

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

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(Question Serial No. 1635)

Head: (82) Buildings Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (1) Buildings and Building Works
Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings (CHEUNG Tin-cheung)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding the Joint Office for Investigation of Water Seepage Complaints (JO) under the Buildings Department and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, please inform this Committee of the following:

- (1) the number and percentage of cases outsourced by JO to private investigation companies using infrared thermography or microwave tomography in 2018-19 out of the number of requests for assistance received, and the total costs of such outsourcing;
- (2) the estimates for outsourcing investigation work in 2019-20.

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (LegCo internal reference no.: 65)

Reply:

- (1) Investigation of water seepage cases is carried out by the Joint Office (JO) set up by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Buildings Department (BD) in three stages. Generally speaking, JO staff would carry out initial investigation of the source of seepage, including coloured water test for drainage pipes. In case the initial investigation cannot identify the source of seepage, professional investigation by outsourced consultants is required.

Since the second half of June 2018, new testing technologies (i.e. infrared thermography and microwave tomography) have been adopted by outsourced consultants when conducting professional investigation in three pilot districts (i.e. Kowloon City, Wanchai and Central and Western) as far as practicable. However, in cases whereby these new testing technologies cannot be effectively applied due to, for example, spalling of concrete ceilings at the locations of water seepage, blockage of pipes and other facilities, the outsourced consultants have to continue to employ the conventional tests.

In 2018, conventional tests including colour water tests for drainage pipes were conducted for 13 650 cases, of which 9 716 cases required professional investigation. Among these 9 716 cases, 92 cases had adopted new testing technologies in the investigation. In 2018-19, the estimated expenditure for engaging outsourced consultants for professional investigation is around \$36 million. BD does not compile statistics on the total cost of water seepage investigation using new technologies alone.

- (2) In 2019-20, the estimated expenditure for engaging outsourced consultants for professional investigation is around \$52.8 million.

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