

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**EEB(F)145**

**(Question Serial No. 0957)**

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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

Programme: (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Ms Irene YOUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

In 2022, a media report titled “Slacking-off Rodent Control Workers Unmasked for Cigarettes” revealed the sluggish work performance of outsourced rodent control workers of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. Please advise this Committee of:

- (1) whether the Department has plans to outsource rodent control work in the new financial year; if yes, the details, estimated expenditure involved and rate of change as compared with the previous financial year; and
- (2) the measures employed to monitor the efficiency and performance in respect of outsourced work, so as to ensure the proper use of public funds.

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (LegCo internal reference no.: 34)

Reply:

- (1) In 2023-24, the number of outsourced pest control service contracts of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will be maintained at 25, and the contract periods for all such contracts are 3 years. Services that the contractors are required to provide for the Department include the prevention and control of mosquitoes, rodents and other arthropod pests with medical importance. As for rodent control, provisions are made in the contracts to require the contractors to conduct rodent infestation assessment and implement rodent prevention and control work in the service areas, such as trapping, poisonous baiting, filling rat holes and clearing refuse and junks.

For the outsourced pest control service contracts, the estimated expenditure for 2023-24 is \$449.1 million, and the revised estimate for 2022-23 is \$448.7 million.

- (2) The Department endeavours to enhance the management mechanism for outsourced contractors so as to monitor the performance of its contractors, including the pest control service contractors. Performance standards for the contractors are clearly stipulated in the pest control service contracts. Staff of the Department will monitor the contractors' compliance with the contract provisions in service delivery in accordance with the

operational manual for management of contracts and by means of site inspections, surprise checks, examination of job records, etc. In the event of any irregularities, defaults or non-compliance with contract provisions in the delivery of services, the Department will take follow-up actions, including the issuance of verbal warnings, written warnings and default notices coupled with deduction of monthly payments. Such performance records will also have a bearing on the tenderers' future bidding for the Department's outsourced service contracts.

The numbers of verbal warnings, written warnings and default notices issued to contractors by the Department in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of verbal warnings</b>	<b>Number of written warnings</b>	<b>Number of default notices</b>
2020	311	25	262
2021	573	33	441
2022	1 074	11	329

- End -