

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY****DEVB(PL)268****(Question Serial No. 3595)**

Head: (82) Buildings Department

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

Programme: (1) Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings (HUI Siu-wai)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

In 2015-2016, what are the estimated manpower and departmental expenditure for the Joint Office (JO) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Buildings Department (BD) responsible for co-ordinating reports on water seepage, and what are the details of engaging outsourced consultants? What are the percentage changes as compared with 2014-2015?

In 2014-2015, regarding the service of outsourced consultants which cost \$244,000, how many suspected water seepage cases were investigated? What was the cost of investigation per case?

What are the estimated percentage changes of the above provision, number of cases investigated and cost in the financial year of 2015-2016?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (Member Question No. 54)

Reply:

The staff establishment and the expenditures of the Buildings Department for the operation of the Joint Office (JO) with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in 2014-15 and 2015-16 are tabulated below –

	2014-15	2015-16	Change (%)
Number of professional and technical staff	64	64	0%
Staff cost and departmental expenses (\$ million)	28 (estimated)	30 (estimated)	+7.1%
Expenditure for engaging outsourced consultants (\$ million)	26 (estimated)	25 (estimated)	-3.9%

In general, there are three stages in the investigation of a water seepage case conducted by the Joint Office (JO). Stage I (confirming the existence of water seepage nuisance) and Stage II (initial investigation) are carried out by the staff of the JO. Where the source of seepage cannot be identified in Stage II, Stage III (professional investigation) will be required. In Stage III, an outsourced consultant is engaged to assist in conducting detailed investigation including the carrying out of water ponding test, water spray test, etc. to identify the source of seepage. The staff of the JO act as the overall coordinator in Stage III and undertake subsequent enforcement actions, such as issuing nuisance notice and instigating prosecutions.

The JO does not compile separate statistics on the number of cases concluded at different stages of investigation or the number of cases involving outsourced consultants. Therefore the JO is not able to provide the investigation cost of different cases.

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