

EMSD announces latest sampling results for legionella at fresh water cooling towers

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (May 8) announced that the department tested 11 water samples collected from cooling towers in seven buildings in its routine inspections in April 2024. None of them were detected to have a total legionella count at or above the upper threshold, which is 1 000 colony-forming units per millilitre. The latest statistics are set out in Annex 1.

The EMSD also announced the locations of buildings which were served with nuisance notices during the preceding three-month period as the total legionella count was found in the fresh water cooling towers to be equal to or above the upper threshold. Details can be found in Annex 2.

The EMSD publishes the latest statistics of the above information on a half-monthly basis on its website (www.emsd.gov.hk/en/other_regulatory_services/cooling_towers/water_sampling/index.html).

The EMSD reminds the owners of fresh water cooling towers that they have the responsibility to design, operate and maintain cooling towers properly. They should arrange regular inspections, timely maintenance and periodic testing of the water quality in their cooling towers in accordance with the Code of Practice for Fresh Water Cooling Towers issued by the department to prevent the proliferation of legionella.

SCST to visit Beijing

The Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, will depart for Beijing tomorrow morning (May 9). He will attend a plaque unveiling ceremony for a programme at the Palace Museum and call on the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Mr Yeung will return to Hong Kong on May 11 (Saturday). During his absence, the Under Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Raistlin Lau, will be the Acting Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism.

LCQ11: Encouraging Hong Kong young people to take up employment in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area

Following is a question by the Hon Martin Liao and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, in the Legislative Council today (May 8):

Question:

The Government implemented the Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme on a pilot basis (the pilot scheme) in 2021 and regularised the scheme (the regularised scheme) in 2023. On encouraging Hong Kong young people to take up employment in the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (the Greater Bay Area), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that in reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on the Estimates of Expenditure 2024-2025, the Government indicated that 718 job offers for young people had been received under the regularised scheme as at February 29 this year, of the industries in which the employed young people are engaged, and whether the participation in the regularised scheme has met the Government's expectation;

(2) as it has been reported that a total of 1 091 young people had been employed under the pilot scheme, and among the 632 people who had completed the 18-month on-the-job training, 464 were offered further employment, whether the authorities have followed up on the reasons why the young people participating in the pilot scheme quitted midway and were not offered further employment; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) as a survey has pointed out that some young people who have completed the pilot scheme aspire to pursue development in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, but they have indicated that the Mainland job search platforms are not clear about how to recruit Hong Kong young people to work on the Mainland and resolve technical issues such as taxation and the "five insurances and one housing fund" for them, how the authorities will optimise the regularised scheme to assist the young people who have completed the scheme to continue to seek development in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, so as to enhance continuity of the relevant policy initiatives;

(4) whether the authorities will consider arranging cross-programme collaborations between the regularised scheme and other youth programmes in the Greater Bay Area (e.g. the Alliance of Hong Kong Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurial Bases in the Greater Bay Area, and the Funding Scheme for Experiential Programmes at Innovation and Entrepreneurial Bases in the

Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area), so as to provide assistance for the entire community of Hong Kong young people who pursue development in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, and to enhance the long-term exchanges between young people on the Mainland and in Hong Kong; and

(5) given that the authorities of the Guangdong Province have introduced measures, including the Centralised Public Recruitment of College Graduates by the Public Institutions in the Guangdong Province in 2023 and the Guangdong Province Internship Programme for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan Students, to provide Hong Kong young people with employment and internship opportunities in various industries in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, how the authorities will step up co-operation with the authorities of the Guangdong Province to attract more Hong Kong young people to take up employment in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, so as to encourage them to integrate into the country's overall development?

Reply:

President,

The Government launched the pilot Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme (the pilot scheme) in 2021 and has regularised the scheme (the regularised scheme) since March 2023, encouraging enterprises with business in both Hong Kong and the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) to employ Hong Kong young people in accordance with Hong Kong laws with a monthly salary of not less than HK\$18,000 and station them in the Mainland cities of the GBA to work and receive on-the-job training. Based on the number of young people employed, the Government disbursed a monthly allowance of HK\$10,000 to enterprises for each person for up to 18 months.

In consultation with the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (CMAB) and the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB), our consolidated reply is as follows:

(1) The regularised scheme for 2023 received a total of 718 notifications of employment. A breakdown of the number of employed young people by industry is set out at Annex. The regularised scheme is open to all eligible young people for participation with no pre-set quota.

(2) The pilot scheme received a total of 1 091 notifications of employment. Among the 632 young people who had completed the 18-month on-the-job training, 464 continued to be employed by the relevant enterprises. The Labour Department (LD) does not maintain information on the reasons for leaving employment or not being further employed in respect of young people participating in the pilot scheme. To evaluate the effectiveness of the regularised scheme, the LD has commissioned a contractor to conduct a 3-year "longitudinal study". The study involves following up with the participating enterprises and young people with a view to understanding the employment situation of the young people, and collecting opinions from enterprises and young people on the Scheme. The first phase of the study commenced in March

2024.

(3) The Government provides various supporting measures to young people participating in the regularised scheme, including setting up a dedicated website to provide the scheme details and a practical guide on working and living in the GBA. The LD has also commissioned service providers to provide support services for the participating young people in the Mainland, including a telephone hotline manned by a dedicated staff to answer enquiries on daily life, laws, taxation in the Mainland, etc., setting up platforms and groups in social media, organising seminars, and assisting young people who have participated in the Scheme to establish alumni associations to strengthen their social networks and promote the sustainable development of their careers. In addition, the Interactive Employment Service website of the LD hosts a dedicated webpage of Information on Employment in the Mainland. It links to employment websites of the Mainland and publishes practical information on working in the Mainland for the reference of enterprises and job seekers.

Moreover, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development Office (the Office) under the CMAB has strived to make use of diversified and multi-media means and channels to promote the GBA development to various sectors of the community (including Hong Kong young people). For example, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), the Office has launched and continuously optimised the "GoGBA" digital platform, which provides support to Hong Kong residents and enterprises interested in pursuing development in the Mainland cities of GBA. The Office has also co-organised with the HKTDC a number of "GoGBA Development Day" events in Hong Kong and the Mainland cities of GBA every year and invited representatives of governments to introduce the respective local policies and support measures for entrepreneurship and employment, as well as entrepreneurs and experts to share their experiences in starting businesses or working in the GBA, etc. The Office also actively participates in the "Education and Careers Expo", "Entrepreneur Day" exhibitions, etc., so as to provide young people and members of the public with more information about entrepreneurship and employment in the GBA, including information about the GBA Youth Employment Scheme.

The HKSAR Government also established the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development Promotion Centre (Promotion Centre) in April 2023. Through further strengthening strategic co-operation with the HKTDC, Invest Hong Kong and relevant Mainland organisations and institutions, the Promotion Centre organises different types of activities in the Mainland cities of the GBA for Hong Kong residents (including participants of the GBA Youth Employment Scheme) and enterprises pursuing development there, so as to promote the opportunities brought about by the GBA development and to better understand their needs for providing them with practical assistance.

(4) The HYAB and the Youth Development Commission rolled out the Funding Scheme for Experiential Programmes at Innovation and Entrepreneurial Bases in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (the Experiential Scheme) and the Funding Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-

Macao Greater Bay Area (the Entrepreneurship Scheme), which assist young people to understand the entrepreneurial opportunities in the huge Mainland market, as well as to provide start-up capital, entrepreneurial support and incubation services to Hong Kong young people who are interested in starting their businesses, help them cope with the difficulties they encounter at the early stages of starting a business, and support them in establishing and developing their businesses. The new round of Entrepreneurship Scheme and Experiential Scheme just started in early April 2024, with a number of optimised arrangements to provide more comprehensive support services for more Hong Kong young people who are interested in starting their businesses locally and in the Mainland cities of the GBA. Furthermore, the HYAB provides funding through the Funding Scheme for Youth Exchange in the Mainland (FSYEM) for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to organise youth exchange projects in the Mainland. The objectives are to promote Hong Kong youth's awareness and understanding of their home country, strengthen their sense of national identity, and enhance exchanges between youths of Hong Kong and the Mainland. Under the first round of the FSYEM in 2024-25, over 140 projects were approved to provide around 12 000 exchange places in the Mainland cities of the GBA.

The Government established the Alliance of Hong Kong Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurial Bases in the Greater Bay Area (the Alliance) in December 2023 to further support Hong Kong young people to start their businesses in the GBA. The HYAB, the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the People's Government of Guangdong Province, and the Human Resources and Social Security Department of Guangdong Province are the leading parties of the Alliance. Nearly 60 organisations from various sectors in the GBA have joined the Alliance as members, including government and public organisations, innovation and entrepreneurial bases, NGOs and social organisations, post-secondary institutions and scientific research institutes, professional organisations and venture funds. The Alliance leverages the resources and networks of member organisations to provide a one-stop information, publicity and exchange platform, thereby providing young entrepreneurs with comprehensive support. The HYAB also provides funding through the Funding Scheme for Youth Internship in the Mainland (FSYIM) for NGOs to organise youth internship projects in the Mainland. Participants may deepen their understanding of the employment market, workplace culture and development opportunities in the Mainland, which will help them set their future career goals, accumulate work experience, build interpersonal network and boost their employment advantage. Under the FSYIM in 2024-25, 75 projects were approved to provide around 2 600 internship places in the Mainland cities of the GBA.

(5) The LD maintains close contact with the governments of the Guangdong Province and the GBA Mainland cities to step up promotion of the GBA Youth Employment Scheme and the support for young people, and visits higher educational institutions in the Guangdong Province from time to time to conduct promotional briefings. The Guangdong Provincial Government has introduced supporting measures, including online and offline support. Individual municipal governments also offer housing, taxation and other preferential treatment to young people participating in the Scheme. To

further support the participating young people to adapt to working and living in the Mainland, the Guangdong Provincial Government doubled the living allowance to a maximum of RMB2,000 per month in August 2023. The Government will continue to strengthen the collaboration with the Guangdong Provincial Government to support Hong Kong young people to pursue careers in the Mainland cities of the GBA and to actively integrate into overall national development.

The LD will continue to listen to the views of enterprises, tertiary institutions and other stakeholders, and actively explore appropriate measures to further enhance the GBA Youth Employment Scheme.

LCQ13: Enhancing level of convenience in use of Home Return Permits

Following is a question by the Hon Maggie Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (May 8):

Question:

It is learnt that when members of the public register Mainland online services with their Mainland Travel Permits for Hong Kong and Macao Residents (commonly known as Home Return Permits), they often come across situations like "authentication failure" or "non-valid type of identity document" as these permits are not Mainland identity documents. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that as pointed out by the People's Government of Guangdong Province in the "Three-Year Action Plan of Digital Greater Bay Area Construction" announced in November last year, it would promote the unification of identity authentication for residents in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) and expeditiously take forward the initiative to accord the same level of convenience for Home Return Permits and Residence Permits for Hong Kong and Macao Residents (residence permits) in the handling of businesses in areas such as transport, accommodation and job-seeking registration in the GBA as that of Mainland resident identity cards, and the HKSAR Government indicated in reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2024-2025 that it would proactively participate in the Action Plan, and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) was now studying with the Government Services and Data Management Bureau (GSDMB) of Guangdong Province, which is responsible for the implementation of the Digital GBA, the setting up of a joint task force to discuss and take the next step of work, whether the OGCIO will consider first discussing with the GSDMB of Guangdong Province

the expedition of promotion of the relevant business handling arrangements for Home Return Permits and residence permits; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it will proactively conduct regular exchanges and collaboration with the relevant Mainland authorities, so as to promote the full digitalisation of the process from application for Home Return Permits to immigration clearance with the use of Home Return Permits; if so, of the details; and

(3) given that some members of the public hope that the level of convenience in the use of Home Return Permits will be enhanced, whether the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government will relay their aspiration to the Mainland Government in the coming year and conduct regular exchanges and communication in this regard; if so, of the details?

Reply:

President,

To facilitate Hong Kong and Macao residents working, studying and living in the Mainland, since September 1, 2018, relevant mainland authorities have further facilitated Hong Kong and Macao residents to use the Mainland Travel Permits for Hong Kong and Macao Residents (commonly known as the Home Return Permits) in the application of the Home Return Permits in the areas of transport, finance, communications, education, healthcare, social security, industry and commerce, taxation, accommodation, etc.

Regarding the Hon Maggie Chan's question, after consultation with the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau (ITIB) and the Security Bureau, our consolidated reply is as follows:

(1) On November 21, 2023, the People's Government of Guangdong Province issued the "Three-Year Action Plan of Digital Greater Bay Area Construction" (Action Plan), which contains 60 initiatives involving multiple departments in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao. Promoting the arrangement of full digitalisation of the process of frequently handled businesses using Home Return Permits has also been included in the Action Plan. The Chief Executive also mentioned in the 2023 Policy Address that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government would fully support the Action Plan and collaborate with the People's Government of Guangdong Province to develop the "Digital Bay Area", promoting deeper integration of economic development, public services and social governance of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao through digitalisation, thereby facilitating the development of the Greater Bay Area (GBA) into the world's most digitally advanced bay area, and allowing Hong Kong to better integrate into the development of the GBA and the country.

The ITIB and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer are now in close liaison with the People's Government of Guangdong Province to jointly promote the "Digital Bay Area" initiative. Paying heed to the principle of launching initiatives once they are ready, both sides have also

reached consensus on setting up a task force to jointly explore the implementation direction and details of various initiatives under the Action Plan, alongside relevant departments of the HKSAR Government and Guangdong, in order to progressively promote the work relating to Hong Kong in the "Digital Bay Area".

(2) The Immigration Department (ImmD) and relevant departments of the HKSAR have been maintaining close liaison with Mainland authorities to formulate appropriate measures to enhance clearance capacity of boundary control points (BCPs), depending on the situation of each BCP. Moreover, the ImmD will also review the use of immigration facilities and system operation from time to time, and adopt innovative technologies with a view to providing services with enhanced convenience and quality, including actively study the implementation of the more tourist-friendly clearance mode of "collaborative inspection and joint clearance". Under the relevant clearance mode, automatic channels or counters of both sides will be set up side by side within their respective jurisdiction at the boundary inside the port, such that outbound and inbound visitors only need to queue up to have their documents inspected and their identities verified once to pass through the facilities of both sides in order to complete the respective immigration procedures.

(3) Apart from the discussion on enhancing the level of convenience of using Home Return Permits in the Mainland with Mainland authorities mentioned above, the Mainland Offices and the Liaison Units of the HKSAR Government have been maintaining close liaison with the relevant authorities, and conveying the views and requests of Hong Kong residents living, working and studying in the Mainland, including the requests for wider and more convenient use of the Home Return Permits in the Mainland, etc. The HKSAR Government will continue to maintain close liaison and co-operation with the Mainland authorities with a view to enhancing the level of convenience for Hong Kong people living in the Mainland.

[LCQ20: Multi-functional smart lampposts](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Yuet-ming and a written reply by the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, in the Legislative Council today (May 8):

Question:

In the 2017 Policy Address, the Government proposed to implement the Multi-functional Smart Lampposts Pilot Scheme (the Scheme) in selected urban locations. The Scheme was completed in December last year with over 400 multi-functional smart lampposts equipped with smart devices (smart lamppost) installed in selected locations. In this connection, will the Government

inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective installation cost of various smart devices in a smart lamppost; as there are views pointing out that most smart lampposts are only equipped with radio frequency identification tags and Geo-QR code tags, rendering their deployment of smart devices incomplete, whether the Government will consider equipping these smart lampposts with more smart devices;
- (2) as there are views that smart lampposts have been densely installed in many districts, so much so that dozens of smart lampposts can be found on the same street, of the justifications for the relevant arrangement;
- (3) whether it has evaluated the effectiveness of the Scheme, and whether it will make a report on the Scheme to this Council;
- (4) as the 2023 Policy Address proposed to expedite the expansion of mobile network infrastructure in rural and remote areas, whether the Government will pilot the use of smart lampposts as fifth generation (5G) radio base stations in rural areas with poorer mobile network signals, with a view to improving mobile communications services in these areas; and
- (5) given that in reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on the Estimates of Expenditure 2024-2025, the Government indicated that smart lamppost would be a standard infrastructure to be installed in new development areas, whether the Government will replace conventional lampposts already installed with smart lampposts in large numbers; if so, of the relevant expenditure?

Reply:

President,

Under the Multi-functional Smart Lampposts Pilot Scheme (Pilot Scheme) launched in 2019, over 400 multi-functional smart lampposts have been installed in locations with higher pedestrian and vehicular flow in the territory (including Central and Admiralty, Wan Chai, Yau Tsim Mong, Kwun Tong / Kai Tak Development Area, Kowloon City district and Sai Kung district) to provide intelligent public lighting services and facilitate concerned bureaux/departments (B/Ds) to collect different kinds of city data through smart devices as well as to support the development of 5G mobile communications services. The Pilot Scheme was completed in December 2023.

Having consulted the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau and the Highways Department, a consolidated reply in response to the questions raised by the Hon Chan Yuet-ming is as follows:

(1) and (2) Smart lampposts are the infrastructure for building smart city, allowing B/Ds to install relevant smart devices and applications at suitable locations in accordance with their operational needs to assist in their work on city management. The distance between lampposts is mainly determined by relevant technical standards, including pedestrian flow. The smart devices to be installed on smart lampposts depend on the real-time city data required to

be collected or published by respective B/Ds. Due to the differences in functionality and coverage of different smart devices, the relevant departments would, based on the actual circumstances, install different smart devices at different locations on the same street where the smart lampposts are installed, in order to achieve the best effect and collect the required data for analysis and reference by the relevant B/Ds. On average, the cost of each smart lamppost with smart devices is about \$140,000.

(3) and (5) The Pilot Scheme was completed in December 2023. We have reported the initial achievements and the way forward in the meeting of the Legislative Council Subcommittee on Matters Relating to the Development of Smart City on April 25, 2023, and in the paper for the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting on April 8, 2024 respectively. The experience gained from the Pilot Scheme shows that smart lampposts are suitable for installing with smart devices and can help collect real-time city data of the area. Mobile network operators have also expressed their wish for installing more radio base stations (RBSs) on smart lampposts to promote the development of 5G network services. In addition, various sectors across the community and the general public hold positive views on going ahead with installation of smart lampposts and smart devices, and suggest that the Government install more smart devices on smart lampposts so as to meet the needs of smart city.

To further promote smart city development in Hong Kong, smart lampposts will be a standard infrastructure to be installed in new development areas under planning or construction in future, so as to facilitate B/Ds to install suitable smart devices and applications in accordance with their operational needs for enhancing city management and developing innovative services. As for developed areas, in the light of the experience gained from the Pilot Scheme, we consider that large-scale replacement of existing conventional lampposts is not cost-effective and may not be feasible from the technical and engineering perspectives. It is more preferable to replace the existing lampposts with smart lampposts in suitable urban locations where feasible, and duly taking into account the operational and services requirements of individual departments.

(4) To enhance mobile network coverage in rural and remote areas, the Chief Executive announced in the 2023 Policy Address that the Government will proactively co-ordinate with the mobile network operators (MNOs) and explore the feasibility of providing subsidies to expedite the expansion of mobile network infrastructure in rural and remote areas, with a view to enhancing the mobile network coverage and capacity in these areas so as to improve the quality of life of the residents and safeguard the safety of visitors. The Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA) is now conducting the preparatory work for the implementation of the programme, including drawing up MNO's eligibility, proposed coverage scope and areas, number of mobile network facilities to be constructed, implementation timetable, funding mechanism and amount, etc. OFCA will conduct an industry consultation in the second half of 2024 to finalise the detailed implementation arrangement.

As for the use of smart lampposts as 5G wireless RBSs, the Government has established mechanism to reserve space and carrying capacity in multi-functional smart lampposts set up in various areas for MNOs to install RBSs

in order to further expand 5G network coverage.