

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

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**(Question Serial No. 2443)**

Head: (82) Buildings Department

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

Programme: (1) Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings (YU Tak-cheung)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding the Joint Office for Investigation of Water Seepage Complaints (JO) under the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Buildings Department:

- (1) What are the number and percentage of cases outsourced by JO to private companies using infrared thermography or microwave tomography in 2019-20 out of the number of requests for assistance received, and the total costs of such outsourcing services?
- (2) What are the estimates for outsourcing investigation work in 2020-21?
- (3) At present, what is the cost of using infrared thermography and microwave tomography in investigation per case?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (LegCo internal reference no.: 14)

Reply:

- (1) Investigation of reports on water seepage in buildings is carried out by the Joint Office (JO) set up by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Buildings Department (BD). Generally speaking, JO staff would carry out initial investigation of the source of seepage, including colour water test of drainage pipes. In cases where the source of seepage cannot be identified by the initial investigation, professional investigation will be carried out with the assistance of outsourced consultants.

Since the second half of June 2018, JO has applied new testing technologies such as infrared thermography (IT) and microwave tomography (MT) in professional investigation in three pilot districts (i.e. Kowloon City, Wanchai and Central and Western), where applicable. With the experience gained and data obtained through pilot application of the new testing technologies, JO has since September 2019 extended the new testing technologies to another five districts (i.e. Sham Shui Po, Kwai Tsing, Tuen Mun, Tai Po and the North District). 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 2019, JO completed the investigation of 14 229 cases with the results concluded, among which 10 078 cases required professional investigation. Out of the 10 078 cases, 620 cases adopted new testing technologies in the investigation. In 2019-20, the estimated expenditure for engaging outsourced consultants for professional investigation is around \$26 million. BD does not compile statistics on the total cost of water seepage investigation using new technologies alone.

- (2) In 2020-21, the estimated expenditure for engaging outsourced consultants for professional investigation is around \$42.5 million.
- (3) Taking an ordinary domestic flat with one kitchen and one toilet as an example, the cost for engaging an outsourced consultant to adopt IT and MT in carrying out professional investigation of a water seepage report is estimated to be around \$8,000 under the current contracts. The estimate does not include the overall staffing and operating expenditure of the JO.