

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

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Question Serial No.

3166

Head: 82 Buildings Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding the Joint Office which handles public reports about water seepage problems, what are the estimated expenditure, staffing provision, number of cases to be handled, average time required for handling each case, manpower and expenditure involved in the financial year 2013-14? What are the percentage changes compared with the past three financial years (2010-11 to 2012-13)?

Asked by: Hon. TSE Wai-chun, Paul

Reply:

Water seepage in private premises is primarily a matter of building management and maintenance for property owners. However, if the problem of water seepage causes public health nuisance, building structural safety risks or wastage of water, the Government will consider intervention by exercising the relevant statutory powers. To facilitate action, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Buildings Department (BD) have established the Joint Office (JO) as a pilot programme since 2006 to co-ordinate investigation of reports on water seepage and taking of enforcement actions. The programme has been extended for two years from 2012-13, involving provision of 64 professional and technical staff from the BD and an estimated expenditure of about \$23 million per year for engaging outsourced consultants to assist in conducting professional investigation on water seepage cases. The staffing provision from the BD for operation of the JO and the expenditures incurred for engaging consultants to assist in conducting professional investigation on water seepage cases in the past three years are tabulated below:

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Staffing provision from the BD	60	60	64
Expenditures incurred for engaging consultants \$ (million)	28.0	22.5	23.0 (estimate)

The relevant statistics on the number of reports on water seepage received and handled by the JO in the past three years are tabulated below:

Number of Cases	2010	2011	2012
Reports received ^{Note}	25 717	23 660	27 353
Reports handled	22 971	23 210	24 553

Note : As there is a lapse of time between receipt of a report and completion of handling a report, the number of reports processed in a year does not necessarily correspond to the number of reports received in that year.

The JO has not kept statistics on the average handling time for individual water seepage cases.

It is estimated that the JO will receive about 27 000 reports on water seepage in 2013.

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