

EPD welcomes Office of Ombudsman's direct investigation into issue of illegal disposal of construction waste

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (November 26) expressed its welcome for the announcement by the Office of the Ombudsman that it will launch a direct investigation into the Government's efforts to tackle illegal disposal of construction waste and related recycling service.

The EPD spokesman said that tackling illegal disposal of construction waste is one of the key enforcement tasks of the EPD. Since 2017, the department has implemented multi-pronged measures including the installation of surveillance camera systems, enhanced departmental collaboration, as well as strengthened law enforcement actions. As a result, the amount of construction waste illegally disposed of in the territory has significantly decreased by 90 per cent from about 9 000 tonnes from the start of action in 2017 to about 1 000 tonnes in 2023 (see Annex). The number of priority sites for tackling fly-tipping of construction waste has decreased from a previous peak of 86 to just eight recently. The most significant improvements have been seen in the Sham Shui Po district.

To further reduce illegal disposal of construction waste, the EPD has commenced a pilot scheme subsidised by the Recycling Fund and led by the trade for collecting and recycling construction waste from small-scale renovation work since 2021, which provides a construction waste collection service for small-scale renovation work of the renovation trade, thereby reducing at source illegal disposal of construction waste. Up to October 2024, the pilot scheme has provided more than 13 000 collection services and around 4 700 tonnes of construction waste have been collected. Should the above-mentioned service be not in place, a significant portion of the construction waste from the renovation work would probably have been disposed illegally.

The spokesperson said, "The EPD will fully assist with the Office of the Ombudsman's investigation, and we hope that constructive and cost-effective measures can be identified, thereby further improving the illegal construction waste disposal situation."