

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)172

(Question Serial No. 0764)

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

Question:

During 2017-18, the Food and Health Bureau (Food Branch) will implement the assistance scheme for improving the fire safety and operating environment of fixed-pitch hawker areas. In this connection, please advise on the following:

1. whether sufficient consultation and negotiation have been conducted with the stakeholders; if yes, the details; if not, the reason(s); and
2. details of the assistance scheme and the implementation schedule.

Asked by: Hon SHIU Ka-fai (Member Question No. 6)

Reply:

The Finance Committee approved in March 2013 a financial commitment of \$230 million for launching a five-year Hawker Assistance Scheme (the Scheme) for some 4 300 licensed fixed-pitch hawkers operating in 43 hawker areas. The 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 Scheme for voluntary surrender of hawker licences to the Government. This would help expedite the release of vacant pitches and facilitate the relocation of stalls which pose higher fire risks. Specifically, the 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 Scheme is at Annex.

In the past 3 years and 8 months, the Department has positively engaged hawker associations, hawker representatives, local District Council members and every individual hawker in each of the 43 hawker areas in 356 special forums and 106 Hawker Management Consultative Committee meetings. Stakeholders were clearly briefed of the Scheme and the relevant details, including stall reconstruction specifications, reasons for relocating the stalls which are situated directly in front of staircase discharge points of buildings or which may obstruct the operation of fire engines or other emergency vehicles, as well as stall relocation and reconstruction proposals. We listened and responded to their views on the hawker relocation proposals and endeavoured to identify areas which could bring about enhancement to the hawking environment in the hawker areas. This included rationalising the overall layout of the concerned hawker areas where circumstances permit and enhancing safety of the fixed electrical installations to hawker stalls. The Department also reported the progress to the respective District Committees on 16 occasions and the LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene in December 2015.

We have made good progress in implementing the Scheme since its launch in June 2013. All 499 hawkers whose stalls were located directly in front of staircase discharge points of adjacent building, or obstructing the operation of fire engines or other emergency vehicular access have vacated their pitches. As at 28 February 2017, among the 4 326 hawkers in the 43 hawker areas, 721 hawkers have applied for voluntary surrender of licence for EGP. For the remaining 3 605 hawkers, 2 833 have applied for reconstruction grant and 2 239 of them have completed reconstruction of their stalls to meet the fire-resisting specifications. 772 hawkers have yet to apply for financial assistance under the Scheme. The Department would continue to follow up with the remaining hawker stalls and encourage hawkers to reconstruct their stall structures to meet the required specifications before the Scheme expires in June 2018.

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

Type	Stall Size	Maximum Grant		EGP for Voluntary Surrender of Licence
		In-situ Reconstruction	Relocation cum Reconstruction	
“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 Places 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	