

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)126

(Question Serial No. 0893)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (3) Market Management and Hawker Control
Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume I Page 252 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 31):

Under this programme, it is mentioned that the Department will “continue to take forward the assistance scheme for hawker licensees to improve the fire safety and operating environment of fixed-pitch hawker areas”. Please advise on the details and progress of the scheme, as well as the estimated expenditure and manpower involved.

Asked by: Hon. HO Chun-yin, Steven

Reply:

The Finance Committee approved in March 2013 a financial commitment of \$230 million for launching a five-year assistance scheme for some 4 300 licensed fixed-pitch hawkers operating in 43 hawker areas (“the Assistance Scheme”). The Assistance Scheme, which commenced on 3 June 2013, aims to provide one-off financial assistance to hawkers in the hawker areas for stall reconstruction and relocation in order to expedite the work of reducing fire risks in those areas. Besides, an ex-gratia payment (“EGP”) is offered under the Assistance Scheme for voluntary surrender of hawker licences. This would help expedite the release of vacant pitches and facilitate the relocation of stalls which pose higher fire risks. Specifically, the Assistance Scheme has the following features –

- (a) hawkers who are required by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (“the Department”) to relocate their stalls to new pitch spaces for fire safety reasons may apply for a one-off relocation grant;
- (b) hawkers who are not required to relocate their stalls under (a) may apply for a one-off reconstruction grant to carry out partial or full reconstruction of their stalls in-situ for reducing fire risks; and
- (c) an EGP will be paid to hawkers (except those whose licences are newly issued pursuant to the hawker licensing policy review in 2008-09) who opt for voluntary surrender of their hawker licences to the Government.

A summary of the package under the Assistance Scheme is at Annex.

As at 28 February 2014, the Department has received 261 applications from eligible hawkers for EGP on surrendering of hawker licences, 46 of which were from hawkers whose stalls were located directly in front of building staircase discharge points and required to be relocated (“relocatees”). Further, 167 relocatees have reached agreement with the Department on relocation arrangements. In other words, the Department has so far handled over 40% of the some 500 cases requiring relocation. Besides, the Department has also received 93 applications for in-situ reconstruction grant.

Regarding manpower, 13 civil service posts for five years starting from 2013-14 have been allocated for implementing the Assistance Scheme, with 4 non-civil service contract staff providing support. The total estimated staff expenditure is about \$33 million for five years.

**Amount of Grant/Ex-gratia Payment (EGP) under
the Assistance Scheme for Hawkers in Fixed-pitch Hawker Areas**

Type	Size	Maximum Grant		EGP for Voluntary Surrender of Licence
		In-situ Reconstruction	Relocation	
“Cabinet-type” Hawker Stalls	Not exceeding 1.1 m ²	\$40,000	\$50,000	\$120,000
	Exceeding 1.1 m ² but not exceeding 1.7 m ²	\$47,000	\$57,000	
	Exceeding 1.7 m ² but not exceeding 2.2 m ²	\$54,000	\$64,000	
Hawker Permitted Place Hawker Stalls	Not exceeding 1.1 m ²	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$120,000
	Exceeding 1.1 m ² but not exceeding 1.7 m ²	\$23,500	\$33,500	
	Exceeding 1.7 m ² but not exceeding 2.2 m ²	\$27,000	\$37,000	