

Index Page

Replies to initial written questions raised by Legislative Council Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2022-23

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Development

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Reply Serial No.	Question Serial No.	Name of Member	Head	Programme
SV-DEVB(W)001	SV018	CHAN Hok-fung	159	(3) Greening, Landscape and Tree Management
SV-DEVB(W)002	SV019	TSE Wai-chuen, Tony	25	(3) Facilities Development
S-DEVB(W)001	S039	WONG Yuen-shan	159	(5) Project Strategy and Governance

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SV-DEVB(W)001

(Question Serial No. SV018)

Head: (159) Government Secretariat: Development Bureau
(Works Branch)

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (3) Greening, Landscape and Tree Management

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Development (Works) (Ricky C K LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

The current distribution of *Acacia confusa* in Hong Kong, and the number of senescent *Acacia confusa* in need of replacement.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hok-fung

Reply:

As early as the 1950s and 1960s, the Government chose to plant fast-growing exotic species such as *Acacia confusa* (Acacia) to reduce soil erosion and effectively prevent landslides. In view of the fact that these Acacia trees have already started entering senescence, tree management departments, in their routine tree maintenance and tree risk assessment work, will remove those that are in senescence, structurally unstable or poor health conditions with potential risk of failure, and plant suitable native tree species having regard to environmental conditions.

Considering the substantial number of Acacia on roadside slopes, the Highways Department has implemented the “Succeed Sustain Slopescape” Enhancement of Vegetated Slopes Programme since 2016. Under the Programme, Acacia trees that are in senescence, with structural and health problems, are removed in a systematic and orderly manner, and are replenished by native plants with higher ornamental value, such as *Liquidambar formosana* with red leaves in autumn, *Sterculia lanceolata* with red fruits, as well as *Viburnum odoratissimum* with yellow and white flowers, to enhance road safety and improve roadside landscape and its ecological value, so as to achieve sustainable development.

According to records on the Development Bureau's Tree Management Common Platform, the number of Acacia in areas of high pedestrian and vehicular flow has decreased from about 96 000 in late 2017 to around 54 000 in late March 2022. As at 31 March 2022, the distribution of Acacia is set out below:

Core tree management department	Distribution of Acacia in high pedestrian and vehicular flow areas			Total
	Hong Kong	Kowloon	New Territories	
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department	254	110	3 374	3 738
Architectural Services Department	576	886	10 492	11 954
Civil Engineering and Development Department	1	16	27	44
Drainage Services Department	0	0	2	2
Highways Department	7 256	9 272	6 243	22 771
Housing Department	547	3 780	1 350	5 677
Leisure and Cultural Services Department	679	1 810	7 437	9 926
Water Supplies Department	40	26	76	142

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SV-DEVB(W)002****(Question Serial No. SV019)**Head: (25) Architectural Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): Not specifiedProgramme: (3) Facilities DevelopmentControlling Officer: Director of Architectural Services (Winnie HO Wing-yin)Director of Bureau: Secretary for DevelopmentQuestion:

Please provide a list of works projects expected by the Architectural Services Department to be undertaken by Band 3 architectural consultants in 2022-23.

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chuen, Tony (LegCo internal reference no.: 29)Reply:

To facilitate the participation of more small and medium enterprise consultants in public works projects, the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) has invited Band 3 architectural consultants to undertake the design work for suitable projects through various means in recent years. The ArchSD not only engages Band 3 architectural consultants either directly or via request to contractors and consultancy firms, but also co-organises open design competitions with other government departments, so that more Band 3 architectural consultants and young professionals can be engaged in government works projects to enrich their experiences.

Over the past 3 years, Band 3 architectural consultants have been engaged in 30 works projects which include “design-and-build” works projects and “first design then build” projects, as well as some minor works projects.

The works projects to be undertaken by Band 3 architectural consultants in 2022-23 as planned by the ArchSD are tabulated as follows:

	Project Titles
1.	Kwun Tong Composite Development Project
2.	Expansion of the Legislative Council Complex
3.	Redevelopment of Western Police Married Quarters
4.	District open space, sports centre and public vehicle park at Sze Mei Street
5.	Construction of a District Court Building at Caroline Hill Road
6.	Kong Nga Po Police Training Facilities
7.	Construction of a new public market in Tin Shui Wai

8.	Redevelopment of Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre
9.	Leisure and cultural complex in Tin Yip Road, Tin Shui Wai
10.	Transformation of public play space in Sha Tin Park (Children's Playground at South Garden)
11.	Reprovisioning of Ho Pui Tsuen Public Toilet at Yuen Long
12.	Reprovisioning of A Kung Ngam Village Road Public Toilet at Shau Kei Wan
13.	Transformation of public play space in To Kwa Wan Recreation Ground
14.	Transformation of public play space in Tsuen Wan Park (Phase II)
15.	Conversion of Wai Ha Village Public Toilet in Tai Po
16.	Reprovisioning of Oil Street Refuse Collection Point, North Point
17.	Viewing platform overlooking Po Pin Chau and associated hiking facilities near the East Dam at Sai Kung East Country Park

Government departments other than the ArchSD also provide participation opportunities for Band 3 architectural consultants through various means. For example, over the past 3 years, more than 10 projects approved under the Funding Scheme to Support the Use of Vacant Government Sites by Non-government Organisations, and the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme launched by the Development Bureau have been undertaken by Band 3 architectural consultants, which have also been engaged in the design work for the transformation of public play space projects undertaken by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. S039)

Head: (159) Government Secretariat: Development Bureau
(Works Branch)

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (5) Project Strategy and Governance

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Development (Works) (Ricky C K LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

In order to meet the challenges such as manpower shortage in the construction industry and high construction cost, the Government has been actively promoting the adoption of Modular Integrated Construction (MiC) in recent years. Although it is mentioned in the Government's reply that the adoption of MiC can reduce the construction time by 30 to 50%, the construction method has not yet been applied in housing development on a large scale.

In fact, the Housing Authority and the Construction Industry Council have completed a number of studies, site visits and mock-ups since 2018, they have specifically pointed out that there are many hindrances to the adoption of MiC in the industry. Apart from the high cost as a result of the lack of local prefabrication yards, the hindrances also include challenges such as design application, quality supervision, logistic arrangement and site constraints. For example, due to the large size of modules, application for a Wide Load Permit and submission of a traffic impact assessment report are required for transportation processes. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. Has the Government made reference to the findings of the above studies? How will the above difficulties be addressed?
2. Apart from the provision of the concession of floor area, will the Government formulate a holistic policy for the wide adoption of MiC, such as relaxation of transport restrictions, streamlining of the relevant approval procedures, promotion of local production of modules, or according top priority to MiC among other construction methods?
3. Will the Government consider setting the objectives and blueprint for enhancing the productivity of the construction industry in the future?

Asked by: Hon WONG Yuen-shan

Reply:

The construction industry in Hong Kong has been facing challenges, including manpower shortage, declining productivity, high construction cost, etc. Through the three pillars of

innovation, professionalisation and revitalisation under Construction 2.0, the Government is committed to boosting the productivity, cost-effectiveness and overall performance of the construction industry.

The Government has been actively promoting the adoption of the Modular Integrated Construction (MiC). Furthermore, the Government has been taking the lead in piloting MiC in public projects, with a view to leading the industry in this regard. According to the University of Hong Kong's study on MiC pilot projects, the adoption of MiC can reduce construction time by about 30% to 50 %, uplift on-site productivity by 100% to 400% save construction costs by at least 10% and has better performance in terms of workmanship, environmental protection and safety aspects than those using traditional construction method.

As MiC can help shortening construction time substantially and addressing the problem of manpower shortage in the construction industry effectively, a number of public and non-governmental organisations, including the Hong Kong Housing Authority, Hong Kong Housing Society, Urban Renewal Authority, Hospital Authority, etc. have also started to adopt or pilot MiC. At present, over 70 projects in both private and public sectors have or will adopt MiC.

Our reply to Hon WONG Yuen-shan's question is as follows:

(1) and (2)

The Government has been actively promoting the adoption of MiC. Apart from making reference to the relevant international experience and local studies conducted by organisations such as the Housing Authority and the Construction Industry Council (CIC), the Development Bureau (DEVB) has also conducted in-depth studies on various challenges faced by the industry and developed solutions accordingly. Since 2018, we have implemented a number of pilot projects adopting MiC, including the InnoCell in Hong Kong Science Park in Tai Po and the Disciplined Services Quarters for the Fire Services Department at Pak Shing Kok in Tseung Kwan O, with a view to understanding the actual circumstances in the course of construction. The satisfactory completion of these pilot projects illustrates that technical difficulties encountered in the adoption of MiC are surmountable. Besides, the University of Hong Kong's study further establishes that projects adopting MiC have very good performance in productivity, construction time, cost-effectiveness, workmanship, environmental protection and safety aspects.

The DEVB has implemented a number of measures for the wider adoption of MiC.

In 2017, the DEVB and the CIC formed the Joint Working Group on Modular Integrated Construction to share related technologies and promote the adoption of MiC in the industry. To encourage a wider adoption of MiC in the industry, the DEVB set up a high-level steering committee leading the relevant departments to streamline procedures and provide related guidelines and facilitation measures, such as the pre-acceptance mechanism for MiC, and guidelines on the application for Wide Load Permits, building services and Construction Noise Permits. In 2020, we issued a technical circular mandating the adoption of MiC for designated government buildings such as schools, dormitories,

hospitals and office buildings under the Government's Capital Works Programme, unless otherwise exempted by the Steering Committee.

Currently, the MiC modules used in Hong Kong are mainly manufactured in the Mainland and Malaysia. The number of MiC suppliers were very few some years ago and it has been increased to about 40 under the pre-acceptance mechanism of the Buildings Department. Despite the highly mature development of the supply chain for MiC production within the Greater Bay Area, market demand for production of MiC modules is getting increasingly high with the rising popularity of MiC. We are open to the suggestions on setting up of local factories for the production of MiC modules, and will continue to communicate with the industry and foster sustainable development of the local construction industry.

(3)

The Government has been committed to enhancing the productivity of the construction industry, including promotion of MiC, application of innovative technologies and implementation of project digitisation so as to reduce manpower demand and improve construction efficiency, and performance in workmanship and safety. We set up the Construction Innovation and Technology Fund in 2018 to encourage and subsidise the industry to enhance productivity through innovation. We have also strengthened the relevant professional training to increase practitioners' capability to apply technologies, with a view to instilling innovative thinking and technologies into the construction industry, boosting the industry's efficiency and productivity, reducing the cost and improving performance in safety and workmanship.

To further enhance the productivity of the construction industry, we have been actively studying the formulation of a construction productivity index for Hong Kong and the relevant consultancy study has commenced in late 2021. Apart from reviewing various practices in different regions, the study will also research on measurable productivity indexes, collection of required information, etc. to establish a baseline productivity index for Hong Kong's construction industry according to the actual data in the past. After the establishment of the construction productivity index, we can set the target for enhancing productivity and draw up a roadmap for the long-term sustainable development of the construction industry.

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