

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**EEB(F)095**

**(Question Serial No. 1742)**

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

There are views that the investigation efficiency of the Joint Offices for Investigation of Water Seepage Complaints (JO) needs to be improved and the investigation for water seepage cases in buildings is slow. Sometimes, even when the water seepage case has been established, the source could not be identified. In this connection, please advise this Committee of:

- (1) the expenditure of JO in each of the past 3 years; and
- (2) whether the Government will consider allocating more resources to enhance the current testing measures.

Asked by: Hon LAM Shun-chiu, Dennis (LegCo internal reference no.: 19)

Reply:

- (1) Expenditure of the Joint Office (JO) set up by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the Buildings Department (BD) for the investigation of water seepage cases in buildings in each of the past 3 years is as follows:

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
<b>FEHD</b>			
Staff costs and departmental expenses (\$ million)	202.6	192.1	195.9 (Revised estimate)
<b>BD</b>			
Staff costs and departmental expenses (\$ million)	64.9	66.8	82.7 (Revised estimate)
Expenditure for engaging outsourced consultants (\$ million)	47.4	38.4	45.0 (Revised estimate)

- (2) Since June 2018, JO has applied new testing technologies, such as infrared thermography and microwave tomography, in professional investigation in selected pilot districts where applicable, with a view to identifying the source of water seepage

more effectively. With the experience gained and data obtained in the pilot application, JO has extended the use of these technologies to a total of 14 districts as at December 2023. JO will continue to use the new testing technologies effectively to identify the source of water seepage. Depending on the availability of relevant service providers in the market, JO will gradually extend the use of these technologies to more districts.

In addition, since mid-September 2023, JO has implemented a new set of investigation procedures in 4 districts on a trial basis. After completion of Stage I investigation, it will carry out at the same time Stage II initial investigation and Stage III professional investigation, which are originally conducted sequentially, to see whether the target investigation time required for applicable cases can be reduced by 30% from 90 to approximately 60 working days. JO will continue to optimise and streamline its work procedures to expedite the handling of water seepage cases.

JO will review the resource and manpower arrangements in a timely manner, and deploy them flexibly to meet actual operational needs.

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