

DRINKING WATER SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Proposed Work Plan of the Committee

PURPOSE

This paper aims to seek views from Members on the proposed work plan of the Drinking Water Safety Advisory Committee (the Committee) during its term of office.

WORK PLAN

2. According to the Terms of Reference of the Committee, the Committee's work can be broadly divided into four main areas. The Secretariat has proposed the following draft work plan based on the main areas of work for members' consideration:

- (i) Development of the regulatory regime for drinking water safety in Hong Kong

Background information

3. Development Bureau (DEVB) will commission an in-depth consultancy study to look into the general framework of water safety regulatory regime being adopted in developed jurisdictions and recommend a control framework on the same that is suitable for Hong Kong.

The Committee's involvement

	Activities	Target Date
1.	Discussion of the scope of the draft consultancy brief by the <u>Committee</u>	2 Feb 2018
2.	Invitation of Tender	Mid-Feb 2018
3.	Award of Consultancy	Mid-Mar 2018
4.	Discussion of the Consultant's recommendations by the <u>Committee</u>	End-Nov 2018
5.	Completion of Consultancy	Dec 2018
6.	Further consultations will be made with the <u>Committee</u> depending on the outcome of the study.	

(ii) Review of Hong Kong Drinking Water Standards

Background information

4. Currently, Hong Kong is adopting the World Health Organization's (WHO's) Guideline Values/Provisional Guideline Values of 92 parameters as drinking water standards for compliance monitoring. In line with WHO's general principles, Hong Kong will carry out a review on its drinking water standards when there is new information available from WHO's further revision of its Guidelines or when sufficient local data is available.

5. Water Supplies Department (WSD) has engaged consultants to review the drinking water standards in two stages as shown in the below table.

	Scope of the review	Status
Stage 1	12 metal parameters in World Health Organization Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality ("WHO Guidelines") (i.e. Antimony, Arsenic, Barium, Boron, Cadmium, Chromium, Copper, Lead, Mercury, Nickel, Selenium and Uranium)	Completed
	<u>Recommendation</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Continue adopting corresponding WHO's Guideline Values/Provisional Guideline Values for metal parameters as drinking water standards for compliance monitoring <u>Advice from International Expert Panel on Drinking Water Safety (IEP)¹</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Make use of 3 to 5 years to collect sufficient local data. In this connection, WSD has enhanced its water quality monitoring programme to collect data representing the water quality at consumer's tap	
Stage 2	80 non-metal parameters in WHO Guidelines and other non-WHO parameters	On-going
	<u>Points to Note</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The consultant would recommend:-<ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) A list of parameters in WHO Guidelines for the inclusion in the Standards for monitoring, i.e. recommending a reduced surveillance programme, and the standard values for monitoring; and(b) A list of priority parameters (non-WHO parameters which are currently included in overseas jurisdictions' monitoring regime) and the methodologies for further evaluation of their applicability to Hong Kong situation.	

¹ The IEP was appointed by the Secretary for Development (SDEV) in June 2016 to advise SDEV on the proposal of DEVB/WSD on drinking water safety.

6. In this connection, the consultant to be engaged by DEVB to carry out the study on the regulatory regime would also explore and recommend a formal and robust mechanism for endorsement of the Standards which should be based on overseas experience and local practices for setting standards of similar nature. As a related matter, in case a new legislation is needed to be enacted for regulating water quality in Hong Kong, the Standards may form part of the legislation.

The Committee's involvement

	Activities	Target Date
1.	<u>The Committee</u> to endorse the mechanism proposed by the Consultant to be engaged by DEVB	June 2018
2.	WSD to present the findings of the Stage 2 review of water quality parameters to <u>the Committee</u> for consideration	End 2018
3.	WSD to present the findings of the enhanced water quality monitoring programme and make recommendation to DWSAC on the review of drinking water standards to <u>the Committee's</u> consideration	End 2021 (next term of office)

- (iii) Review of existing policies and operational strategies/measures relating to drinking water quality as well as formulation of associated new policies and operational strategies/measures

Background information

7. As part of its surveillance monitoring, WSD will provide quarterly reports to DEVB summarizing the water sampling results during the reporting period as well as yearly reports to show the trend of water quality with comparison of the previous year's data. Furthermore, WSD will carry out internal audit on its quality system while DEVB will conduct surprise check and engage external auditing firms for external audit.

DWSAC's involvement

8. The Secretary will report to the Committee biannually regarding the observation from the water quality data as well as the findings in surprise check. In case non-compliance is found, the Secretary will also report to the Committee and share with it the investigation reports submitted by WSD regarding the recommended remedial actions and preventive measures. The Secretary will also report the findings of the external audits on WSD's quality

system to the Committee yearly, if any. The Committee's views on the appropriateness and suitability of the proposed actions/measures arising in connection with the investigation reports or external audits will be sought as necessary.

(iv) Keeping abreast of international development on water quality and safety

9. WSD has engaged a consultant to provide radar service for any overseas drinking water quality incident, and the drinking water quality issue of growing concern. WSD will review the incidents/issues and where appropriate make recommendations on the proposed way forward for the Committee consideration. Likewise, suggestions from the Committee regarding the latest international updates on water quality issue are also welcome.

ADVICE SOUGHT

10. Members are invited to offer views on the work plan of the Committee.

Development Bureau
January 2018