

ITEM FOR ESTABLISHMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

HEAD 44 – ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT Subhead 000 Operational expenses

Members are invited to recommend to Finance Committee the creation of the following supernumerary post in the Environmental Protection Department with immediate effect upon approval by Finance Committee up to 31 March 2019 –

1 Principal Environmental Protection Officer
(D1) (\$135,950 - \$148,750)

PROBLEM

We need to strengthen the leadership and manpower support in Environmental Protection Department (EPD) for implementing the various strategies as set out in ‘A Food Waste and Yard Waste Plan for Hong Kong: 2014-2022’ (Food Waste Plan) to reduce food waste disposed of at landfills, and to sustain the initial achievements made so far in food waste reduction.

PROPOSAL

2. We propose to create a supernumerary Principal Environmental Protection Officer (PEPO) (D1) post in EPD with immediate effect upon approval by Finance Committee (FC) up to 31 March 2019. The proposed PEPO will lead the Food Waste Management Group (FWMG) created in 2014 in EPD for implementing the various strategies as set out in the Food Waste Plan.

/JUSTIFICATION

JUSTIFICATION

Limited Landfill Capacity and Food Waste Reduction Target

3. Food waste is a major constituent of the municipal solid waste (MSW) disposed of at landfills. In 2015, of the 10 159 tonnes of MSW landfilled each day, some 3 382 tonnes were food waste (i.e. about 33% of the MSW). This translates to a disposal rate of 0.46 kg/person/day. The practice of disposing biodegradable food waste at landfills indiscriminately is not sustainable and is environmentally undesirable as it depletes the limited landfill space, generates leachate and greenhouse gases that require further mitigation measures to deal with and squanders the useful organic contents.

4. To address the food waste problem in Hong Kong, the Government promulgated the Food Waste Plan in February 2014 articulating the overall strategy and a plan of actions to meet the target of reducing the amount of food waste disposed of at landfills by 40% by 2022. The plan comprises four strategies to tackle the food waste challenge, namely reduction at source, reuse and donation, recyclable collection, and turning food waste to energy.

Stepped-up Efforts in Food Waste Reduction and Recycling

5. Achieving 40% reduction of food waste disposed at landfills by 2022 as set out in the Food Waste Plan requires collaborative efforts at multiple fronts. The Government has been implementing a host of initiatives, programmes and projects in accordance with the above strategies, including the launch of a Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign (FWHKC) to raise the public awareness of food waste reduction, planning and development of a network of Organic Waste Treatment Facilities (OWTFs), as well as various initiatives to promote food waste reduction and recycling, including funding support for non-government organizations to collect surplus food for distribution to the needy.

6. The various initiatives taken, in particular on nurturing a culture to reduce food waste at source and to donate surplus food to the needy, coupled with the efforts made by various sectors of the community, have collectively made some initial achievements in reducing food waste disposal at landfills. According to the latest statistics, food waste disposal at landfills had dropped by 7.1% in 2015 as compared to 2014. In particular, the drop in domestic food waste disposal was

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more notable (-8.1%) than that in the commercial and industrial (C&I) sectors (-4.6%). The per capita disposal rate of municipal food waste also dropped by 7.9%, from 0.50 kg/person/day in 2014 to 0.46 kg/person/day in 2015¹. While food waste generation correlates generally to the level of vibrancy of the food and beverage, catering and hotel sectors, etc., such a discrepancy suggests that there should still be room for redoubling efforts to further reduce the food waste generation and disposal, particularly in the C&I sectors.

7. Another important backbone strategy under the Food Waste Plan is the development of sufficient food waste recycling facilities for the recovery of energy and nutrients from food waste that cannot be avoided. In light of the fact that Hong Kong has been generating a very large amount of food waste each day, and that food waste in general decomposes quickly and is not suitable for compaction at refuse transfer stations for long-haul transport, the most efficient and environmentally sound method to recycle food waste is to build a network of dedicated recycling plants. This approach will enable food waste to be transported quickly from its source to facilities that are not too far away, thereby reducing potential nuisance and minimizing the carbon footprint so incurred. We have estimated in the Food Waste Plan that Hong Kong has to build a network of around five to six OWTFs across the territory in the longer term, with a total recycling capacity of about 1 300 to 1 500 tonnes per day, which together with other measures, should help prolong the life span of the operating landfills.

8. With funding approval from FC in October 2014, the first phase of OWTF situated at Siu Ho Wan of North Lantau is currently under construction, and is scheduled for testing and commissioning in the second quarter of 2017, as well as full commissioning by end 2017. A site at Sha Ling of the North District has also been earmarked for the development of OWTF Phase 2, the tendering process of which is planned to commence by end 2016. In addition, a site in Shek Kong has been earmarked for the development of OWTF Phase 3, and we will take forward the Environmental Impact Assessment and Engineering Feasibility Study in 2017. To better prepare the community for large scale food waste recycling in future, we have implemented a number of schemes to raise public awareness of food waste reduction, and to promote the practice of food waste source separation to facilitate onward collection and recycling.

/Need

¹ The final report 'Monitoring Solid Waste in Hong Kong – Waste Statistics for 2015' is still being compiled and will be released by end of 2016. To enable Members to discuss this paper in perspective and on a well-informed basis, we have compiled the statistics in relation to food waste first among the various waste types.

Need for a Supernumerary PEPO (D1) post

9. To take forward the Food Waste Plan issued in 2014 and to cope with the huge workload involved in this new initiative, the EPD set up the FWMG in 2014 through temporary deployment of existing manpower and creation of eight non-directorate posts² (five permanent posts and three time-limited posts for three years) between 2014 and 2016 to plan, manage and implement various food waste reduction initiatives and recycling projects as promulgated in the Food Waste Plan.

10. In view of the persistently huge workload and the continued need to closely monitor the complex issues involved as a result of the implementation of the Food Waste Plan, there is an urgent and strong need for creating a new supernumerary PEPO post, to be designated as PEPO (Food Waste Management), up to 31 March 2019, to provide professional input and leadership to FWMG to handle the mammoth and highly-demanding tasks as stipulated in the Food Waste Plan. The proposed supernumerary PEPO post will report to the Assistant Director (Nature Conservation and Infrastructure Planning) (AD(NCIP)). He/she will assist AD(NCIP) in supervising the FWMG to plan and implement the strategies and initiatives as set out in the Food Waste Plan. In particular, the proposed supernumerary PEPO post will play a key role in championing the FWHKC in the coming years to sustain the initial achievements we have made in food waste reduction. His/her leadership is also instrumental to the development of the OWTF network which has now entered a critical stage. The duties for the proposed supernumerary PEPO post are shown in Enclosure 1. The organization chart of EPD before and after creation of the proposed post is at Enclosure 2.

Encl. 1

Encl. 2

11. Such professional input and leadership is crucial to the sustained implementation of various food waste reduction initiatives under the Food Waste Plan including the FWHKC and the development and operation of the network of OWTFs. Without such professional support, it would be extremely difficult to sustain the progress and initial achievements we have made as reported above, or to further pursue the measures stipulated in the Food Waste Plan which are critical to meeting the target of reducing food waste disposal at landfills by 40% by 2022.

/ALTERNATIVES

² These eight non-directorate posts, together with other posts temporarily redeployed within the EPD, currently report to the supernumerary PEPO post created under the temporary arrangement mentioned in paragraph 12.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

12. In view of the urgent operational needs, and despite all the competing priorities within EPD, we have created a supernumerary PEPO post to head FWMG by temporarily deploying a PEPO post from the Cross Boundary and International Division (CBD) since September 2015 as a stop-gap measure. While such a temporary arrangement has been able to meet EPD's imminent manpower need, this is not a sustainable solution as the PEPO post in CBD is originally designated for supporting the various cross-boundary and international cooperation duties of CBD, including in particular preparatory work for a piece of new legislation to implement the Minamata Convention on Mercury in Hong Kong and coordination of the Government's efforts in combating climate change.

13. We have evaluated critically whether the duties of the proposed directorate post could be absorbed by existing PEPOs within EPD. Our conclusion is that it would not be viable for any of the existing PEPOs to take up additional duties in relation to food waste management without prejudicing the delivery of the policy initiatives under their own portfolios. The portfolios of the existing PEPOs are at Enclosure 3.

Encl. 3

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

14. The proposed creation of the supernumerary PEPO post will bring about an additional notional annual salary cost at mid-point of \$1,732,800. The additional full annual average staff cost, including salaries and staff on-cost, is \$2,582,000³. Subject to FC's approval for the creation of the supernumerary PEPO post, we will include sufficient provision in the draft Estimates of the relevant financial years to meet the cost of the proposal.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

15. The Legislative Council Panel on Environmental Affairs was consulted at its meeting on 24 October 2016. Members generally supported the submission of this proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee.

/ESTABLISHMENT

³ For the eight non-directorate civil service posts mentioned in paragraph 9 above, the notional annual salary cost at mid-point is \$5,195,910, and the full annual average staff cost (including salaries and staff on-cost) is \$7,141,000.

ESTABLISHMENT CHANGES

16. The establishment changes of Head 44 EPD for the past two years are as follows –

Establishment (Note)	Number of posts			
	Existing (as at 1 November 2016)	As at 1 April 2016	As at 1 April 2015	As at 1 April 2014
A	33+(9) [#]	33+(6)	33+(7)	33+(4)
B	569	552	543	497
C	1 277	1 271	1 251	1 236
Total	1 879+(9)	1 856+(6)	1 827+(7)	1 766+(4)

Note:

- A – ranks in the directorate pay scale or equivalent
- B – non-directorate ranks, the maximum pay point of which is above MPS point 33 or equivalent
- C – non-directorate ranks, the maximum pay point of which is at or below MPS point 33 or equivalent
- () – number of supernumerary directorate posts
- [#] – as at 1 November 2016, there was no unfilled directorate post in EPD

CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU COMMENTS

17. The Civil Service Bureau supports the proposed creation of the supernumerary PEPO post up to 31 March 2019. The grading and ranking of the proposed post are considered appropriate having regard to the level and scope of responsibilities concerned.

ADVICE OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DIRECTORATE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

18. As the PEPO post is proposed on a supernumerary basis, its creation, if approved, will be reported to the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service in accordance with the agreed procedure.

Job Description
Principal Environmental Protection Officer

Rank : Principal Environmental Protection Officer (D1)

Responsible to : Assistant Director (Nature Conservation and Infrastructure Planning)

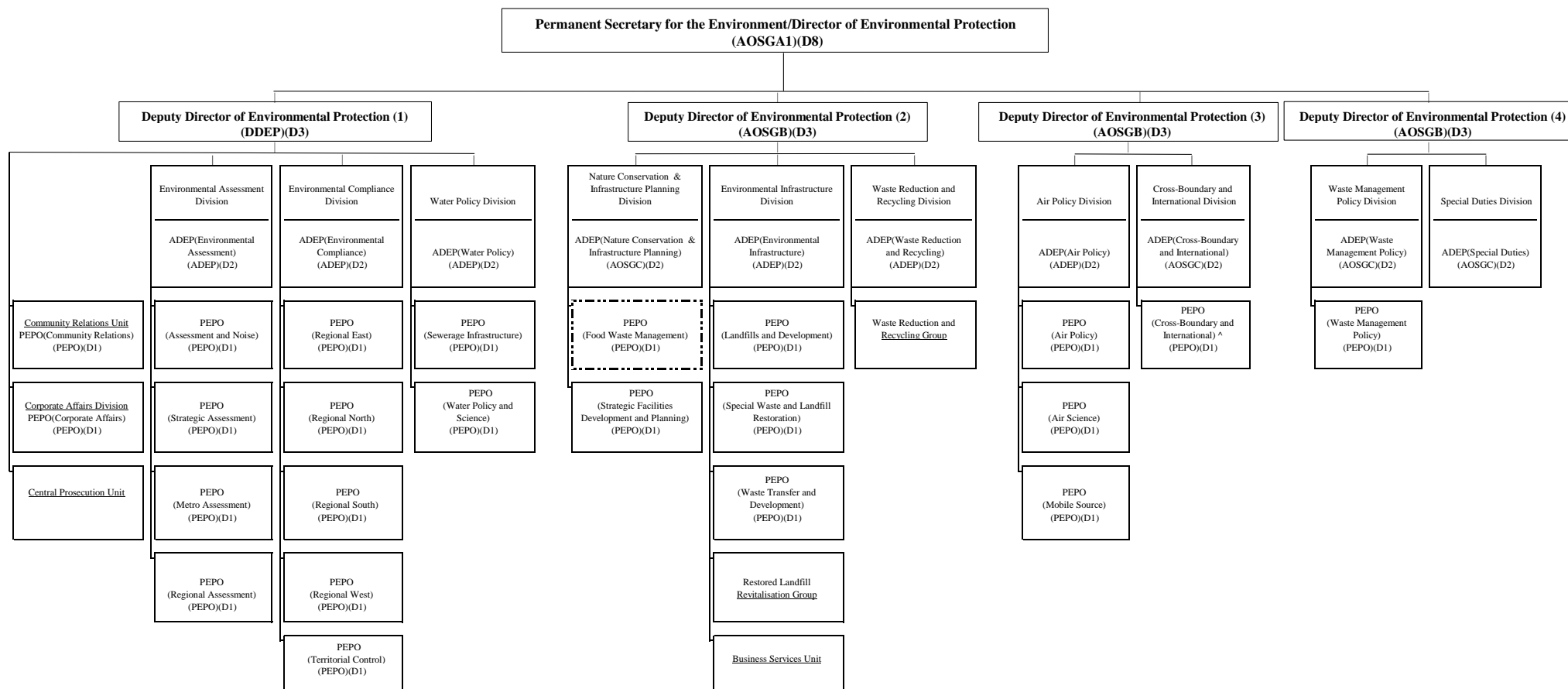
Main Duties and Responsibilities –

- (a) To supervise and direct the work of Food Waste Management Group.
- (b) To manage the implementation of the on-going Organic Waste Treatment Facilities (OWTFs) Phase 1 Design Build and Operate Contract; and make preparation including the necessary administrative and logistical arrangement to receive food waste to be delivered from the commercial and industrial sectors.
- (c) To manage the implementation of OWTF Phase 2 and prepare for the tendering of OWTF Phase 2.
- (d) To prepare for the initiation of the feasibility study and Environmental Impact Assessment for OWTF Phase 3, including the necessary consultant selection process and to pave the way for the development of OWTF Phase 3.
- (e) To provide inputs on future food waste management aspects to on-going long-term, strategic and regional studies and to search for suitable sites for future OWTFs to pave the way for future development of more OWTFs to meet the territorial needs.
- (f) To kick-start and manage a consultancy study committed in ‘A Food Waste and Yard Waste Plan for Hong Kong 2014-2022’ on the food waste collection and delivery in territorial and regional levels to meet the handling and treatment requirements.
- (g) To oversee and facilitate various on-going food waste reduction and recycling initiatives and measures in both public and private sectors, in particular those under the Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign and the launching of ‘Food Wise Eateries’ campaign, food waste survey, etc.

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- (h) To manage and monitor the on-going pilot project and partnership schemes with both public and private sectors to pave the way for longer term initiatives on food waste management for driving behavioral change of the community and preparing the diversion of source separated food waste away from landfill disposal to other food waste recycling and waste-to-energy facilities.
- (i) To respond to any proposals that may come from the private sector during the interim period on the development of food waste recycling and treatment facilities.

Existing and Proposed Organisation Chart of Environmental Protection Department



 Post proposed for creation

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ADEP: Assistant Director of Environmental Protection
AOSGA1: Administrative Officer Staff Grade A1
AOSGB: Administrative Officer Staff Grade B
AOSGC: Administrative Officer Staff Grade C
DDEP: Deputy Director of Environmental Protection
PEPO: Principal Environmental Protection Officer

**Major Duties and Responsibilities of the existing
Principal Environmental Protection Officers (PEPOs)**

PEPO(Corporate Affairs) is responsible for –

- (a) providing departmental administration support, accounting, resources management, human resource management, information technology and knowledge management, and support to corporate development.

PEPO(Community Relations) is responsible for –

- (a) overseeing the secretarial support to the Environment and Conservation Fund Committee and the Environmental Campaign Committee; and
- (b) promoting environmental education and community engagement for municipal solid waste charging.

PEPO(Assessment and Noise) is responsible for –

- (a) reviewing and developing the environmental noise policies and managing the amendments of the Noise Control Ordinance;
- (b) providing professional advice to planning and development proposals to pre-empt and mitigate noise problems;
- (c) overseeing the implementation of noise abatement programme to deal with traffic noise; and
- (d) exploring and studying with other departments the innovative noise mitigating building designs and the practicability of adopting various noise abatement measures in HK including applying low noise road surfacing materials on local roads.

PEPO(Strategic Assessment) is responsible for –

- (a) managing statutory applications and processes under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance for projects and development proposals in Tuen Mun, Tsuen Wan, Yuen Long, Sheung Shui, Fanling and Tai Po;
- (b) administering strategic environmental assessment studies and major environmental planning studies; and
- (c) supervising the offering of environmental inputs to town planning proposals, development studies, land supply for housing and works project.

/PEPO(Metro Assessment)

PEPO(Metro Assessment) is responsible for –

- (a) managing statutory applications and processes under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance for projects and development proposals in Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and Shatin;
- (b) managing the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance Register Office;
- (c) implementing measures and developing guidelines to improve the environmental impact assessment process and documentation; and
- (d) supervising the offering of environmental inputs to town planning proposals, development studies, land supply for housing and works projects.

PEPO(Regional Assessment) is responsible for –

- (a) managing statutory applications and processes under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance for projects and development proposals in Lantau, Tsing Yi, Islands, Sai Kung and Tseung Kwan O;
- (b) supervising the offering of environmental inputs to town planning proposals, development studies, land supply for housing and works project; and
- (c) developing and reviewing of noise enforcement strategies and guidelines.

PEPO(Regional East) is responsible for –

- (a) overseeing the enforcement of environmental legislation in five districts (Yau Tsim Mong, Kowloon City, Wong Tai Sin, Kwun Tong and Sai Kung); and
- (b) organizing investigations on air, noise, waste and water pollution in the districts, responding to emergency incidents and public complaints, and working with District Councils and other stakeholders on local environmental issues.

/PEPO(Regional South)

PEPO(Regional South) is responsible for –

- (a) overseeing the enforcement of environmental legislation in five districts (Central & Western, Wanchai, Eastern, Southern and Islands);
- (b) organizing investigations on air, noise, waste and water pollution in the districts, responding to emergency incidents and public complaints, and working with District Councils and other stakeholders on local environmental issues; and
- (c) working with various trade associations on partnership initiatives to promote compliance and good pollution control practices.

PEPO(Regional West) is responsible for –

- (a) overseeing the enforcement of environmental legislation in four districts (Sham Shui Po, Kwai Tsing, Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun);
- (b) organizing investigations on air, noise, waste and water pollution in the districts, responding to emergency incidents and public complaints, and working with District Councils and other stakeholders on local environmental issues; and
- (c) overseeing the implementation and regulation of asbestos control activities and abatement works throughout the territory.

PEPO(Regional North) is responsible for –

- (a) overseeing the enforcement of environmental legislation in four districts (Shatin, Tai Po, North and Yuen Long);
- (b) organizing investigations on air, noise, waste and water pollution in the districts, responding to emergency incidents and public complaints, and working with District Councils and other stakeholders on local environmental issues; and
- (c) overseeing the implementation and regulation of livestock waste control activities and the village house connections to the public sewerage in the New Territories.

/PEPO(Territorial Control)

PEPO(Territorial Control) is responsible for –

- (a) overseeing the implementation of territory-wide control programmes on chemical waste disposal, transboundary movement of waste, clinical waste disposal, disposal of marine mud and sediments, hazardous chemicals and plastic shopping bag charging; and
- (b) overseeing the control enforcement and inter-departmental collaboration initiatives for tackling illegal dumping and land filling of construction waste.

PEPO(Sewerage Infrastructure) is responsible for –

- (a) implementing and reviewing the sewerage strategy; overseeing the management of sewerage infrastructure planning;
- (b) managing the Studies on Further Enhancing Quality of Coastal Waters of Victoria Harbour, Sewerage Master Plans Review and the Tolo Harbour Effluent Export Scheme Review; and
- (c) working with the Drainage Services Department on the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme.

PEPO(Water Policy and Science) is responsible for –

- (a) reviewing and developing Water Quality Objectives for marine waters, beaches and inland watercourses, overseeing the implementation of water quality monitoring programmes including the harbour and nearshore water quality;
- (b) managing cross-boundary water quality issues with mainland counterparts;
- (c) providing advice on water quality impact of development projects; and
- (d) coordinating government efforts in addressing marine refuse problem.

PEPO(Strategic Facilities Development and Planning) is responsible for –

- (a) managing the development of the Integrated Waste Management Facilities Phase 1 and the associated compensatory marine park;
- (b) overseeing the Food Waste-Sewage Sludge Co-digestion Pilot Trial; and
- (c) overseeing the planning study of future waste management and transfer facilities to determine the additional waste facilities and technologies required to meet Hong Kong's development needs up to 2041.

/PEPO(Landfills and Development)

PEPO(Landfills and Development) is responsible for –

- (a) monitoring and management of existing strategic landfill projects;
- (b) overseeing various engineering planning and contractual processes for landfill extension projects;
- (c) managing various stakeholder engagement processes to facilitate the implementation of different landfill developments and projects; and
- (d) managing the implementation and enforcement of the construction waste charging scheme.

PEPO(Special Waste and Landfill Restoration) is responsible for –

- (a) overseeing the development, contract management and operation of the Sludge Treatment Facility, Chemical Waste Treatment Facility, Low-level Radioactive Waste Storage Facility and Animal Waste Composting Plant;
- (b) supervising the implementation and review of charging basis for chemical, MARPOL and clinical waste charging schemes; and
- (c) supervising the project management, contract administration and operation of the restored landfills.

PEPO(Waste Transfer and Development) is responsible for –

- (a) the operation, planning and development of the Refuse Transfer Station network and management of a charging scheme for refuse transfer service;
- (b) implementing a territorial waste diversion plan for the South East New Territories Landfill;
- (c) overseeing the statutory enforcement for new refuse collection vehicles equipment standard; and
- (d) managing the consultancy study on upgrading Nim Wan Road and Deep Bay Road and connecting the roads to Tuen Mun.

/PEPO(Air Policy)

PEPO(Air Policy) is responsible for –

- (a) formulating air quality management plan (including regularly reviewing the air quality objectives); and
- (b) developing, implementing and managing air control programmes on marine vessels, power plants, non-road mobile machinery, products containing volatile organic compounds, asbestos and ozone depleting substances.

PEPO(Air Science) is responsible for –

- (a) overseeing the development and operation of the regular air quality monitoring network and disseminating air quality information; and
- (b) planning, development and execution of air science projects and air science cooperation work with the Mainland authorities.

PEPO(Mobile Source) is responsible for –

- (a) overseeing the planning, development, implementation and enforcement of vehicle emission control programmes;
- (b) managing the operation of the Pilot Green Transport Fund; and
- (c) promoting the wider use of electric vehicles.

PEPO(Cross-Boundary and International) is responsible for –

- (a) liaising with Mainland authorities on cross-boundary environmental issues and ensuring timely implementation of agreed pollution control measures and environmental protection programmes;
- (b) providing secretarial support to the Guangdong-Hong Kong Joint Working Group on Sustainable Development and Environmental Protection;
- (c) devising and taking forward the implementation plan to give effect to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; and
- (d) implementation of the climate change action agenda and plans to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases in Hong Kong.

[Note: The post will be reinstated upon the creation of the proposed PEPO post.]

/PEPO(Waste Management Policy)

PEPO(Waste Management Policy) is responsible for –

- (a) developing the legislation, programmes and implementation details for producer responsibility scheme (PRSS) on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) and glass beverage containers;
- (b) managing the design-build-operate project for the WEEE Treatment and Recycling Facility;
- (c) managing the Glass Management Contractors and developing the enforcement strategy for provisions under the Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance in respect of the two PRSSs; and
- (d) developing the procurement strategy and administering the operation contracts for the provision of Community Green Stations in each of the 18 districts.
