

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on May 16 to noon today (May 17), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 254 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan"

(www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 50 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 51 925 samples of food imported from Japan (including 33 621 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 13 236 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

EIA report for San Tin/Lok Ma Chau Development Node approved with conditions (with video)

Regarding the application submitted by the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO), the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) today (May 17) approved the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report for San Tin/Lok Ma Chau Development Node (ST/LMC DN) with conditions.

The CEDD has exhibited the EIA report for public inspection from February 2 to March 2, 2024, in accordance with the EIAO. During the public inspection period, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) received a total of 50 public comments. The EIA Subcommittee of the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE) discussed in detail the EIA report and public comments at its meeting on March 18, 2024. Since the commencement of the public inspection of the EIA report, the CEDD has been liaising with green groups closely. The EPD has also participated in four meetings held by the CEDD with green groups, and gathered views from the green groups on the EIA report and proposals on enhancing the mitigation measures and compensation. Subsequently, the ACE endorsed unanimously the EIA report with conditions and recommendations at its meeting on April 22, 2024.

At a press conference today, the Director of Environmental Protection, Dr Samuel Chui, said, "The EPD has studied and reviewed in detail the EIA report for ST/LMC DN, and agreed with the proposed mitigation of the ecological and fisheries impacts arising from the development through avoiding impacts on the Ramsar Site, Mai Po Lung Village Egrettry and the Mai Po Village Egrettry; as well as creation of environmental capacity through reprofiling pond banks, pond drain-down, and when necessary, trash-fish stocking, with a view to achieving no-net-loss in ecological function and capacity of the wetlands concerned. In addition, other mitigation measures proposed in the EIA report, such as preservation of a 300-metre-wide east-west birds' flight corridor near the Lok Ma Chau Boundary Control Point and a 70m-wide major bird flight path of the Mai Po Lung Village Egrettry, establishment of a 35m-wide non-building area in the form of an eco-interface along the Sam Po Shue Wetland Conservation Park (SPS WCP), adoption of stepped building height descending towards the SPS WCP, and establishment of wildlife corridors for facilitating and supporting movement of Eurasian otters across Lok Ma Chau, Sam Po Shue and the Inner Deep Bay area, can achieve effective mitigation of the ecological impacts arising from the ST/LMC DN on egrettries, birds' flight corridors and paths, and Eurasian otters, etc. The EPD has also thoroughly and carefully considered the requirements of the EIA Study Brief (SB) and the Technical Memorandum on Environmental Impact Assessment Process (TM), comments on the environment

raised by the public during the public inspection period of the EIA report, suggestions and data from green groups in respect of the EIA report, supplementary information submitted by the CEDD upon request of the EIA Subcommittee of the ACE, as well as conditions and recommendations raised by the ACE, and decided to approve the EIA report with conditions."

"The purposes of ecological surveys are to fill in the information gaps in existing available data, and to confirm and evaluate the ecological value of the habitats and species thereon. A large number of continuous ecological surveys data within the study area are already available. These include data collected by the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society since January 2012 under a nature conservation agreement funded by the Environment and Conservation Fund; as well as a number of environmental impact assessment studies and environmental monitoring and audit reports. The ecological impact assessment in the EIA report for ST/LMC DN has considered all relevant literature review, research information/data and ecological survey records. Hence, the EIA study is scientific, professional and comprehensive," Dr Chui added.

The approval conditions mainly include requiring the CEDD (i) to submit various detailed designs and implementation plans (such as the Habitat Creation and Management Plan, the Detailed Design Plan for Establishment of Wildlife Corridors, the Implementation Plan for Wetland Enhancement Measures at Mai Po, the Interim Wetland Enhancement Plan, the Bird-friendly Design Guideline, etc) to implement the recommended ecological mitigation/enhancement measures; (ii) not to commence pond-filling works of the ST/LMC DN prior to commencement of construction of the ecologically enhanced fish ponds at the SPS WCP; and (iii) to set up an environmental committee comprising representatives of relevant government departments as well as green groups and academics for providing advice on the preparation of various implementation plans and monitoring the effectiveness of the implementation of the proposed ecological mitigation/enhancement measures of the Project set out in the EIA report and the approved implementation plans.

In addition, the CEDD shall report regularly to the ACE on the progress of the implementation of various plans, the environmental monitoring results and effectiveness of ecological mitigation/enhancement measures, and set up a working group with the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department to co-ordinate the progress of the ST/LMC DN and the implementation of the SPS WCP. The EPD will closely liaise with relevant government departments for following up on the abovementioned approval conditions.

Dr Chui stressed that the EIA process in Hong Kong is a professional, objective and open system. The TM and EIA SB have laid down objective and clear principles, procedures, guidelines, requirements and criteria for various EIA matters. The statutory EIA process aims at assessing the environmental impacts of the project, and recommending appropriate mitigation measures. The project proponent had to comply with relevant legislation and procedural requirements before the project could proceed.

The approved EIA report and the approval conditions have been uploaded to the EPD's EIAO website (www.epd.gov.hk/eia/). Members of the public may

also visit the EIAO Register Office at 27th floor, Southorn Centre, Wan Chai, to inspect these documents.

10 property owners of five village houses fined over \$450,000 in total for non-compliance with removal orders

Ten property owners were convicted and fined over \$450,000 in total last month and earlier this month at the Fanling Magistrates' Courts and Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts respectively for failing to comply with removal orders issued under the Buildings Ordinance (BO) (Cap. 123).

The five village houses in Tai Po, Tuen Mun and Yuen Long had various unauthorised structures on their roofs and/or ground floor with areas ranging from 28 square metres to 80 sq m.

Since the Lands Department would not issue certificates of exemption for the above-mentioned buildings, they are not New Territories Exempted Houses under the Buildings Ordinance (Application to the New Territories) Ordinance (Cap. 121). As the related unauthorised building works (UBWs) were carried out without the prior approval and consent from the Buildings Department (BD), removal orders were served on the owners under section 24(1) of the BO.

Failing to comply with the removal orders, the owners were prosecuted by the BD.

The four co-owners of the first case and the two co-owners of the second case were fined a total of \$180,160 and \$53,880 on April 30 and May 7 respectively upon conviction at the Fanling Magistrates' Courts.

The owner of the third case was fined \$63,500 upon conviction at the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts on May 3.

Failing to comply with the removal orders, the two co-owners of the fourth case and the owner of the fifth case were prosecuted by the BD, and were fined \$49,200 in total and \$4,340 in 2022 and 2021 respectively upon conviction at the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts. As the owners persisted in not complying with the removal orders, they were prosecuted by the BD for the second time and were fined \$84,900 in total and \$73,100 on May 3 and 10 respectively upon conviction at the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts.

A spokesman for the BD said today (May 17), "UBWs may lead to serious consequences. Owners must comply with removal orders without delay. The BD will continue to take enforcement action against owners who have failed to comply with removal orders, including instigation of prosecution, so as to

ensure building safety."

Failure to comply with a removal order without reasonable excuse is a serious offence under the BO. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$200,000 and one year's imprisonment, and a further fine of \$20,000 for each day that the offence continues.

Expanding cross-boundary e-CNY pilot in Hong Kong

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) and the People's Bank of China (PBoC) have made further progress in the e-CNY pilot for cross-boundary payments, to expand the scope of e-CNY pilot in Hong Kong to facilitate the set up and the use of e-CNY wallets by Hong Kong residents, as well as the top-up of e-CNY wallets through the Faster Payment System (FPS). The interoperability between the FPS and the e-CNY system operated by the Digital Currency Institute (DCI) of the PBoC also marks the first linkage of a faster payment system with a central bank digital currency system in the world. It provides an innovative use case which underscores interoperability, a key area set out in the G20 Roadmap for enhancing cross-border payments.

The expansion of the cross-boundary e-CNY pilot in Hong Kong is one of the six measures announced by the PBoC earlier this year under the "three connection, three facilitation" initiative. With the expansion of the pilot scope, users can now set up e-CNY personal wallets in Hong Kong, which requires only their Hong Kong mobile phone numbers. The e-CNY wallets can be used for cross-boundary payments but cannot be used for person-to-person transfers. Users can top up their e-CNY wallets via the FPS through 17 retail banks in Hong Kong (Annex 1). In addition to the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), the e-CNY can also be used in other Mainland pilot areas. Progress is being made on the interoperability of e-CNY with traditional e-payment service providers in the Mainland, which would also provide more consumption choices to Hong Kong residents in the future.

The Chief Executive of the HKMA, Mr Eddie Yue, said, "We are delighted that Hong Kong, being the first place in conducting cross-boundary e-CNY pilot, has also become the first place outside the Mainland that enables its residents to set up e-CNY wallets locally. By expanding the e-CNY pilot in Hong Kong and leveraging the 24x7 operating hours and real-time transfer advantages of the FPS, users may now top up their e-CNY wallets anytime, anywhere without having to open a Mainland bank account, thereby facilitating merchant payments in the Mainland by Hong Kong residents. We will continue to work closely with the PBoC to gradually expand the applications of e-CNY,

enrich the range of functionalities of the e-CNY wallet available to Hong Kong residents and step up efforts in promoting the acceptance of e-CNY by more retail merchants in the two places."

The HKMA will continue working with the DCI to explore upgrading the e-CNY wallet to higher tiers through real-name verification and enhancing the interoperability in payments so as to provide more convenient user experiences, whether for individuals or merchants. Additionally, corporate use cases will also be explored with a view to facilitating cross-boundary trade settlement.

The e-CNY will provide an additional safe, convenient and innovative means of cross-boundary retail payments to residents in Hong Kong and the Mainland. It will also enhance the efficiency and user experience of cross-boundary payments, and promote the interconnectivity of the GBA.

[New weather radar at Tai Mo Shan comes into operation](#)

The new Tai Mo Shan weather radar (TMSWR) of the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) was installed in March 2024 and has come into operation to provide essential observation data for monitoring various inclement weather conditions including thunderstorms, rainstorms and tropical cyclones.

The Director of the HKO, Dr Chan Pak-wai said, "Situated on the highest peak in Hong Kong, the weather radar at Tai Mo Shan has been an indispensable observing equipment for the HKO in weather monitoring. The commissioning of the new TMSWR is of paramount importance to the HKO to meet growing challenges of extreme weather".

At a cost of around \$31 million, the new TMSWR is the second dual-polarisation S-band Doppler weather radar in Hong Kong. It is capable of identifying hail areas and raindrop sizes in the air, and is useful for monitoring hail and rainfall rates. Compared to the first dual-polarisation S-band Doppler weather radar at Tate's Cairn (TCWR) that started operation in 2015, the new TMSWR is equipped with more advanced hardware and software modules, providing higher power for the transmission of radar pulses, smaller attenuation of radar signals, lower system noise, a better graphic user interface and more software utility functions for easier radar control. These new technologies enable the generation of higher-quality products to facilitate weather analysis.

The new TMSWR is operating in tandem with the TCWR to provide round-the-clock radar images for severe weather monitoring. The public can access the regularly updated radar images via the [HKO website](#) and the mobile application

["MyObservatory"](#).