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18 January 2024

Ms Shirley CHAN
Clerk, Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms CHAN,

**Follow-up to the Public Accounts Committee Report No. 75A
Collection and removal of marine refuse by the Marine Department**

Thank you for your letter of 8 January 2024 to the Director of Marine. I am authorised to reply below.

2. Marine Department (MD) has implemented all the recommendations made by the Public Accounts Committee and Audit Commission on the collection and removal of marine refuse.

The current contracts

3. The current contracts for marine refuse cleansing and disposal service came into effect on 1 October 2022 and are valid until 30 September 2025. MD has split the service contract into two to cover Eastern waters of Hong Kong and Western waters of Hong Kong respectively. The Eastern waters of Hong Kong covers Yau Ma Tei, Central District, Eastern District, Sai Kung District and Tai Po District. The Western waters of Hong Kong covers Southern District, Tuen Mun, Tsuen Wan and Outlying Islands.

Close Monitoring

4. Under the terms of the contracts, the contractor is obliged to deploy a fleet of at least 42 vessels of various types to provide marine refuse cleansing and supporting service in Hong Kong waters. MD closely monitors the contractor and conducts regular reviews. In addition to the contract requirements, additional vessels have been deployed based on actual situation in order to maintain satisfactory service performance.

5. Additionally, in 2023, the contractor has introduced the latest marine technology and deployed two unmanned remote control crafts for trial to clean waters inaccessible by manned vessels, such as shallow or congested waters. The third one will be on trial in 2024.

Routine Management

6. To ensure better coordination with the contractor and effective performance monitoring, MD holds monthly management meetings with the senior management of the contractor. During the meetings, the contractor provides reports on the work carried out in relation to marine refuse for MD's review and evaluation. In addition, the contractor keeps MD updated on the vessel deployment.

7. Since the commencement of the contracts in October 2022, 15 management meetings have been held. The meeting arrangement has worked well, allowing MD to closely monitor the contractor's performance and facilitating the exchange of feedback between the two parties.

8. A communication channel via mobile phone and communication apps has been established between MD and the contractor to improve efficiency on handling marine refuse service request. Upon receipt of a service request on marine refuse collection, MD will task the contractor to follow up. Since the new service contact from October 2022, the initial response rate to marine refuse service request within three days has been maintained at 100%, which is higher than the target response rate of 95%. In 2023, MD also carried out 1,776 routine patrols in 12 patrol areas and 219 surprise inspections to monitor the performance of contractor. The contractor's overall performance is satisfactory.

9. MD will continue monitoring the service performance of the contractor to ensure the service quality.

Yours sincerely,



(LK LAW)

for Director of Marine

- c.c. Secretary for Environment and Ecology (email: see@eeb.gov.hk)
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (email: sfst@fstb.gov.hk)
Director of Audit (email: ncylam@aud.gov.hk)

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