

LCQ17: Food waste recycling

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hoi-yan and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (May 8):

Question:

The Government will implement the Municipal Solid Waste Charging (MSW charging) on August 1 this year. However, some members of the catering industry have indicated that the current food waste recycling supporting facilities for eateries are still insufficient. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the current average daily quantity of food waste recovered in each of the 18 districts across the territory;

(2) of the current number of the following premises participating in the Pilot Scheme on Food Waste Collection in Hong Kong: (i) food processing factories, (ii) public markets, (iii) cooked food centres, (iv) wholesale markets, (v) hospitals, (vi) government facilities, (vii) tertiary institutions, (viii) hotels, (ix) club houses, (x) restaurants, (xi) public housing estates, and (xii) private housing courts (with a tabulated breakdown by District Council district);

(3) of the current average daily quantity of food waste recovered at (i) each food waste recycling point at refuse collection points and (ii) each food waste recycling spot in Hong Kong, with a tabulated breakdown by District Council district;

(4) of the maximum handling capacity of each food waste treatment facility of the Government; the total quantity of food waste from the industrial and commercial sectors recovered by each food waste treatment facility in each of the past three years, and the percentage of such quantity in the maximum handling capacity of the facilities;

(5) whether it has assessed if the quantity of food waste to be recovered will increase after the implementation of MSW charging; if it has assessed and the outcome is in the affirmative, whether it has assessed if the current food waste treatment facilities of the Government can cope with the increasing quantity of food waste to be recovered; if it has assessed and the outcome is in the negative, of the corresponding measures to be put in place;

(6) of the authorities' specific means to further encourage the industrial and commercial sectors to reduce food waste at source, such as whether they will consider subsidising the catering industry to set up sorting and recycling facilities, or encouraging the industry to participate in food recovery and donation activities; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(7) whether the authorities will introduce measures to facilitate the development of the downstream food waste recycling industry, so as to improve the food waste recycling industry chain; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Currently, about 11 100 tonnes of municipal solid waste are generated in Hong Kong per day, of which around 30 per cent is food waste. The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) is actively implementing various food waste collection initiatives, including support to the collection of food waste from commercial and industrial (C&I) sectors and households, so as to encourage the whole community and the general public to participate in food waste recycling. The reply to the question raised by the Hon Chan Hoi-yan is as follows:

(1) to (3) The EPD extended the Pilot Scheme on Food Waste Collection in 2021 to progressively provide point-to-point food waste collection services for public and private premises which generate larger quantities of food waste. Currently, there are approximately 900 collection points across the territory, such as food processing factories, public markets, cooked food centres, wholesale markets, hospitals, government facilities, tertiary institutions, school lunchbox suppliers, hotels and shopping malls, etc. From the current term of the Government on, the EPD is expanding the food waste recycling services to all public rental housing (PRH) estates at full steam with an aim to completing the installation of more than 700 food waste smart recycling bins (FWSRBs) in all of the 213 PRH estates (a total of approximately 1 500 blocks) across the territory by August this year, covering about one-third of the population in Hong Kong. Meanwhile, we have subsidised the installation of FWSRBs in private residential buildings and rural villages through the Recycling Fund and the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF), and in collaboration with the Environmental Campaign Committee. At present, the amount of food waste recovered from various local sources is gradually increasing, with an average daily collection of around 230 tonnes in March this year.

To promote the participation of restaurants in food waste recycling, the EPD has set up food waste collection points at 71 refuse collection points (RCPs) under the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, and the number will increase to nearly 100 in July this year. Nearby restaurants and residents can also use these food waste collection points. The EPD has also proactively approached restaurants in the vicinity of the food waste collection points and provided relevant information and appropriate assistance to them. At present, a total of around 500 restaurants have registered in this scheme, and the average daily food waste collected at the aforementioned 71 food waste collection points is around 3.2 tonnes. In addition, the EPD has progressively set up Food Waste Recycling Spots, using mobile booths or trucks, at "food and beverage (F&B) clusters" concentrated

with restaurants in Tai Po, Yuen Long, Tuen Mun and Sha Tin to collect food waste since April 2023 and has extended the services to Hong Kong Island and Kowloon during March and April this year. We have also set up 76 Food Waste Recycling Spots in 15 districts for collecting food waste from restaurants, with an average daily collection of around 2.1 tonnes.

The daily average quantity of food waste recovered in various districts, the number of venues participating in food waste recycling, and the locations of food waste collection points at RCPs and Food Waste Recycling Spots, along with their respective daily average quantity of food waste recovered, are tabulated in Table 1 to Table 4 of the Annex respectively.

(4) and (5) From 2021 to 2022, the total treatment capacity of food waste treatment facilities was 250 tonnes per day, including 200 tonnes per day of Organic Resources Recovery Centre Phase 1 (Oâ€\$PARK1) and 50 tonnes per day of the Food Waste, Sewage Sludge Anaerobic Co-digestion Trial Scheme at Tai Po Sewage Treatment Works. With the commencement of operation of the Food Waste, Sewage Sludge Anaerobic Co-digestion Trial Scheme at Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works in November 2023, the total treatment capacity of food waste treatment facilities increased from 250 tonnes per day to 300 tonnes per day. With the commencement of food waste reception at Organic Resources Recovery Centre Phase 2 (Oâ€\$PARK2) in March this year, the total treatment capacity has further increased to 600 tonnes per day at present. The quantities of food waste recovered from public and C&I premises over the past three years and their respective percentages of the highest treatment capacity of that year are tabulated below:

Year	Quantity of food waste recovered from public and C&I premises	
	Annual total volume (tonnes per year)	Percentage of the highest treatment capacity of the year (%)
2021	48 986	54
2022	48 648	53
2023	58 260	53

With the launch of various facilitation measures, promotional and educational campaigns, as well as GREEN\$ Electronic Participation Incentive Scheme to proactively encourage public participation in food waste recycling, we expect that the quantity of food waste recovered will increase progressively. The existing food waste treatment facilities in operation have a total daily food waste treatment capacity of 600 tonnes, which is sufficient to meet the food waste treatment needs. We will closely monitor changes in the quantity of food waste recovered and level of public participation in food waste recycling, and review the planning and development of food waste treatment facilities in a timely manner.

(6) To encourage restaurants to participate in food waste recycling, the EPD

will visit restaurants in the vicinity of the collection points to distribute promotional leaflets and invite them to register for the abovementioned food waste collection points which are set up at RCPs and F&B clusters. We will explain the arrangements for food waste recycling to the restaurants and provide them with transparent plastic bags and small containers free of charge to facilitate their temporary storage of recyclable food waste.

To promote food waste reduction at source, the Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign has been promoting a "Food Wise and Waste Less" culture and encouraging behavioural change to reduce food waste at source in the community through various schemes and activities since its launch in 2013. The Government has also been supporting non-governmental organisations through the ECF to collect surplus food from the commercial sector and donate them to the needy in the society in order to achieve the goals of caring for society and reducing food waste.

(7) To promote the sustainable development of the recycling industry, the Recycling Fund set up by the Government has assisted the local recycling industry in enhancing its overall operational capabilities and productivity, and helped enterprises to upgrade and expand their recycling operation through various funding programmes. On food waste recycling, the Recycling Fund launched a scheme on Supporting Residential Buildings in Adopting Smart Bins Technology in Food Waste under the Industry Support Programme in 2020, specifically supporting and subsidising private residential buildings to collect food waste using smart recycling bins so as to encourage members of the public and housing estates to participate in domestic food waste recycling. The Enterprise Support Programme (ESP) under the Recycling Fund also provides project-based matching funds for individual food waste recycling enterprises to enhance and expand their recycling operations. Enterprises can also implement standard projects through simplified application procedures in the Standard Project under the ESP, including purchase and installation of relevant equipment for handling food waste.