

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**DEVB(PL)100**

**(Question Serial No. 1918)**

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:

It is mentioned in paragraph 6 that the Government launched a one-off special operation to inspect external drainage systems of all private residential and composite buildings exceeding three storeys. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. Please list the total number of private residential and composite buildings which fit the definition given by the Government and provide a breakdown by District Council district.
2. For implementation of the initiative, has the Government set the timetable for inspection and determined the order of priority? What are the details?
3. What are the manpower and expenditure involved in this initiative?
4. Those buildings which fit the definition of private residential and composite buildings with defective drainage systems are mainly old buildings without owners' corporations. What measures will be taken by the Government to assist the building owners concerned to support the enforcement actions? If so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 13)

Reply:

1. With funding from the Anti-epidemic Fund (AEF), the Buildings Department (BD) has engaged consultancy firms to undertake this one-off special scheme to inspect the external drainage systems of all private residential or composite buildings exceeding three storeys in height (the inspection scheme). The funding for the inspection scheme under the AEF is outside the scope of the Appropriation Bill or the estimates of the

General Revenue Account. The inspection scheme covers the inspection of external drainage systems of around 20 000 private residential or composite buildings across the territory. The numbers of target buildings covered in the inspection scheme by districts are tabulated below –

<b>District</b>	<b>Number of target buildings</b>
Central & Western	2 143
Eastern	1 402
Southern	1 199
Wan Chai	1 554
Kowloon City	2 535
Kwun Tong	464
Sham Shui Po	1 777
Yau Tsim Mong	2 402
Wong Tai Sin	343
Islands	414
Kwai Tsing	291
North	610
Sai Kung	549
Sha Tin	870
Tai Po	1 348
Tsuen Wan	642
Tuen Mun	642
Yuen Long	971
<b>Total</b>	<b>20 156</b>

2. The inspection scheme, launched in June 2020, is expected to complete in 24 months. During the implementation, priority has been/will be given to buildings situated in the specified areas subject to the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation as well as those covered by compulsory testing notices.
3. A total of 38 BD staff comprising professional, technical and clerical grade officers are required to implement the inspection scheme and take follow-up and enforcement actions under the Buildings Ordinance. \$300 million has been earmarked under the AEF for the inspection scheme.
4. Owners should take primary responsibility for the proper maintenance of their properties. Nevertheless, the Government recognises that some owners may have genuine difficulties in fulfilling their responsibility in maintaining their properties due to lack of financial means, technical knowledge and/or organisation ability. Therefore,

apart from taking enforcement action to ensure that building owners would discharge their statutory responsibilities, the Government has stepped up public education and publicity and has also provided financial assistance to owners of private buildings to maintain and repair their buildings, including building drainage systems, through various assistance and loan schemes. Such assistance and loan schemes include the Operation Building Bright 2.0 (OBB 2.0), the Building Maintenance Grant Scheme for Needy Owners, the Building Safety Loan Scheme, and Urban Renewal Authority (URA)'s Home Renovation Interest-free Loan and the Common Area Repair Works Subsidy.

In addition, the Government has proposed in the Appropriation Bill 2021-22 to set aside \$1 billion for a new Building Drainage System Repair Subsidy Scheme (DRS) to subsidise owners of private residential and composite buildings aged 40 or above with lower average rateable values in repairing or upgrading the drains of their buildings.

To facilitate owners to apply the various assistance schemes above, URA has launched an all-in-one Integrated Building Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme (IBRAS). Under the IBRAS, owners can simply complete one set of application forms for multiple applications by those who meet the eligibility criteria of the respective assistance schemes. During the inspection, staff of BD's consultancy firms distribute pamphlets and posters to the owners, which contain information of IBRAS and the relevant assistance schemes. BD's consultancy firms also set up hotlines under the inspection scheme to answer owners' enquiries including those on the assistance schemes. If owners encounter difficulties in complying with BD's enforcement actions on investigation and repair of their buildings, BD's in-house social services teams would outreach and take care of their financial, psychological and social needs, including assisting them in applying for the respective assistance schemes according to their eligibility.

In addition, for both OBB 2.0 and DRS, apart from accepting applications from owners of eligible buildings, BD may on risk basis select target buildings and carry out requisite works in default of owners for compliance of outstanding statutory order(s) for the common drains of the buildings or outstanding statutory notice(s) for Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme and seek to recover the cost from owners concerned afterwards. Eligible owners may also benefit from both schemes.

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