



40/F, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong
香港灣仔告士打道 5 號稅務大樓 40 樓

ACE Paper 17/2006
For information

**Update on the Progress of the Key Initiatives in the
“Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014)”**

PURPOSE

This paper presents an update on the progress of the key initiatives in the “Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014)” (Policy Framework).

BACKGROUND

2. In December 2005, the Administration published the Policy Framework to set out a comprehensive strategy to tackle our imminent waste problem in the next ten years. The Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE) has tasked its Waste Management Subcommittee to monitor the progress of the key initiatives in the Policy Framework.

KEY INITIATIVES IN THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

Source Separation of Domestic Waste Programme

3. As of June 2006, 361 housing estates have signed up to join the programme (covering 455,000 households and some 1,500,000 people). Out of these estates, 180 housing estates have committed to implement a floor-to-floor mode of waste separation. The remaining 181 housing estates have set up waste separation facilities on ground floor to collect different types of recyclables. Among the housing estates that have implemented floor-to-floor waste separation, more than half of them have reported encouraging results, with an overall 54% increase in the quantity of recyclables collected and a 3% to 4% reduction in the waste disposed of. The results of other participating estates are being collected for further assessment.

Producer Responsibility Schemes (PRSs)

4. We have proposed in the Policy Framework to introduce the Product

Eco-responsibility Bill in 2006 so as to provide a legal framework for implementing PRSs. The Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Environmental Affairs discussed the proposed legislative approach in April 2006. While supporting the implementation of PRSs in principle, LegCo Members would like to know the details of individual schemes as early as possible. We would take into account the views of LegCo Members as we proceed.

5. With regards to the PRS on plastic shopping bags, the Financial Secretary has proposed in his latest Budget Speech to introduce legislation to prohibit the free distribution of plastic shopping bags and to levy a tax to deter their indiscriminate use. We have engaged a consultant to conduct a regulatory impact assessment of such a scheme and will consult the public in due course. On the voluntary front, eight major retail chains¹, including the three largest supermarkets in Hong Kong, have respectively entered into a Voluntary Agreement on Plastic Bag Reduction with the Government. They have pledged to reduce over 100 million plastic shopping bags in total in a year.

6. We are also examining possible schemes and regulatory measures for the PRSs on vehicle tyres and waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE). With regard to vehicle tyres, we intend to levy a fee to support waste tyre management and require the relevant industry to undertake recovery and recycling of waste tyres. For WEEE, we are considering to focus the PRS initially on key products like personal computers and large household appliances, and to extend the list to cover more equipment at a later stage.

Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Charging

7. The proposed MSW charging scheme is a key policy initiative for waste reduction. In accordance with the principle of “polluter pays”, a variable rate charging scheme is preferred. In designing a variable rate charging scheme, we consider it necessary to conduct a trial scheme to study the logistical arrangement of a variable rate charging scheme under different housing settings. We will invite some 20 housing estates to join the trial scheme, and “designated bags” will be distributed to the households. We will also include the use of “food waste bags” in the trial scheme for a few selected housing estates to examine the feasibility of source separation of food waste. The trial scheme will commence in late 2006.

EcoPark and Land Policy

8. The 20-hectare EcoPark site in Tuen Mun Area 38 was rezoned to “Other Specified Uses (Resource Recovery Park)” under the Town Planning Ordinance in February 2006. In March 2006, we invited expressions of interest from the recycling and environmental trade to set up their businesses in the EcoPark. More than 50 submissions were received. They provided useful information for the further

¹ Wellcome, PARKnSHOP, China Resources Vanguard, Watson's, Mannings, Pricerite, DCH Food Marts and A-1 Bakery.

planning of the EcoPark. The construction of the basic infrastructure and facilities for the EcoPark started in July 2006 under a contract of \$257 million in value. We are now calling tenders for the management and maintenance of the EcoPark, with a view to appointing an operator in September 2006. In addition, tenancy agreements are being drafted for priority recycling and environmental industries in the Phase I lots, which will start to be leased out towards the end of this year.

9. Regarding short-term tenancies (STT), three more sites in East Kowloon and Tseung Kwan O have been leased to local recyclers, making a cumulative total of 32 STT sites with an aggregate area of 6.4 hectares leased exclusively to the recycling trade.

Green Procurement

10. We organized a green management seminar in June 2006 for relevant colleagues in various bureaux and departments. We have identified green specifications for a certain number of products commonly purchased by bureaux and departments under their direct purchase authority. We are devising a pilot scheme to encourage colleagues to include the green specifications when they procure these products.

Funding for Recycling Technology Projects

11. The Waste Management Subcommittee has issued letters to the vetting committees of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Fund, the Innovation and Technology Fund, the Environment and Conservation Fund, the Sustainable Development Fund and the Quality Education Fund to appeal for their support on waste management projects. Some vetting committees have responded positively.

Landfill Extensions and Landfill Disposal Bans

12. The feasibility/EIA studies for North East New Territories (NENT) and South East New Territories (SENT) Landfill extensions are in progress. For NENT Landfill extension, the study is at its late stage and the EIA Report will be ready for public exhibition and ACE's consideration in late 2006. We are also finalizing the consultancy brief for the feasibility/EIA study for West New Territories (WENT) Landfill extension. It is envisaged that the study can be commissioned in early 2007. The introduction of landfill disposal bans for specific types of waste and untreated municipal solid waste will tie in with the implementation of PRSs and the commissioning of the Integrated Waste Management Facilities respectively.

Integrated Waste Management Facilities (IWMF)

13. To achieve bulk reduction of unavoidable MSW, we propose to develop the IWMF in phases, with a view to commissioning the first phase in mid 2010s. An ACE delegation conducted a study tour in the Netherlands and Germany in March

2006 to obtain first hand knowledge on the experience of these countries in MSW management. Based on the recommendations of the delegation, we have refined the proposed technologies to be adopted for developing the IWMF. The treatment technologies will include biological treatment for source-separated biodegradable waste, mechanical sorting and recycling of clean mixed recyclables, and thermal treatment with state-of-the-art incineration possessing waste-to-energy opportunities. The scale and technologies of the IWMF were discussed at the meeting of the Waste Management Subcommittee in July 2006, and a site search exercise will start shortly.

PUBLIC EDUCATION PLAN FOR THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

14. The Waste Management Subcommittee considered that a public education plan was important to generate broad-based support for the key initiatives in the Policy Framework. A Brainstorming Session was therefore held in June 2006 with green groups and relevant stakeholders to develop a public education plan. A Subcommittee meeting was subsequently held in July 2006 to follow up on the subject.

15. After taking into account of the views and suggestions at the Brainstorming Session, the Subcommittee generally agreed on the Public Education Plan at Annex. The Subcommittee stressed that the projects under the Plan should aid the implementation of the key initiatives in the Policy Framework, and special consideration should be given to the sustainability, continuity and synergy of the projects. In order to implement the Plan, the Subcommittee agreed that the Administration should seek dedicated funding from the Environment and Conservation Fund.

CONCLUSION

16. Members are invited to note the update on the progress of the key initiatives in the Policy Framework.

**Environmental Protection Department
August 2006**