

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**EEB(E)125**

**(Question Serial No. 0185)**

Head: (100) Marine Department

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

Programme: (3) Local Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Marine (Mr S.F. WONG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

Regarding the Marine Department's expenditure on the adoption of technology to enhance marine cleansing efficiency, please advise on the following:

- (a) What are the mandatory requirements on the qualification of tenderers under the existing marine cleansing service contract, such as the number of vessels to be provided, the number of manpower and the frequency of cleansing?
- (b) How does the Government assess the effectiveness of the marine cleansing service providers?
- (c) Among the marine cleansing service contracts awarded in the past 5 years, were there any clauses that encouraged operators to adopt technology to enhance cleansing efficiency? If yes, what were the details? If not, what were the reasons?
- (d) Among the marine cleansing service contracts awarded in the past 5 years, what were the respective expenditures on innovative cleansing technology and equipment as well as manpower costs? Please provide a breakdown by contract item.
- (e) What innovative technologies are currently being adopted for marine cleansing? What are the expenditures involved and their effectiveness?

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 5)

Reply:

- (a) The Marine Department (MD) signed the contracts for marine refuse cleansing and disposal services with the two existing contractors for a term of 3 years, covering the period from 1 October 2025 to 30 September 2028. Under the existing contracts, the contractors are required to provide a fleet of at least 42 vessels in total of various types for marine refuse cleansing and support across the territory to clean up floating refuse in Hong Kong waters on a daily basis (including Sundays and public holidays), which

include offering domestic refuse collection services to vessels berthed in typhoon shelters, anchorages and small boat anchorage areas. Comprising a total of about 140 staff, the contractors' teams provide marine cleansing services including cleaning up floating refuse, collecting domestic refuse from vessels, managing marine refuse collection points and transporting marine refuse to landfills for disposal, etc. The contractors may deploy more vessels and staff in accordance with the actual needs to clean up marine refuse.

- (b) To better monitor the service performance of the contractors, MD has set out standards for different levels of sea surface cleanliness in the marine cleansing service contracts to assess the contractors' performance. When the sea surface cleanliness of a particular area falls below the "Good" level, the contractors are required to deploy vessels to conduct cleansing on site within the specified time limit. In 2025, the marine cleansing service contractors delivered satisfactory services to maintain the sea surface cleanliness of Hong Kong waters at "Good" level on average.
- (c) To promote the adoption of technology for enhancing efficiency, since 2020, MD has included "innovative proposals" as a marking criterion in the tender documents of the marine cleansing service contracts to assess whether tenderers could offer concrete and feasible innovative solutions. The contractors utilised computerised reporting systems to monitor daily fleet operations. They also deployed electric vessels to reduce carbon emissions and used unmanned cleansing tools (such as remote-controlled vessels) to collect floating refuse in near-shore waters. However, due to sea condition factors such as weather, water depth and currents, the use of unmanned cleansing tools has yet to achieve its full potential. Relevant trials were completed in the last contract period.
- (d) Since the overall contract cost covers the services and management provided by the contractors, including daily administration, supervision of cleansing services, maintenance of vessels and equipment, procurement of consumables and spare parts, as well as the marine cleansing work as stipulated in the contracts, there is no separate breakdown for such items.
- (e) In September 2022, MD commissioned the construction of 3 "Sea Cleaner" cleansing vessels through open tender. Designed as multi-functional green vessels, "Sea Cleaner" cleansing vessels are fitted with specialised equipment for effective collection of floating refuse and recovery of oil spills, thereby enhancing cleansing capabilities in various operating environments, such as open waters and typhoon shelters.

The total procurement cost for the 3 vessels was about HK\$178.064 million, with all procurement conducted in accordance with open tender procedures. The contractors operate the vessels on a bareboat charter basis and are responsible for their daily operations and maintenance, while the Government mainly bears the costs of vessel procurement and management. Currently, the 3 vessels are still in their initial stage of operation following delivery to the contractors. Although these vessels are fitted with specialised refuse collection devices, their long-term stability, operational coverage and overall effectiveness in actual operating environment remain subject to further assessment and verification by MD based on the operational data submitted by the contractors.