban forest healthy and minimising tree failure risks, GLTMS has explored the application of various technologies in tree management, including the Tree Management Common Platform for use by relevant tree management departments, Quick Response-coded tree labels which facilitate the public to access information on specific trees and tilt sensors for better monitoring and sensing tree movement;
- (c) GLTMS has launched the \$200 million Urban Forestry Support Fund (UFSF) in mid-2020 to implement a number of new initiatives, including the Study Sponsorship Scheme and the Trainee Programme, to incentivise interested youngsters in joining our urban forestry management work, and uplift the professional standards of

/arboriculture

^{Note} Under this approach, departments are responsible for managing the trees in the facilities and areas within their purview as part and parcel of their daily work.

arboriculture and horticulture practitioners. We also rolled out the Registration Scheme for Tree Management Personnel for five types of qualified in-service arboriculture practitioners in December 2020. Preparatory work is underway to require contractors undertaking government works under new contracts to engage registered tree management personnel to handle tree works; and

- (d) GLTMS promotes proper tree care through a series of public education and promotion activities. These activities are effective in raising awareness of the importance of proper tree management. With the support of the newly established UFSF, promotion efforts have been strengthened to cultivate public's appreciation of the landscape and trees. In 2020, GLTMS and relevant tree management departments have organised a number of education and promotion activities involving about 680 000 participants including professionals, practitioners, tree owners, property management personnel, students and the public.

Recruitment difficulty of the two one-rank grade directorate posts

5. Both post-holders of H/GLTMS and H/TMO require a broad policy vision that cuts across different disciplines and a thorough understanding of the numerous challenges to sustainable greening efforts and tree management regime in a developed urban setting. When GLTMS was newly established some ten years ago, in order to reach out to a wider pool of candidates and tap talents with knowledge and experience in the development of a greener urban environment and a holistic regime for tree management outside the Government, open cum in-service recruitment exercises had been conducted for filling the two posts. Both posts were filled by candidates outside the civil service for some time. However, experience showed that it was difficult to recruit suitable candidates for these posts. Apart from the fact that there were only a very limited number of qualified candidates, wastage rate had been high. Coupled with the long lead time for recruitment exercises, there were repeated occasions that these posts have to be filled by civil servants on a temporary basis since their creation in 2010. This is unhealthy and not conducive to the effective operation of GLTMS and TMO in the long run.

6. As a stop-gap measure, the post of H/GLTMS is currently taken up by an Engineer grade officer with extensive experience in administration and management as well as knowledge in urban greening and preservation, while most of the time the post of H/TMO was filled by a Geotechnical Engineer grade officer with expertise in risk assessment and professional qualification in arboriculture.

/Need

Need for regrading the two one-rank grade directorate posts to MD directorate posts

Evolving requirements of the two directorate posts

7. Having reviewed the setup of GLTMS and in light of the experience in rolling out the major initiatives as highlighted in paragraph 4 above, we consider that good knowledge of the local environment of Hong Kong, particularly our developed and congested urban setting, is one of the pre-requisites in formulating suitable greening and tree management policy for our city. We consider that the post-holders of H/GLTMS and H/TMO should be familiar with the local situation so that they can better understanding local concerns and public sentiments, and are more ready to communicate with stakeholders in the community. Moreover, driving urban forestry management requires support from and coordination with different departments. It would be more effective for H/GLTMS and H/TMO posts to be filled by suitable officers identified from within the civil service as they are not only familiar with the local situation, but also with the rules, procedures and practices of the Government. Their extensive experience in liaising with various bureaux and departments (B/Ds) as well as managing and working with civil servants from different grades would enable them to command support from staff of GLTMS and relevant B/Ds.

Availability of suitable officers within the civil service to fill the two directorate posts

8. In recent years, the Government has put in tremendous efforts to build up the knowledge, experience and expertise for the management of Hong Kong's tree asset within the civil service resulting in a pool of landscape and tree management personnel equipped with the requisite knowledge, experience and professional expertise. Competent senior professional officers of the five grades mentioned in paragraph 2 above are available and suitable for discharging the duties of H/GLTMS and H/TMO posts.

9. As regards the skill-sets and qualification of H/GLTMS and H/TMO posts, the post-holders should have good analytical, managerial, communication and organisation capabilities. These are important qualities in leading GLTMS and TMO to deliver the missions and tasks. Both post-holders should be professional staff from one of the relevant civil service grades listed in paragraph 2 above who have cross-disciplinary leadership, management capability, experience in landscape and tree management work as well as knowledge to work effectively with professionals and experts from various disciplines both inside and outside the Government. They should also have good communications skills and an open-mind in engaging the public and responding to their expectations.

10. Having regard to the nature of tasks to be handled by H/GLTMS and H/TMO and the diverse capabilities required in addition to arboricultural and horticultural knowledge, we recommend that the two posts be regraded to MD directorate posts. These two post-holders should have a broad policy vision that spans across different disciplines and a thorough understanding of the challenges to sustainable greening efforts in the developed urban setting. In this connection, officers from the Engineer, Forestry Officer, Geotechnical Engineer, Landscape Architect and Leisure Services Manager grades are considered as suitable candidates for H/GLTMS (D2) and H/TMO (D1) posts. Officers of these five grades have been serving in GLTMS and various government departments in performing duties related to landscape and tree management.

Selection mechanism of the two directorate posts

11. The Government is committed to the continued enhancement of the quality of our urban environment through quality greening and tree management initiatives. The proposed MD directorate post arrangement will enable a more flexible deployment of suitable professional officers with relevant expertise and competencies within the civil service to achieve our policy objective of enhancing urban forestry management. Officers recommended by the respective Heads of Grades would enter a selection process. The selection of the most suitable officers would be made on basis of character, ability, experience as well as other relevant selection criteria commensurate with the job requirements of the posts. The selected officer for each of the two posts will normally serve a tour of three years in accordance with the established mechanism for filling the MD directorate posts. This arrangement allows selection of the most suitable officers from the civil service to fill the two posts to cope with operational needs evolving over time, with due regard to the manpower situation and development needs of potential officers in the respective grades. We have consulted the Heads of Grades of the related grades not under the central authority of the Permanent Secretary for Development (Works), i.e. the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation for the Forestry Officer grade and the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services for the Leisure Services Manager grade. The respective Heads of Grades in general support the proposal.

12. The main duties of H/GLTMS and H/TMO MD directorate posts are shown in Enclosures 1 and 2 respectively.

Encls. 1 & 2

/NON-DIRECTORATE

NON-DIRECTORATE SUPPORT

13. GLTMS is underpinned by GLO and TMO, the daily operation of which is supported by a total of 39 non-directorate civil service posts. The proposed creation of two MD directorate posts will be offset by the deletion of the same number of one-rank grade directorate posts. The total number of non-directorate civil service posts in GLTMS will remain unchanged. The proposed organisation chart of GLTMS and TMO after regrading the two directorate posts is at Enclosure 3. The existing organisation chart of DEVB(WB) is at Enclosure 4.

Encls. 3 & 4

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

14. Deployment of suitable personnel with the required professional knowledge and experience is imperative to the effective and efficient operation of GLTMS. Given the less than satisfactory outcome in tapping talents outside the Government for H/GLTMS and H/TMO posts in the past, maintaining the status quo is not desirable. Moreover, given the availability of a pool of competent civil servants from the five relevant professional grades, we consider it appropriate to regrade the two one-rank grade directorate posts to MD directorate posts so that the Government may have the flexibility to appoint the most suitable candidates within the civil service having regard to the operational needs and work requirements.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

15. The regrading proposal of the two one-rank grade directorate posts to MD directorate posts is cost neutral.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

16. We have consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Development on the proposal at its meeting held on 25 May 2021. Members generally supported the submission of the regrading proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee for consideration.

ESTABLISHMENT CHANGES

17. The establishment changes in DEVB(WB) in the past two years are as follows –

/Establishment

Establishment (Note)	Number of posts			
	Existing (As at 1 July 2021)	As at 1 April 2021	As at 1 April 2020	As at 1 April 2019
A	28+(2) [#]	28+(2)	28+(2)	26+(2)
B	149	149	138	129
C	260	258	239	230
Total	437+(2)	435+(2)	405+(2)	385+(2)

Note:

A – ranks on the directorate pay scale or equivalent

B – non-directorate ranks, the maximum pay point of which is above MPS Point 33 or equivalent

C – non-directorate ranks, the maximum pay point of which is at or below MPS Point 33 or equivalent

() – number of supernumerary directorate posts

– all directorate posts in DEVB(WB) were filled as at 1 July 2021

CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU COMMENTS

18. The Civil Service Bureau supports the proposed regrading of the one-rank grade directorate posts of H/GLTMS and H/TMO to MD directorate posts. H/GLTMS and H/TMO posts are to be filled by an officer from any of the five grades of Engineer, Forestry Officer, Geotechnical Engineer, Landscape Architect and Leisure Services Manager. The grading and ranking of the posts involved are considered appropriate having regard to the level and scope of responsibilities and professional input required.

ADVICE OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DIRECTORATE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

19. The Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service has advised that the grading proposed for the posts would be appropriate if the regrading proposal is to be implemented.

Development Bureau
July 2021

Job Description

Post Title : Head of Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section

Rank : Multi-disciplinary post at D2 level
(Eligible Grades: Engineer, Forestry Officer, Geotechnical Engineer, Landscape Architect and Leisure Services Manager)

Responsible to : Deputy Secretary for Development (Works)1 (DS(W)1)

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. To assist DS(W)1 in formulating policies, strategies and measures on greening, landscape and tree management to ensure seamless integration from landscape design and planting in the upstream to tree maintenance in the downstream.
2. To oversee the work of the Greening and Landscape Office, including implementation of the annual greening programme and Greening Master Plans; research on new greening and landscape policies, practices and technologies; and development of standards and guidelines on greening and landscape planning and design.
3. To oversee the work of the Tree Management Office, including implementation of the “integrated approach” on tree management; development of tree management standards and guidelines; tree risk assessment and management arrangements; training to departmental staff; industry development, research on new tree management policies, practices and technologies; and management of tree database systems.
4. To oversee the co-ordination of greening, landscape and tree management matters and set up the protocol of liaison with relevant bureaux and departments, and to deal with cross-bureaux and cross-departmental issues.
5. To serve as the focal point of contact on greening, landscape and tree management matters both locally and overseas.
6. To oversee community involvement and public education programmes; handle enquiries, complaints and suggestions from the public and media on greening, landscape and tree management matters; and coordinate emergency responses regarding tree management.

7. To serve as the Chairperson of the Urban Forestry Advisory Panel and oversee its operation.

Job Description

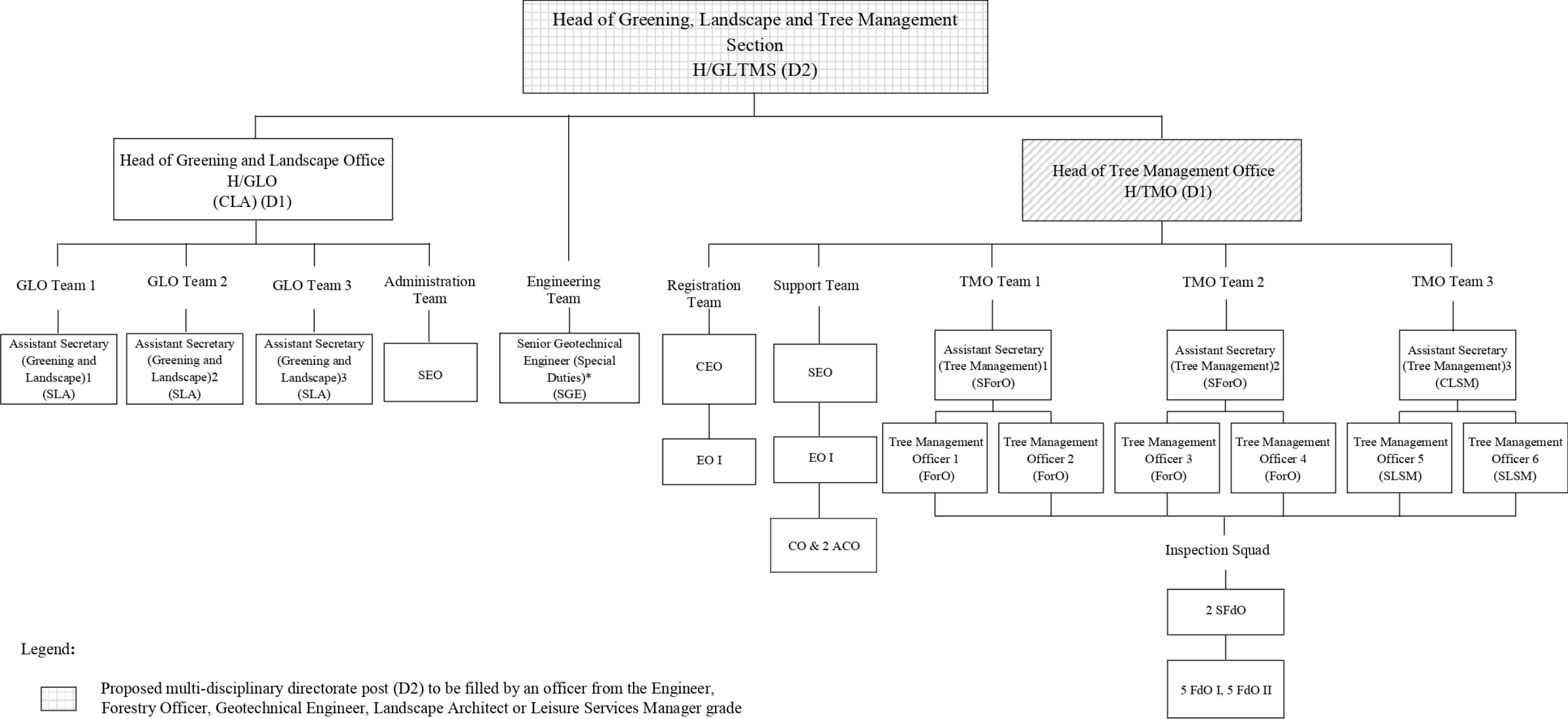
- Post Title** : Head of Tree Management Office
- Rank** : Multi-disciplinary post at D1 level
(Eligible Grades: Engineer, Forestry Officer, Geotechnical Engineer, Landscape Architect and Leisure Services Manager)
- Responsible to** : Head of Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section (H/GLTMS)

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. To assist H/GLTMS in formulating policies, strategies and measures on tree management.
2. To ensure effective implementation of the “integrated approach” on tree management by developing and promulgating standards, guidelines and best practices at the central level; administering and housekeeping tree management databases; coordinating inter-departmental efforts; and resolving issues when such arise.
3. To supervise the development, implementation and review, as appropriate, of tree risk assessment and management arrangements.
4. To advise and steer departments in handling complex cases concerning tree management.
5. To formulate and implement strategic training plans and make arrangements for capacity building for tree management in the Government.
6. To liaise with training institutes and providers of education and training courses; and formulate and take forward industry development initiatives including manpower development and a registration scheme for tree management personnel.
7. To lead research into tree management policies, practices and technologies.
8. To liaise with relevant bureaux and departments, academia, non-governmental organisations and other relevant parties on tree management matters, including identifying possible areas and measures for improvement.

9. To handle matters relating to community involvement and public education programmes, enquiries, complaints and suggestions from the public and media, and assist in coordinating emergency responses regarding tree management.

Proposed Organisation Chart of the Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section and Tree Management Office of the Development Bureau (Works Branch)



Legend:

Proposed multi-disciplinary directorate post (D2) to be filled by an officer from the Engineer, Forestry Officer, Geotechnical Engineer, Landscape Architect or Leisure Services Manager grade

Proposed multi-disciplinary directorate post (D1) to be filled by an officer from the Engineer, Forestry Officer, Geotechnical Engineer, Landscape Architect or Leisure Services Manager grade

ACO

Assistant Clerical Officer

ForO

Forestry Officer

CEO

Chief Executive Officer

SEO

Senior Executive Officer

CLA

Chief Landscape Architect

SFdo

Senior Field Officer

CLSM

Chief Leisure Services Manager

SForO

Senior Forestry Officer

CO

Clerical Officer

SGE

Senior Geotechnical Engineer

EO I

Executive Officer I

SLA

Senior Landscape Architect

FdO I

Field Officer I

SLSM

Senior Leisure Services Manager

FdO II

Field Officer II

* Time-limited post

Existing Organisation Chart of the Development Bureau (Works Branch)

