

## Head 48 — GOVERNMENT LABORATORY

**Controlling officer:** the Government Chemist will account for expenditure under this Head.

**Estimate 2017–18** ..... **\$463.9m**

**Establishment ceiling 2017–18** (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 480 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2017 and as at 31 March 2018..... **\$280.4m**

In addition, there will be an estimated seven directorate posts as at 31 March 2017 and as at 31 March 2018.

**Commitment balance**..... **\$8.6m**

### Controlling Officer's Report

#### Programmes

**Programme (1) Statutory Testing** This programme contributes to Policy Area 2: Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety (Secretary for Food and Health) and Policy Area 15: Health (Secretary for Food and Health).

**Programme (2) Advisory and Investigative Services** This programme contributes to Policy Area 2: Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety (Secretary for Food and Health), Policy Area 9: Internal Security (Secretary for Security), Policy Area 23: Environmental Protection, Conservation, Power and Sustainable Development (Secretary for the Environment) and Policy Area 32: Environmental Hygiene (Secretary for Food and Health).

**Programme (3) Forensic Science Services** This programme contributes to Policy Area 9: Internal Security (Secretary for Security).

#### Detail

##### Programme (1): Statutory Testing

	2015–16 (Actual)	2016–17 (Original)	2016–17 (Revised)	<b>2017–18 (Estimate)</b>
Financial provision (\$m)	209.6	218.6	219.5 (+0.4%)	<b>211.0</b> (–3.9%)
				(or –3.5% on 2016–17 Original)

#### Aim

- 2 The aim is to carry out statutory functions as referee analyst under a number of ordinances and regulations.

#### Brief Description

3 The Government Chemist discharges statutory functions as referee analyst under various ordinances and regulations. The work involves the analysis of food products for regulatory compliance; the examination of western and Chinese medicines for registration and quality control; the classification of dangerous goods for compliance with the Dangerous Goods Ordinance (Cap. 295); the testing of dutiable commodities for tariff classification; the assessment of toys, children's products and consumer articles for health and safety hazards; the determination of tar and nicotine yields in cigarettes; the assay of gold and platinum articles for fineness; the analysis of consumer goods in relation to the fitness with their trade descriptions; and the verification of products and equipment for compliance with the Weights and Measures Ordinance (Cap. 68). The Laboratory provides 24-hour on-call service to assist the Fire Services Department at scenes of accidents involving hazardous chemicals.

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4 In 2016–17, the Laboratory continued outsourcing some of the routine food testing work to private testing laboratories. The resources released from outsourcing were deployed to take up test method development, new testing work arising from amendments of food legislation and activities related to outsourcing such as organisation of technical seminars as well as chemical metrology development. In another area of health concern, the Laboratory continued to provide full support for (a) urgent investigatory analyses of substandard pharmaceuticals and Chinese medicines; (b) investigation into cases of adverse reaction arising from the consumption of proprietary Chinese medicines and/or health products found containing undeclared western drug ingredients; and (c) intoxication incidents related to substitution or contamination of herbs in Chinese herbal medicines. In addition, the Laboratory continued to provide analytical and advisory support to the Department of Health in the development of Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica Standards. The Laboratory will continue to provide support to the testing and certification industry, for example, arrangement of proficiency tests for local laboratories and provision of reference materials.

5 The key performance measures in respect of statutory testing are:

### *Targets#*

	Target	2015 (Actual)	2016 (Actual)	2017 (Plan)
<i>Testing of:</i>				
food complaint cases within 25 working days (%).....	84Ω	89	85	<b>84</b>
urgent samples relating to food incidents within two working days (%).....	100	100	100	<b>100</b>
other food samples within reporting time averaging 19 working days (%).....	95	98	98	<b>95</b>
urgent samples relating to pharmaceutical incidents within two working days (%)@.....	95	N.A.	100	<b>95</b>
other pharmaceutical samples within reporting time averaging 25 working days (%)@.....	95	N.A.	97	<b>95</b>
pharmaceuticals (quality control) within reporting time averaging 14 working days (%)Θ.....	N.A.	99	N.A.	<b>N.A.</b>
pharmaceuticals (registration) within reporting time averaging 30 working days (%)Θ.....	N.A.	98	N.A.	<b>N.A.</b>
urgent samples relating to Chinese medicine incidents within two working days (%)@.....	95	N.A.	100	<b>95</b>
other Chinese medicine samples within reporting time averaging 30 working days (%)@.....	95	N.A.	99	<b>95</b>
Chinese medicines within reporting time averaging 30 working days (%)Ψ.....	N.A.	98	N.A.	<b>N.A.</b>
dangerous goods within reporting time averaging 14 working days (%).....	96Δ	99	98	<b>96</b>
dutiable and other commodities within reporting time averaging ten working days (%).....	95	99	99	<b>95</b>
toys and children's products within reporting time averaging 15 working days (%).....	95	99	99	<b>95</b>
consumer goods within reporting time averaging 35 working days (%).....	95	99	99	<b>95</b>
non-pharmaceutical consumer goods (trade descriptions) within reporting time averaging 35 working days (%).....	92Λ	94	97	<b>92</b>

# For targets where reporting time is mentioned, different samples require different analytical procedures, hence different reporting time. The quoted number of working days required represents an average of reporting time for the different types of samples and test requests within the category, while the target (in percentage) is the total compliance rate of the concerned samples and test requests within a particular category against their respective targets.

Ω The target is revised from 83 per cent to 84 per cent as from 2016.

@ These are new targets as from 2016, which are regrouped into “urgent” and “other” samples to better reflect different levels of urgency.

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- ⊖ These targets are replaced by the new targets relating to pharmaceuticals marked with @ as from 2016.  
 Ψ This target is replaced by the new targets relating to Chinese medicines marked with @ as from 2016.  
 Δ The target is revised from 95 per cent to 96 per cent as from 2017.  
 ^ The target is revised from 90 per cent to 92 per cent as from 2016.

### Indicators

The key indicators for statutory testing are the numbers of tests performed on the various categories of services.

	2015 (Actual)	2016 (Actual)	2017 (Estimate)
<i>Tests performed</i>			
food complaint samples .....	14 317	12 422	<b>14 000</b>
urgent samples relating to food incidents .....	316	393	N.A.‡
other food samples .....	196 339	196 370	<b>184 000</b>
urgent samples relating to pharmaceutical incidents§ ....	N.A.	655	N.A.‡
other pharmaceutical samples§ .....	N.A.	54 078	<b>51 000</b>
pharmaceuticals (quality control)ω .....	22 025λ	N.A.	N.A.
pharmaceuticals (registration)ω .....	37 929	N.A.	N.A.
urgent samples relating to Chinese medicine incidents§ .....	N.A.	438	N.A.‡
other Chinese medicine samples§ .....	N.A.	81 468	<b>80 000</b>
Chinese medicines¶ .....	82 930	N.A.	N.A.
dangerous goods .....	4 983	8 120η	<b>5 000</b>
dutiable and other commodities .....	5 618	6 040	<b>6 000</b>
non-pharmaceutical consumer goods (trade descriptions) .....	5 948	4 642	<b>5 000</b>
cigarette samples .....	12 504	12 864	<b>13 000</b>
toys and children's products .....	20 400	20 628	<b>21 500</b>
consumer goods .....	13 076	11 693	<b>12 000</b>

‡ As the testing requirements for urgent samples relating to food, pharmaceuticals and Chinese medicine incidents respectively fluctuated in previous years, it is difficult to estimate either the occurrence of these type of incidents or the number of tests required.

§ These are new indicators as from 2016, which are regrouped into “urgent” and “other” samples to better reflect different levels of urgency.

ω These indicators are replaced by the new indicators relating to pharmaceuticals marked with § as from 2016.

λ The analytical requirement for pharmaceutical manufacturing work included under the category of pharmaceuticals (quality control) ceased from January 2015 due to closure of the Pharmaceutical Manufactory of the Department of Health. Hence, there was a decrease in the number of testing requests in 2015.

¶ This indicator is replaced by the new indicators relating to Chinese medicines marked with § as from 2016.

η The higher work output in 2016 was due to unforeseen and ad hoc litigation samples.

### Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2017–18

6 During 2017–18, the Laboratory will continue to:

- provide analytical services in support of the implementation of the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulation 2014;
- provide professional advisory and analytical services to support the implementation of the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap. 132CM);
- outsource some of the routine food testing work to the private sector to better utilise the Laboratory’s resources in developing and performing new tests regarding legislative amendments;
- provide analytical and advisory support to the Department of Health for the formulation and development of Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica Standards for Chinese herbal medicines commonly used in Hong Kong;
- provide metrology-in-chemistry support for the development of testing and certification industry in Hong Kong; and
- provide professional advisory and analytical services to support the enforcement of the various orders and regulations under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (Cap. 362). The services will cover analysis and authenticity tests on consumer goods, in particular those related to valuable goods such as jewellery, seafood products and Chinese medicinal products where their authenticity is of public concern.

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### Programme (2): Advisory and Investigative Services

	2015–16 (Actual)	2016–17 (Original)	2016–17 (Revised)	<b>2017–18 (Estimate)</b>
Financial provision (\$m)	83.3	88.0	92.6 (+5.2%)	<b>89.6</b> (–3.2%)
				(or +1.8% on 2016–17 Original)

#### *Aim*

7 The aim is to provide a wide range of primarily chemical testing and advisory services to other government departments and public institutions.

#### *Brief Description*

8 The Laboratory provides comprehensive analytical and advisory services to the Government in the management and monitoring of the environment and in the enforcement of various pollution control measures. Chemical testing of air, water and waste samples for a variety of pollution indicators constitutes the main activity under this programme. Specific incidents of emission or leakage of gaseous substances into the environment involve the Laboratory in on-site investigations. Analytical support is provided to the Hong Kong Observatory's Environmental Radiation Monitoring Programme as well as the Daya Bay Contingency Plan. Other activities include the examination of seepage and swimming pool water samples for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, analysis of samples related to evaluation of exposure to occupational hazards for the Labour Department, testing of government supplies for conformity to tender specifications and identifying products made from endangered species.

9 In 2016–17, the Laboratory continued to render analytical support and professional advice to the Government in improving the quality of the environment of Hong Kong and engage in scientific research to further enhance its analytical capabilities in environmental analysis. In addition to its routine commitments, the Laboratory was actively involved in various environmental impact studies and ad hoc projects including the analysis of environmental samples for organic and inorganic pollutants under the Toxic Substances Monitoring Programme. To support the implementation of the Air Pollution Control (Volatile Organic Compounds) Regulation (Cap. 311W), the Laboratory continued to provide analytical services for determining the content of volatile organic compounds in regulated products including architectural paints, vessel paints and pleasure craft paints, printing inks, adhesives and sealants, vehicle refinishing paints and consumer products. Method development and validation work for the analysis of new persistent organic pollutants was continued. In 2016, the Laboratory also provided over 360 pieces of professional advice relating to over 1 410 items for classification under the Dangerous Goods Ordinance and over 260 pieces of advice relating to over 540 items supporting implementation of the Chemical Weapons (Convention) Ordinance (Cap. 578) and control of strategic commodities.

10 The key performance measures in respect of advisory and investigative services are:

#### *Targets#*

	Target	2015 (Actual)	2016 (Actual)	<b>2017 (Plan)</b>
<i>Testing of:</i>				
air pollution monitoring samples within reporting time averaging 20 working days (%).....	95	99	99	<b>95</b>
field investigation (air pollution) samples within reporting time averaging 12 working days (%).....	96	100	100	<b>96</b>
air pollution samples for litigation purposes within reporting time averaging 18 working days (%).....	97	100	100	<b>97</b>
water quality monitoring samples within reporting time averaging 20 working days (%).....	96	97	99	<b>96</b>
environmental waste monitoring samples within reporting time averaging 27 working days (%).....	95	98	99	<b>95</b>
environmental waste samples for litigation purposes within reporting time averaging 12 working days (%).....	97	100	99	<b>97</b>
radioactivity monitoring samples within reporting time averaging 12 working days (%).....	95	100	100	<b>95</b>

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	Target	2015 (Actual)	2016 (Actual)	2017 (Plan)
pesticides formulation samples within reporting time averaging 36 working days (%).....	93	100	100	<b>93</b>
seepage and swimming pool water samples within ten working days (%).....	96	99	99	<b>96</b>
other samples within reporting time averaging 25 working days (%).....	90	99	99	<b>90</b>

# For targets where reporting time is mentioned, different samples require different analytical procedures, hence different reporting time. The quoted number of working days required represents an average of reporting time for the different types of samples and test requests within the category, while the target (in percentage) is the total compliance rate of the concerned samples and test requests within a particular category against their respective targets.

### Indicators

The key indicators for advisory and investigative services are the numbers of tests performed on the various categories of services.

	2015 (Actual)	2016 (Actual)	2017 (Estimate)
<i>Tests performed</i>			
air pollution monitoring samples .....	62 148	66 281	<b>63 000</b>
air pollution samples for litigation purposes.....	2 783	3 929	<b>3 400</b>
field investigation (air pollution) samples .....	476	417	<b>440</b>
water quality monitoring samples .....	128 920	134 935	<b>123 000</b>
environmental waste monitoring samples.....	10 799	12 747	<b>11 000</b>
environmental waste samples for litigation purposes .....	528	1 112	<b>1 400</b>
pesticides formulation samples .....	350	596	<b>700</b>
seepage and swimming pool water samples .....	35 248	46 081	<b>40 000</b>
miscellaneous			
radioactivity monitoring samples.....	5 199	5 149	<b>4 700</b>
other samples.....	19 434Φ	9 381	<b>9 150</b>

Φ The high output in 2015 was due to the testing of samples related to Incident of Lead in Drinking Water.

### Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2017–18

11 During 2017–18, the Laboratory will continue to provide:

- analytical services in support of the implementation of the Air Pollution Control (Ocean Going Vessels) (Fuel at Berth) Regulation, and
- support to government departments in relation to the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.

### Programme (3): Forensic Science Services

	2015–16 (Actual)	2016–17 (Original)	2016–17 (Revised)	2017–18 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	158.7	158.4	162.9 (+2.8%)	<b>163.3</b> (+0.2%)
				(or +3.1% on 2016–17 Original)

### Aim

12 The aim is to provide comprehensive and unbiased forensic science services to the criminal justice system.

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### *Brief Description*

13 The Laboratory provides comprehensive and impartial forensic science services to the law enforcement departments, which include mainly the Hong Kong Police Force, the Customs and Excise Department, the Immigration Department and the Fire Services Department. The services include crime scene investigation, traffic accident reconstruction, fire investigation, DNA profiling, drugs of abuse examination, toxicology analysis and questioned documents examination. A 24-hour and express service is also provided for these scientific examinations to fulfil the immediate client's need.

14 Additionally, the screening and monitoring, through urine testing (urinalysis), of the drug-abuse behaviour of persons under imprisonment, rehabilitation or probation is conducted for the Department of Health (Methadone Maintenance Scheme), the Social Welfare Department, the Correctional Services Department, the Hong Kong Police Force and other organisations requiring this service.

15 The targets are defined to be the percentage of completed cases whose individual case-completion time does not exceed a specified number of working day(s). The key performance measures in respect of the forensic science services are:

### *Targets*

	Target	2015 (Actual)	2016 (Actual)	2017 (Plan)
<i>Cases for:</i>				
biochemical grouping (DNA profiling) - non-complicated cases completed within 60 working days (%) <sup>β</sup> .....	90	99	91	<b>90</b>
complicated cases completed within 130 working days (%) .....	90	98	96	<b>90</b>
DNA database (DNA profiling) completed within 22 working days (%) .....	90	98	98	<b>90</b>
parentage testing (DNA profiling) completed within 22 working days (%) <sup>Δ</sup> .....	90	97	98	<b>90</b>
trace evidence completed within 66 working days (%) .....	90	97	93	<b>90</b>
accident reconstruction completed within 66 working days (%) .....	90	91	91	<b>90</b>
illicit drug seizures completed within 11 working days (%) .....	90	93	94	<b>90</b>
major illicit drug seizures and manufacturing completed within 44 working days (%) .....	90	93	93	<b>90</b>
other illegal drug activities completed within 120 working days (%) .....	90	94	98	<b>90</b>
analytical toxicology completed within 33 working days (%) .....	85	90	90	<b>85</b>
drug urinalysis - methadone clinics completed within 11 working days (%) .....	90	91	93	<b>90</b>
judicial-confirmation (routine) completed within 22 working days (%) .....	85	99	98	<b>85</b>
judicial-confirmation (enhanced probation) completed within six working days (%) <sup>φ</sup> .....	100	100	100	<b>100</b>
drug-driving completed within 33 working days (%) .....	85	94	91	<b>85</b>
drink-driving completed within 11 working days (%) .....	90	97	97	<b>90</b>
handwriting examination completed within 66 working days (%) .....	85	95	95	<b>85</b>
counterfeiting/forgery completed within 30 working days (%) <sup>Ω</sup> .....	90	96	96	<b>90</b>
express counterfeiting/forgery service completed within one working day (%) .....	99	100	100	<b>99</b>

<sup>β</sup> From 2016 onwards, the turnaround time of the non-complicated DNA profiling cases is shortened from 66 to 60 working days.



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- Δ The figures represent the number of working days lapsed between the reception by the Laboratory of samples for genetic testing and the issuing of genetic data after completion of DNA analysis of these samples within the Laboratory.
- φ From 2016 onwards, the turnaround time of the judicial-confirmation (enhanced probation) drug urinalysis is reset from five to six working days with the day of receipt of samples being included in the calculation. The performance pledge of this service remains unchanged.
- Ω From 2016 onwards, the turnaround time of the counterfeiting/forgery cases is shortened from 33 to 30 working days.

### *Indicators*

Key indicators for the forensic science services are the number of cases investigated in each category, statutory certificates or technical reports and witness statements issued and crime scenes attended.

	2015 (Actual)	2016 (Actual)	2017 (Estimate)
<i>Criminalistics and Quality Management Group</i>			
cases investigated			
DNA database .....	2 906	2 891	3 000
biochemical sciences -			
non-complicated .....	603	594	765
complicated .....	1 208	1 059	1 150
parentage testing .....	2 476	2 354	2 500
chemical sciences .....	661	657	700
physical sciences .....	670	634	650
<i>Drugs, Toxicology and Documents Group</i>			
cases investigated			
controlled drugs .....	5 060	4 745	4 800
analytical toxicology .....	2 428	2 355	2 600
drug urinalysis -			
methadone clinics .....	9 716	7 899	8 500
judicial-confirmation (routine) .....	20 468	18 888	20 000
judicial-confirmation (enhanced probation) .....	1 867	1 661	1 700
drug-driving .....	31	22	30
drink-driving .....	62	67	70
questioned documents .....	571	568	550
<i>Forensic Science Division</i>			
statutory certificates issued .....	5 248	4 932	5 000
technical reports/statements .....	11 997	11 779	12 000
crime scenes attended .....	310	357	360

### *Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2017–18*

16 During 2017–18, the Laboratory will continue to provide analytical support to government departments in urinalysis service for measures combating the youth drug abuse problem, such as enhanced probation scheme at all seven magistracies in Hong Kong.

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### ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

	2015-16 (Actual) (\$m)	2016-17 (Original) (\$m)	2016-17 (Revised) (\$m)	2017-18 (Estimate) (\$m)
<b>Programme</b>				
(1) Statutory Testing .....	209.6	218.6	219.5	<b>211.0</b>
(2) Advisory and Investigative Services .....	83.3	88.0	92.6	<b>89.6</b>
(3) Forensic Science Services .....	158.7	158.4	162.9	<b>163.3</b>
	451.6	465.0	475.0 (+2.2%)	<b>463.9</b> (-2.3%)
				<b>(or -0.2% on 2016-17 Original)</b>

#### Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

##### Programme (1)

Provision for 2017-18 is \$8.5 million (3.9%) lower than the revised estimate for 2016-17. This is mainly due to decreased requirement for procurement of equipment and specialist supplies.

##### Programme (2)

Provision for 2017-18 is \$3.0 million (3.2%) lower than the revised estimate for 2016-17. This is mainly due to decreased requirement for procurement of equipment and specialist supplies.

##### Programme (3)

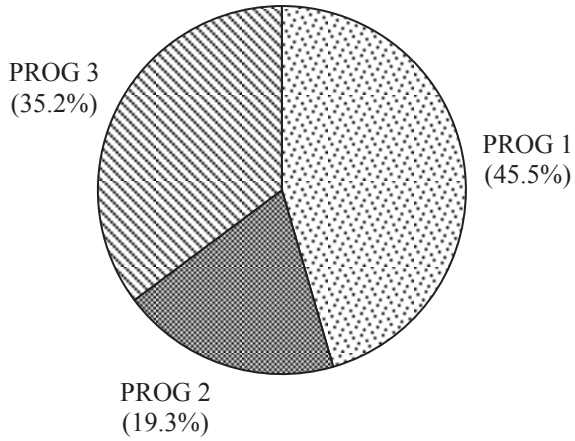
Provision for 2017-18 is \$0.4 million (0.2%) higher than the revised estimate for 2016-17. This is mainly due to increased provision for personal emoluments and other operating expenses.



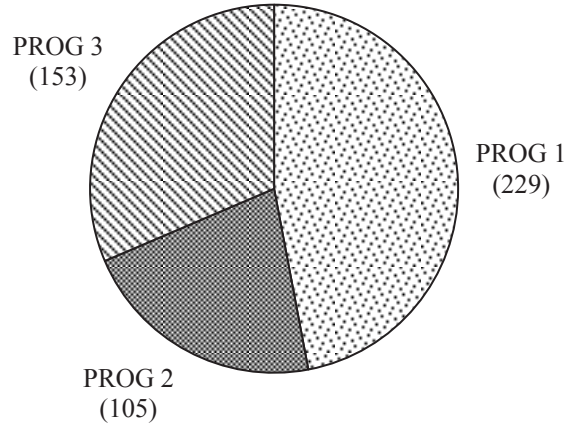
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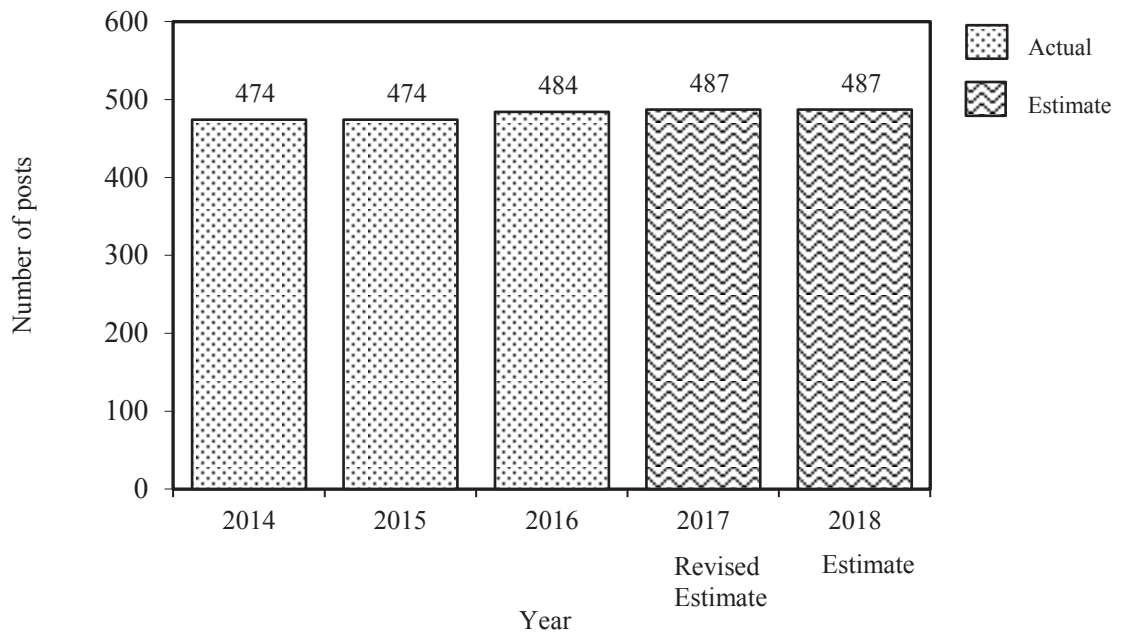
*Allocation of provision  
to programmes  
(2017-18)*



*Staff by programme  
(as at 31 March 2018)*



*Changes in the size of the establishment  
(as at 31 March)*



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Sub-head (Code)	Actual expenditure 2015-16	Approved estimate 2016-17	Revised estimate 2016-17	<b>Estimate 2017-18</b>	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	<b>\$'000</b>	
<b>Operating Account</b>					
Recurrent					
000	Operational expenses .....	384,928	390,069	401,308	<b>405,981</b>
	Total, Recurrent .....	384,928	390,069	401,308	<b>405,981</b>
	Total, Operating Account .....	384,928	390,069	401,308	<b>405,981</b>
<b>Capital Account</b>					
Plant, Equipment and Works					
603	Plant, vehicles and equipment.....	53,080	20,260	19,067	<b>4,640</b>
661	Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote).....	13,616	54,641	54,641	<b>53,297</b>
	Total, Plant, Equipment and Works.....	66,696	74,901	73,708	<b>57,937</b>
	Total, Capital Account.....	66,696	74,901	73,708	<b>57,937</b>
	Total Expenditure .....	451,624	464,970	475,016	<b>463,918</b>

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### Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2017–18 for the salaries and expenses of the Government Laboratory is \$463,918,000. This represents a decrease of \$11,098,000 against the revised estimate for 2016–17 and an increase of \$12,294,000 over the actual expenditure in 2015–16.

#### *Operating Account*

#### Recurrent

**2** Provision of \$405,981,000 under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is for the salaries, allowances and other operating expenses of the Government Laboratory.

**3** The establishment as at 31 March 2017 will be 487 posts. No change in establishment is expected in 2017–18. Subject to certain conditions, the controlling officer may under delegated power create or delete non-directorate posts during 2017–18, but the notional annual mid-point salary value of all such posts must not exceed \$280,355,000.

**4** An analysis of the financial provision under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is as follows:

	2015–16 (Actual) (\$'000)	2016–17 (Original) (\$'000)	2016–17 (Revised) (\$'000)	<b>2017–18 (Estimate) (\$'000)</b>
Personal Emoluments				
- Salaries.....	279,284	292,223	302,511	<b>306,665</b>
- Allowances.....	2,849	1,991	2,942	<b>3,090</b>
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Mandatory Provident Fund contribution.....	586	896	850	<b>808</b>
- Civil Service Provident Fund contribution.....	12,904	14,149	14,455	<b>18,045</b>
Departmental Expenses				
- General departmental expenses .....	89,305	80,810	80,550	<b>77,373</b>
	384,928	390,069	401,308	<b>405,981</b>

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### Commitments

Sub-head (Code)	Item (Code)	Ambit	Approved commitment	Accumulated expenditure to 31.3.2016	Revised estimated expenditure for 2016–17	Balance
			\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b><i>Capital Account</i></b>						
603		<i>Plant, vehicles and equipment</i>				
	802	Acquisition of a set of nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy system .....	9,975	—	1,430	8,545
	864	Replacement of an integrated gas chromatography with mass selective detector and electron capture detector with an integrated gas chromatographic system .....	2,903	2,827	—	76
		Total .....	<u>12,878</u>	<u>2,827</u>	<u>1,430</u>	<u>8,621</u>