

# LCQ15: Collection and recycling of food waste

Following is a question by the Hon Dennis Leung and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (January 31):

Question:

Regarding the collection and recycling of food waste, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the Home Recycling One Stop Shop webpage on the Hong Kong Waste Reduction Website currently operated by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) does not include information on food waste recycling, whether EPD has plans to add to the webpage information on food waste recycling locations and related information; whether information on food waste recycling can be accessed through the iAM Smart mobile app;

(2) of the amount of food waste that EPD managed to collect from residential premises and restaurants in the whole of last year; given that according to EPD's information, O·PARK1, the Organic Resources Recovery Centre (ORRC), and O·PARK2, ORRC Phase 2 scheduled to commence operation this year, have a food waste treatment capacity of 200 tonnes and 300 tonnes per day respectively, yet about 45 000 tonnes and 45 700 tonnes of food waste were recycled in O·PARK1 in 2021 and 2022 respectively, i.e. less than 150 tonnes of food waste were handled by O·PARK1 on average per day, whether EPD has other plans to increase the amount of food waste recycled from residential premises, apart from the Pilot Scheme on Food Waste Smart Recycling Bins in Private Housing Estates (the Pilot Scheme); if not, of the reasons for that;

(3) prior to the implementation of municipal solid waste charging in August this year, whether EPD has plans to provide food waste recycling facilities at Recycling Stations, Recycling Stores and Recycling Spots of the community recycling network GREEN@COMMUNITY; if not, of the reasons for that;

(4) whether the Government has plans to provide food waste recycling facilities at public refuse collection points (RCPs) in rural villages by August this year; if so, of the target number of RCPs to be provided with food waste recycling facilities; if not, the reasons for that;

(5) of the following information on the Pilot Scheme as at December 31 last year: (i) the number of applications approved, (ii) the number of private housing courts installed with food waste smart bins (FWSBs), (iii) the number of FWSBs installed, (iv) the amount of food waste managed to be collected, and (v) the time taken from the receipt of applications to the completion of vetting and approval; whether EPD has set targets for the number of private housing courts managed to be installed with FWSBs by August this year, as

well as the number of FWSBs involved; whether the housing courts concerned will be provided with subsidies at the initial stage of FWSB installation for increasing manpower to educate residents on the use of FWSBs (such as the types of food waste that are recyclable); if not, of the reasons for that; and

(6) of the amount of food waste collected through the Smart Food Waste Bins (SFWBs) in public rental housing (PRH) estates as at December 31, last year; whether EPD has set targets for the number of PRH estates managed to be installed with SFWBs by August this year, as well as the number of SFWBs involved?

Reply:

President,

Currently, about 11 100 tonnes of municipal solid waste (MSW) are generated in Hong Kong per day, of which around 30 per cent is food waste. To complement the implementation of MSW charging, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) is taking forward various food waste collection initiatives in full steam, including providing support on the collection of food waste from commercial and industrial sources and households, thereby encouraging all sectors of the community and the general public to participate in food waste recycling. The reply to the question raised by the Hon Dennis Leung is as follows:

(1) The EPD has all along adopted a multi-pronged strategy to encourage food waste recycling, such as reduction at source, food waste collection and turning food waste into energy. To give the public a comprehensive understanding of the food waste management strategy, the EPD has uploaded the relevant information, including the ways to minimise food waste generation, relevant schemes and funding projects relating to food waste recycling and development progress of the Organic Resources Recovery Centres, onto the EPD website. For details, please visit [www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/prob\\_solutions/food\\_waste\\_challenge.html](http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/prob_solutions/food_waste_challenge.html). In addition, the EPD launched the Trial Scheme on Food Waste Collection in Public Rental Housing (PRH) Estates (the PRH Trial) in late October 2022, and concurrently set up a dedicated website of the PRH Trial at [www.foodwasterecycling.hk](http://www.foodwasterecycling.hk) to provide easier access to the relevant information on smart food waste recycling for PRH residents.

With the implementation of MSW charging, we anticipate that the public demand for food waste recycling will continue to increase. In this connection, the EPD has already uploaded the locations of food waste recycling points to the Map of Recycling Points, which is newly available on the Hong Kong Waste Reduction Website (the Website), and the GREEN\$ and the "Waste Less" mobile apps developed in recent years, with a view to enabling the public to search for the recycling points for food waste and other common recyclables. Moreover, the EPD is preparing to include information on food waste recycling in the "Home Recycling One Stop Shop" section of the Website, and the relevant work is expected to be completed in the first quarter of

this year, thereby offering public access to information on various types of recyclables on one single platform. Our discussion with the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer is also underway in relation to the plan to make the locations and relevant information of recycling points for food waste and other common recyclables available on the "iAM Smart" platform. The EPD will continue to provide information to the public via various channels to facilitate waste reduction and recycling by the public.

(2), (3), (5) & (6) The EPD is actively implementing different food waste collection initiatives to expand the food waste collection network while providing support to various sectors of the community to participate in food waste recycling. We launched a large-scale Pilot Scheme on Food Waste Collection in 2021, providing point-to-point collection services for premises which generate larger quantities of food waste. Currently, there are approximately 860 participating venues, including food factories, public markets, cooked food centres, wholesale markets, hospitals, government facilities, tertiary institutions, hotels, shopping malls, restaurants, PRH estates and private housing estates, etc. Among them, commercial and industrial premises, including hotels, clubs, shopping malls and eateries, account for about 380 venues. In 2023, a total of about 60 800 tonnes of food waste were recycled at the Government's food waste treatment facilities, of which about 2 500 tonnes came from households and the remaining came from commercial and industrial sources. Given that the food waste collection points catering for eateries also collect the food waste generated by other commercial tenants in the same premises, such as supermarkets in shopping malls and stall operators in municipal services buildings, separate breakdowns of the amount of food waste collected from eateries cannot be compiled.

The EPD mainly promotes domestic food waste recycling through the following initiatives:

(a) The EPD, in collaboration with the Housing Department (HD) and Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS), launched the PRH Trial at the end of October 2022, in which Food Waste Smart Recycling Bins (FWSRBs) equipped with overflow prevention and odour abatement devices have been installed to collect food waste for maintaining environmental hygiene. Residents are awarded GREEN\$ points to encourage their participation. The PRH Trial had already been extended to 13 PRH estates (with a total of 101 blocks) by mid-September last year, six months ahead of the original target and covering some 170 000 residents.

As at December 31, 2023, the EPD installed a total of 300 FWSRBs in 70 PRH estates, with a cumulative collection of about 1 830 tonnes of food waste. The EPD is working with the HD and the HKHS in full steam to extend the smart food waste recycling services to all PRH estates in Hong Kong (involving an additional 1 400 buildings). We expect to cover half of all PRH estates in Hong Kong before the Lunar New Year, and can substantially complete the installation of more than 700 FWSRBs in all 213 PRH estates across the territory by August this year, accounting for about one-third of the household population in Hong Kong.

(b) The EPD subsidises the installation of FWSRBs for food waste collection in private residential buildings through the Industry Support Programme under the Recycling Fund. As at December 31, 2023, the Recycling Fund has approved relevant applications for 40 private residential buildings, involving about 120 FWSRBs. Moreover, since December 29, last year, the Environmental Campaign Committee (ECC) has called for applications from private housing estates with at least 1 000 households for two-year funding support for the installation and relevant repair and maintenance services of FWSRBs to further encourage recycling of domestic food waste. As at mid-January 2024, the ECC has received a total of 20 applications for the Pilot Scheme on Food Waste Smart Recycling Bins in Private Housing Estates. The Scheme is still in its early stage of open application and it is expected that about 30 applications from housing estates will be approved before the end of August this year, involving about 100 FWSRBs. Since housing estates are required to submit applications for funding under the relevant funding schemes on their own initiative, the actual quantity of FWSRBs will depend on the number of applications received and approvals granted. In case of an overwhelming number of applications from the housing estates, the ECC will consider increasing the number of FWSRBs; and

(c) In September and December 2023, the EPD installed FWSRBs at two recycling stations in the vicinity of residential areas, namely GREEN@SHAM SHUI PO and GREEN@EASTERN, to conduct trial domestic food waste collection from the neighbourhood (including single-block and "three-nil" buildings) as public collection points. They are complemented by the reward of GREEN\$ points to encourage active participation from the public. The trial has received positive responses from the public, with over 14 000 individuals participating in food waste recycling as at December 31, 2023. The EPD will closely monitor the level of public participation in food waste recycling and conduct timely review of the effectiveness of the trial public food waste collection points. Based on the findings of the review, the Government will continue to explore installing additional public food waste collection points in suitable locations (such as public markets and refuse collection points) to provide the public with more convenient channels for recycling. To further assist residents in conducting food waste recycling, since November 2023, the EPD has also set up "community food waste mobile collection spots" operating with a fixed destination and time schedules in locations packed with eateries and in the vicinity of village houses or single-block buildings in Sha Tin District for concurrently collecting food waste generated by nearby eateries and households. This initiative will gradually extend to more districts in the second quarter of 2024.

On publicity and education, the EPD and the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) provide promotional and educational activities through funding projects to PRH estates and private housing estates participating in the Scheme on Food Waste Collection in PRH Estates, the Industry Support Programme and the Pilot Scheme on Food Waste Smart Recycling Bins in Private Housing Estates. These activities include distributing promotional leaflets and domestic food waste buckets to households, displaying promotional posters in building lobbies and assisting those in need to register for the GREEN\$

physical cards etc., as well as arranging promotional ambassadors to encourage and guide the residents to practise source separation of food waste at home and the proper ways to use the FWSRBs. We will also liaise with the relevant members of the District Councils and their teams, district groups and organisations to strengthen publicity and promotion. The EPD will also closely monitor the utilisation rate of the FWSRBs, proactively listen to the feedbacks from the residents, and provide more publicity and educational support to public and private housing estates in need in a timely manner.

(4) Unlike other recyclables which could be stored for a period of time after collection (such as waste paper and waste plastics), food waste is mainly organic matter with higher moisture content. In general, daily collection services are required, or else environmental hygiene problems may arise. Therefore, the EPD needs to communicate with the village representatives (VRs) and villagers concerned to obtain their consent and support before installing FWSRBs in the rural areas, especially on the locations for collection bins to be placed inside a village. To this end, in November 2023, the EPD introduced to the Heung Yee Kuk New Territories the Pilot Scheme on Food Waste Collection, using the conventional food waste recycling bins, and the application details for funding granted by the ECF to non-profit-making organisations for installation of FWSRBs in rural areas, as well as calling for the active participation from the rural committees and VRs. At present, the ECF has approved four projects, in which two villages have already installed FWSRBs and arranged smart food waste recycling services. It is expected that the remaining six villages will gradually install FWSRBs in March this year to collect domestic food waste.