

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(E)116

(Question Serial No. 0198)

Head: (100) Marine Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Port Services (3) Local Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Marine (Carol YUEN)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

Regarding the collection of refuse from locally-licensed vessels and river trade vessels, please advise on:

- (a) the staffing, expenditures and numbers of vessels involved in collecting refuse from fishing vessels, locally-licensed vessels and river trade vessels, either by staff of the Marine Department (MD) or the contractor it engaged, in the past 3 years (2020-21 to 2022-23); and the staffing, expenditures and numbers of vessels involved in collecting refuse in various typhoon shelters in the past 3 years (2020-21 to 2022-23);
- (b) the mechanism adopted by MD for collecting refuse in various typhoon shelters, and the daily collection schedules;
- (c) whether MD will consider providing additional notification channels or establishing a mechanism in addition to the 24-hour hotline manned by officers on duty, email and fax so as to improve the service for collecting refuse for fishing vessels in typhoon shelters;
- (d) the total quantities of marine refuse collected by MD in the past 3 years (2020-21 to 2022-23) and the total quantities of refuse collected in typhoon shelters (please provide the information by month); and
- (e) the number of notifications issued by the notification and alert system on marine refuse since its setting up under the Hong Kong-Guangdong Marine Environmental Management Special Panel, with the extent of its effectiveness; and the way to an enhanced cross-border collaboration between Guangdong and Hong Kong.

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 36)

Reply:

- (a) MD has conducted a comprehensive review on the tender of marine refuse cleansing and disposal service contract for the whole of Hong Kong waters. In the review, MD

has considered different ways, such as splitting contract service areas and removing unnecessary contract service requirements to reduce the contract price, thereby making the most cost-effective tender award.

MD signed the contract for marine refuse cleansing and disposal services with the existing contractor for a term of three years commencing 1 October 2022 and ending 30 September 2025, involving a contract expenditure of about \$299.75 million.

Under the contract, the contractor is currently providing a fleet of at least 42 vessels of various types for marine refuse cleansing and support to clean up marine refuse in Hong Kong waters on a daily basis (including Sundays and public holidays), which includes offering domestic refuse collection service to vessels berthed in typhoon shelters, anchorages and small boat anchorage areas. The contractor may deploy more vessels in accordance with the actual needs to clean up marine refuse. The contract for marine refuse cleansing services includes cleaning up floating refuse, collecting domestic refuse from vessels, managing refuse collection points and transporting refuse to landfills for disposal, etc. Since the overall contract cost includes the staffing, expenditure and number of vessels involved in collecting refuse from fishing vessels, locally-licensed vessels and river trade vessels in typhoon shelters, there is no separate breakdown for such items.

MD will continue to closely monitor the cleanliness of Hong Kong waters to ensure the effectiveness of marine cleansing services. The current contract adopts an objective-based specifications, requiring the contractor to maintain the cleanliness of Hong Kong waters at “Good” level during service hours (i.e. between 8:00 am and 6:00 pm daily). A penalty mechanism has also been introduced in the contract so that the contractor’s monthly payment will be deducted in case of contract violation. The contractor is also committed to applying innovative technology in marine refusing cleansing services during the contract period, including the use of remote-controlled equipment to improve service efficiency.

As for the staffing of MD, there are mainly ten Marine Inspector IIs and four patrol launches responsible for the inspection of sea water cleanliness across the territory and monitoring of the performance of the contractor, as well as requiring the contractor to redeploy resources in accordance with the actual needs to address the floating refuse problems in various districts. MD will continue to monitor and regularly review the effectiveness of marine refuse cleansing and disposal work, so as to ensure its cost-effectiveness and service quality.

- (b) Currently, the marine refuse cleansing contractor of MD has refuse collection boats stationed in major typhoon shelters such as Sam Ka Tsuen, Shau Kei Wan, Causeway Bay, To Kwa Wan, New Yau Ma Tei, Tuen Mun, Sai Kung, Cheung Chau and Shuen Wan for collecting refuse from vessels at those typhoon shelters at least once a day. The refuse collection boats of the contractor generally sail through the typhoon shelters in the morning period to collect refuse from vessels. Vessels berthed in the typhoon shelters may also make calls to MD or the contractor for arranging refuse collection service. Since the end of 2015, the frequency of collecting refuse from vessels in Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter has been increased to twice a day, i.e. once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

- (c) Apart from the 24-hour hotlines (2385 2791 or 2385 2792) manned by duty officers, MD's contractor has set up a hotline (3527 3929) to facilitate the arrangements for refuse collection service. At meetings before fishing moratorium and Chinese New Year, MD will also inform those in need, via the attending representatives of various organisations, of the available channels to provide information by email (admpcu@mardep.gov.hk) or by fax (2543 6877) for arranging refuse collection service. MD will continuously monitor the use of the various existing notification channels.
- (d) The quantities of marine refuse (including floating refuse, refuse collected from ships, and refuse collected from locally-licensed vessels and river trade vessels) collected in the past three years are as follows:

2020

Month	Floating refuse (in tonnes)#	Refuse collected from ships (in tonnes)#	Refuse collected from locally-licensed vessels and river trade vessels (in tonnes)#
January	767.1	209.4	181.4
February	737.6	194.9	169.4
March	804.8	208.1	177.3
April	829.7	200.6	171.8
May	891.9	207.7	189.8
June	988.8	198.9	187.8
July	1 021.8	209.1	196.0
August	1 023.6	194.6	175.0
September	981.8	202.2	172.9
October	811.1	195.3	158.3
November	764.4	201.3	164.9
December	704.2	209.1	155.6
Full year	10 326.8	2 431.2	2 100.2

The quantities of marine refuse reported in "tonnes" are estimated by volume instead of actual weight.

2021

Month	Marine refuse collected (in tonnes)*
January	146.5
February	140.8
March	154.9
April	188.1
May	232.7
June	279.4
July	307.0
August	274.2
September	219.0
October	204.1

Month	Marine refuse collected (in tonnes)*
November	169.8
December	180.5
Full year	2 497.0

2022

Month	Marine refuse collected (in tonnes)*
January	192.6
February	111.6
March	146.9
April	171.2
May	241.6
June	396.7
July	371.6
August	314.4
September	228.3
October	180.9
November	162.2
December	144.3
Full year	2 662.3

* In response to the recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee's Report, MD had already used the actual weight (tonnes) to record the disposal of marine refuse in accordance with the practice of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and a new indicator of "marine refuse collected" was adopted in MD's 2022 Controlling Officer's Report; the marine refuse as referred to included marine refuse collected from ships, floating refuse and refuse collected from locally-licensed and river trade vessels by MD. As the marine refuse collected from various districts by the contractor was first delivered to marine refuse collection points for temporary storage before vehicles were arranged to centrally collect and send them to EPD's disposal sites where the actual weight would be measured, MD is therefore unable to estimate the weight of marine refuse collected from each district.

The refuse from locally-licensed vessels and river trade vessels is mainly collected in typhoon shelters, with only a small quantity collected in small boat anchorage areas. MD does not maintain separate statistics on the quantities of refuse collected in individual typhoon shelters and small boat anchorage areas. The quantities of refuse collected in typhoon shelters are therefore not separately accounted for.

- (e) The Government has been maintaining close liaison with Guangdong through the "Hong Kong-Guangdong Marine Environmental Management Special Panel" to continually enhance arrangements for relevant cross-border collaboration and the incident notification mechanism in handling marine refuse and environmental incidents. Since the commencement of operation of the "Notification and alert system on marine refuse" in May 2017, EPD had triggered the mechanism and issued a total of 37 timely notifications to Guangdong due to inclement weather or environmental incidents as of December 2022, so that both parties could deploy resources effectively for better preparation, timely clean-up and follow-up actions. Furthermore, Hong Kong and Guangdong will continue to co-organise coastal

clean-up activities to jointly promote the messages of keeping the shoreline clean and protecting the ocean together.

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