

Ref. : WB(W) 209/32/96
Group : 12

4 March 1998

Works Bureau Technical Circular No. 4/98

Use of Public Fill in Reclamation and Earth Filling Projects

Introduction

This Circular promulgates policy requiring reclamation or earth filling projects with imported fill requirements of 300,000 m³ (three hundred thousand cubic metres) or more to consider using public fill (alternatively termed inert construction and demolition (C&D) material) for the Works. It amplifies and should be read in conjunction with WBTC No. 2/93 : Public Dumps. The terminology in current use for what used to be called public dumping but which is now called public filling is shown in the addendum to this circular.

Background

2. It is government policy to make beneficial use of C&D material generated by the construction industry in an efficient as well as an environmentally friendly way. From an economic benefit view point, the inert portion of C&D material (e.g. rock, concrete, etc.) can be used as fill material (termed public fill) for reclamation and earth filling projects through public filling, whilst the non-inert portion (e.g. timber, etc.) (termed C&D waste) shall be disposed of at landfills. A number of measures to encourage the use of inert C&D material at public filling areas have been implemented and these include:

- (i) relaxing the acceptance criteria of public fill to include oversized rocks and a small amount of timber;
- (ii) requiring the contractors managing public filling operations to accept wet soil;
- (iii) operating public fill barging points; and
- (iv) keeping a close liaison with the construction industry to encourage contractors to deliver the inert portion of C&D material to public filling areas.

3. It is noted that tight construction programmes have been used by some project proponents as a reason for not incorporating a requirement to use public fill in many reclamation and earth filling projects. This has resulted in a shortage of public filling areas to accommodate the public fill generated by the construction industry. The Director of Audit in his Report No. 28 issued in April 1997 regarding the beneficial use of inert C&D material recommended :

- (i) to identify more public filling areas from both the current and long-term development programmes to meet local demand; and
- (ii) to strengthen the procedures for assessing the use of public fill in government projects.

Current Situation

4. The Public Filling Sub-Committee (PFSC), previously known as the Public Dumping Sub-Committee, of the Fill Management Committee (FMC) is responsible for co-ordinating the provision and operation of public filling facilities. These facilities include public filling areas, public fill barging points and public fill stockpiling areas. The PFSC also aims at ensuring sufficient strategically located facilities are available at all times to accommodate all inert C&D material in Hong Kong.

Notification and Review of Fill Requirements

5. For proposed reclamation or earth filling projects with imported fill requirements of 300,000 m³ or more, the project proponent shall, in the Preliminary Project Feasibility Study (PPFS) notify the Principal Government Civil Engineer (PGCE) who is the Chairman of the PFSC about incorporating public fill for the Works. The project proponent shall examine and implement measures to maximise the use of public fill and shall enter the requirement of public fill in the "Fill Requirements and Surplus Data Form" and submit it, together with an assessment and details of measures of the use of public fill made under Section 8(b)(iii) of the PPFS report [other Constraints to cost and progress - Borrow areas/disposal sites] directly to the PGCE through the Secretary of the PFSC (Port Works Division, CED). Such forms can be obtained from the Secretary of the FMC or PFSC and a sample copy is shown in Annex I. Within two months from the date of receipt of the notification, the Secretary of the PFSC will advise the project proponent whether the proposed use of public fill meets the requirement for optimum use of public fill for the project. The related information will also be copied to the FMC for reference and record. The Secretary of the PFSC is delegated to carry out the initial screening of such reclamation or earth filling projects, and report to the PFSC at its quarterly meetings. Proponents of projects designated to accept public fill shall report any subsequent amendments to the quantity, extent, programme, etc., advise the implications of these amendments and proposed measures to mitigate any adverse impact on its public filling programme to the Secretary of the PFSC for PFSC's endorsement.

6. Such projects with imported fill requirements exceeding 300,000m³ may in certain circumstances be exempted from using public fill subject to approval by the PFSC, e.g. anticipated short fall in supply of public fill, projects with stringent programmes and comprising contracts associated with complicated interfacing issues, insurmountable environmental impact etc. The project proponent should submit the application for exemption to the PGCE through the Secretary of PFSC at least 8 weeks before the scheduled PFSC meetings. If deemed necessary, the PFSC will invite the project proponent to present its case. The PFSC meetings will be held on a quarterly basis and normally on the second last Thursday of January, April, July, and October of each year, unless otherwise notified.

7. The rate of supply of public fill may fluctuate and may have an impact on the implementation programme of some projects which have a committed land development programme, e.g. land production for the public housing development programme. For such reasons imported fill can be allowed as a contingency measure in the tender document. The quantity of imported fill to be allowed in the tender document as a supplement to public fill and the exact quantity to be ordered during the construction stage need to be endorsed by the PFSC.

(W S Chan)
Deputy Secretary (Works Policy)