

Head 22 — AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

Controlling officer: the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation will account for expenditure under this Head.

Estimate 2020–21 **\$1,978.6m**

Establishment ceiling 2020–21 (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 2 287 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2020 rising by 76 posts to 2 363 posts as at 31 March 2021 **\$906.8m**

In addition, there will be an estimated eight directorate posts as at 31 March 2020 and as at 31 March 2021.

Commitment balance..... **\$1,489.4m**

Controlling Officer's Report

Programmes

- | | |
|--|---|
| Programme (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets | This programme contributes to Policy Area 2: Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety (Secretary for Food and Health). |
| Programme (2) Nature Conservation and Country Parks | This programme contributes to Policy Area 5: Travel and Tourism (Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development) and Policy Area 23: Environmental Protection, Conservation, Power and Sustainable Development (Secretary for the Environment). |
| Programme (3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services | This programme contributes to Policy Area 2: Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety (Secretary for Food and Health), Policy Area 22: Buildings, Lands, Planning, Heritage Conservation, Greening and Landscape (Secretary for Development) and Policy Area 32: Environmental Hygiene (Secretary for Food and Health). |

Detail

Programme (1): Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

	2018–19 (Actual)	2019–20 (Original)	2019–20 (Revised)	2020–21 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	458.9	553.6	451.9 (–18.4%)	528.8 (+17.0%)
				(or –4.5% on 2019–20 Original)

Aim

- 2 The aim is to facilitate agricultural and fisheries production and improve productivity.

Brief Description

- 3 The Department's work in pursuit of its aim involves:
- the provision of infrastructural support, technical assistance and advice, credit facilities and vocational training to local farmers and fishermen;
 - the conduct of adaptive and technical studies, as well as introduction of modern technology and practices to local farmers and fishermen to facilitate their efficient production and improve the quality of their products;
 - the planning and implementation of effective management activities and services for promoting sustainable development of the agriculture and fisheries industries;
 - the provision of administrative and technical support to the operation of the Vegetable Marketing Organization and the Fish Marketing Organization; and
 - the management of government fresh food wholesale markets.

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4 The key performance measures in respect of agriculture, fisheries and fresh food wholesale markets are:

Targets

	Target	2018 (Actual)	2019 (Actual)	2020 (Plan)
<i>Agriculture</i>				
accredited vegetable farms (total no.).....	313#	311	313	313
(total hectares).....	2 717β	2 716	2 717	2 717
<i>Fisheries</i>				
accredited fish farms (total no.).....	125	122	122	125

The target is revised from 319 to 313 as from 2019.

β The target is revised from 2 847 ha to 2 717 ha as from 2020.

Indicators

	2018 (Actual)	2019 (Actual)	2020 (Estimate)
<i>Agriculture</i>			
composite productivity index (100 in 1985).....	163	164	164
production			
vegetables (tonnes).....	14 900	14 800	14 800
(\$m).....	172.0	187.0	187.0
livestock (tonnes).....	21 200	21 600	21 600
(\$m).....	673.0	969.0	969.0
throughput at Vegetable Marketing Organization market			
(tonnes).....	88 609	79 426	71 500
(\$m).....	712.9	650.5	596.0
new loans			
(no.).....	60	49	59
(\$m).....	5.7	5.0	5.6
new grants			
(no.).....	79	73	72
(\$m).....	7.5	37.6	30.9
<i>Fisheries</i>			
production			
capture (tonnes).....	124 000	123 000	123 000
(\$m).....	2,755.0	2,799.0	2,799.0
culture (tonnes).....	3 527	3 284	3 280
(\$m).....	147.0	138.3	138.0
throughput at Fish Marketing Organization markets			
(tonnes).....	43 825	42 710	42 700
(\$m).....	3,662.1	3,623.3	3,623.0
new loans			
(no.).....	610	570	570
(\$m).....	244.8	135.4	135.4
new grants			
(no.).....	2	11	5
(\$m).....	7.9	15.9	57.2
<i>Government fresh food wholesale markets</i>			
annual throughput (tonnes).....	454 000	461 000	461 000
rental market stall space occupied (%).....	99.8	99.8	99.9
area of wholesale markets managed (m ²).....	287 984	287 984	287 984
requests for assistance handled (no.).....	20 898	15 622	18 000
inspections conducted daily (no.).....	205	204	204
recovery of rentable revenue in Cheung Sha Wan Wholesale Food Market and Western Wholesale Food Market (%).....			
	98	98	98

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Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2020–21

- 5 During 2020–21, the Department will focus its work on:
- implementing the New Agriculture Policy to proactively support the modernisation and sustainable development of local agriculture, including preparing for the establishment of the Agricultural Park, processing of applications for the Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund and overseeing the consultancy study on designating Agricultural Priority Areas;
 - taking follow-up actions on the implementation of the legislation to ban trawling and better regulate fishing activities in Hong Kong waters, and continuing to implement other recommendations of the Committee on Sustainable Fisheries, with the aim of conserving and restoring marine resources;
 - preparing for the implementation of the conservation measures under the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources in Hong Kong, including the Catch Documentation Scheme for toothfish and the associated licensing scheme;
 - assisting farmers in capturing high-value market niches by providing technical advice on organic cultivation and intensive greenhouse production;
 - administering the Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund to help fishermen adopt a sustainable and high value-added operation mode and subsidise relevant programmes and research so as to enhance the overall competitiveness of the industry;
 - assisting fishermen in switching to sustainable fisheries operations and fish farmers in developing sustainable aquaculture through technical support services and credit facilities, including offering free training on sustainable fisheries operations, issuing new marine fish culture licences and preparing for the designation of new fish culture zone(s); and
 - promoting good aquaculture practices as well as stepping up monitoring of aquaculture environment and fish health management.

Programme (2): Nature Conservation and Country Parks

	2018–19 (Actual)	2019–20 (Original)	2019–20 (Revised)	2020–21 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	746.0	839.5	809.7 (–3.5%)	988.4 (+22.1%)
				(or +17.7% on 2019–20 Original)

Aim

6 The aim is to conserve flora, fauna and natural habitats; to designate and manage country parks, special areas, marine parks and marine reserves; and to control international trade in endangered species of animals and plants in Hong Kong.

Brief Description

- 7 The Department's work in pursuit of its aim involves:
- the management and protection of country parks, special areas, marine parks and marine reserves under the Country Parks Ordinance (Cap. 208) and the Marine Parks Ordinance (Cap. 476) for the purpose of nature conservation, recreation, nature-based tourism and education;
 - the conservation of biodiversity and promotion of compatible use of country and marine parks;
 - the identification of sites of high scientific value for listing as Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
 - the provision of nature conservation advice on development proposals, planning studies and environmental impact assessments;
 - the monitoring and auditing of ecological mitigation measures for development projects approved under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499);
 - the promotion of public awareness of nature conservation and enforcement of nature conservation legislation;
 - the licensing control of international trade in endangered species and curbing of illegal trade in endangered species in Hong Kong;
 - the conservation and management of the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar site;
 - the management of the Hong Kong Wetland Park; and
 - the management and operation of the Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark.

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8 The key performance measures in respect of nature conservation and country parks are:

Targets

	Target	2018 (Actual)	2019 (Actual)	2020 (Plan)
country parks and special areas managed (hectares)	44 312	44 312	44 312	44 312
marine parks and marine reserves managed (hectares)	4 050‡	3 400	3 400	4 050‡
no. of Sites of Special Scientific Interest listed.....	67	67	67	67
issue of certificates in respect of endangered species (working days).....	2	2	2	2

‡ The anticipated increase in the total area of marine parks and marine reserves managed is due to the planned designation of the Southwest Lantau Marine Park in April 2020. The target is revised from 3 400 ha to 4 050 ha as from 2020.

Indicators

	2018 (Actual)	2019 (Actual)	2020 (Estimate)
seedlings produced	396 700	312 300	310 000
seedlings planted	396 700	298 100	300 000
ecological impact assessment applications and studies handled.....	151	154	150
participants in educational activities	363 400	296 700	320 000
visitors to country parks (million).....	12	11	12
hill fires attended to.....	23	17	23
endangered species licences/certificates	18 942	19 995	20 000
endangered species inspections.....	33 993	31 163	31 200
endangered species prosecutions.....	221	226	230

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2020–21

9 During 2020–21, the Department will focus its work on:

- the promotion of public education and publicity on nature conservation and compatible use of country parks and marine parks;
- exploring ways to enhance education and recreation functions of country parks;
- overseeing the implementation of management agreement projects for nature conservation;
- strengthening publicity and education of the Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark for the promotion and conservation of geological and cultural heritages;
- exploring the feasibility of the incorporation of selected country park enclaves into country parks;
- the implementation of the first Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Hong Kong;
- strengthening the control of trade in endangered species, in particular ivory, and combating their illegal trade and smuggling;
- continuing the preparation for the designation of the proposed Robin's Nest Country Park;
- the preparation for the designation of the proposed South Lantau Marine Park; and
- the preparation for the expansion of the Sham Wan Restricted Area to strengthen the protection of green turtles.

Programme (3): Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services

	2018–19 (Actual)	2019–20 (Original)	2019–20 (Revised)	2020–21 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	400.0	428.2	464.4 (+8.5%)	461.4 (–0.6%)
				(or +7.8% on 2019–20 Original)

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Aim

10 The aim is to safeguard the welfare of animals, and control the diseases in animals and plants through the enforcement of relevant legislation; protect public health; protect and regulate fisheries; and provide technical services.

Brief Description

11 The Department is responsible for the prevention of the introduction and spread of animal and plant diseases, safeguarding animal welfare, regulation of drug use in livestock farms, provision of services to facilitate export of plants, animals and plant/animal by-products, prevention of rabies, and enforcement of regulations pertaining to animal welfare and import requirements, fisheries protection and marine fish culture. The work involves:

- the provision of quarantine services;
- the inspection of animals and plants imported into Hong Kong;
- the prevention and control of rabies and other zoonotic diseases;
- the testing of animal diseases, including zoonotic diseases, and chemical residues in food animals;
- the inspection of farms where food animals are kept;
- the inspection of premises and establishments where animals are kept for exhibition or trading purposes;
- the inspection of marine fish culture farms;
- the control of destructive fishing practices;
- the regulation of fishing activities with the use or aid of vessels; and
- the instigation of prosecution against offenders under relevant legislation.

12 The technical services provided by the Department include:

- managing agricultural weirs;
- licensing livestock farms;
- licensing marine fish culture farms;
- registering local fishing vessels;
- facilitating export trade in plants, animals and their products;
- safeguarding public health through the control of pesticides and drug use in livestock farms;
- assessing ex-gratia payments to primary producers arising from development projects affecting agriculture and fisheries; and
- regulating credit unions and co-operative societies.

13 The key performance measures in respect of animal, plant and fisheries regulation and technical services are:

Targets

	Target	2018 (Actual)	2019 (Actual)	2020 (Plan)
<i>Animal and plant regulation</i>				
prevention				
reported cases of rabies	0	0	0	0
dogs vaccinated in strategic Rabies Control Areas (%)φ	80	80	80	80
enforcement				
issue of animal health certificates (working days)	2	2	2	2
issue of licences/permits (working days)	3	3	3	3
issue of sanitary certificates for products of animal origin (working days)	3	3	3	3

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	Target	2018 (Actual)	2019 (Actual)	2020 (Plan)
<i>Technical services</i>				
management of agricultural weirs				
weirs to be cleansed	205	205	205	205
plant health certification				
issue of phytosanitary				
certificates (working days)	2	2	2	2
control of pesticides				
issue of pesticide				
permits (working days).....	2	2	2	2
<i>Renewal of marine fish culture licence</i>				
in person in 50 minutes (%).....	100	100	100	100

φ The World Health Organization recommends a minimum of 70 per cent.

Indicators

	2018 (Actual)	2019 (Actual)	2020 (Estimate)
<i>Animal and plant regulation</i>			
prevention			
stray animals caught.....	3 151	2 300	2 300
animals vaccinated and quarantined	59 790	56 741	56 700
enforcement			
licences/permits.....	11 485	11 753	11 700
animal and plant health certificates.....	13 191	13 635	13 600
<i>Technical services</i>			
ex-gratia payment assessment			
area assessed for crop ex-gratia			
payment (hectares)Δ.....	70	52	120
area assessed for aquaculture fisheries ex-gratia			
payment (m ²)Δ.....	0	0	105 455
claims assessed for capture fisheries ex-gratia			
paymentΔ.....	20	5	5
licensing of livestock farms			
licences issued.....	31	20	21
control of pesticides			
pesticides registered	7	8	8
licences/permits issued.....	2 200	2 291	2 290
regulation of credit unions and co-operative societies			
accounts examined or audited.....	218	214	216

Δ The figures vary from year to year according to the Government's programme for land clearance and development works.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2020–21

14 During 2020–21, the Department will focus its work on:

- overseeing the conduct of election of members of the veterinary profession to the Veterinary Surgeons Board of Hong Kong in accordance with the regulations under the Veterinary Surgeons Registration Ordinance (Cap. 529);
- following up on the public consultation on the review of the existing legislation related to animal welfare, including introducing a positive duty of care on animal keepers;
- strengthening measures for stray animals management;
- strengthening promotion of animal welfare; and
- enhancing surveillance on antimicrobial resistance and diseases in food animals in local farms.

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ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

Programme	2018–19 (Actual) (\$m)	2019–20 (Original) (\$m)	2019–20 (Revised) (\$m)	2020–21 (Estimate) (\$m)
(1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets.....	458.9	553.6	451.9	528.8
(2) Nature Conservation and Country Parks.....	746.0	839.5	809.7	988.4
(3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services.....	400.0	428.2	464.4	461.4
	1,604.9	1,821.3	1,726.0 (–5.2%)	1,978.6 (+14.6%)
				(or +8.6% on 2019–20 Original)

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

Programme (1)

Provision for 2020–21 is \$76.9 million (17.0%) higher than the revised estimate for 2019–20. This is mainly due to increased cash flow requirement for the one-off assistance package to trawler vessel owners, local deckhands and fish collector owners affected by the trawl ban, administration of the Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund and procurement of minor plant, vehicles and equipment, increase in expenditure for an enhanced surveillance regime for antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobial usage on local pig, poultry and fish farms in 2020–21 and a full-year provision for vacancies filled in 2019–20. There will be an increase of six posts in 2020–21.

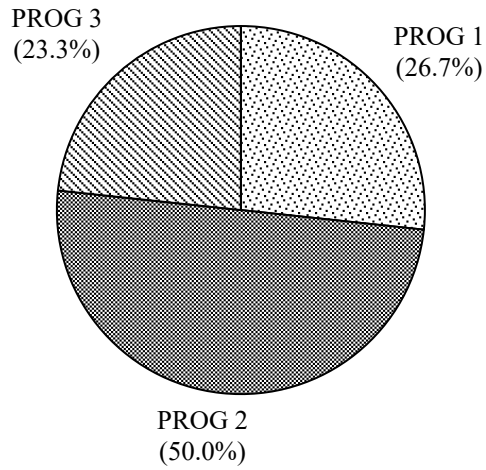
Programme (2)

Provision for 2020–21 is \$178.7 million (22.1%) higher than the revised estimate for 2019–20. This is mainly due to increase in expenditure for tackling the increasing nuisance of wild pigs, monkeys and other wildlife, the management and promotion of country parks, cash flow requirement for a one-off allowance to fishermen affected by new fisheries management strategy in marine parks in 2020–21 and a full-year provision for vacancies filled in 2019–20. There will be an increase of 53 posts in 2020–21.

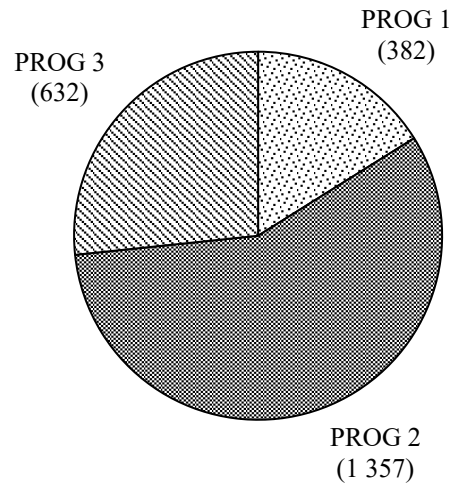
Programme (3)

Provision for 2020–21 is \$3.0 million (0.6%) lower than the revised estimate for 2019–20. This is mainly due to reduced cash flow requirement for statutory compensation and ex-gratia payment for the pigs culled due to African Swine Fever largely offset by the full-year provision for vacancies filled in 2019–20, increase in expenditure in relation to rendering professional and technical support in relation to various new development areas and other development projects being implemented or under planning as well as animal welfare and health in 2020–21. There will be an increase of 17 posts in 2020–21.

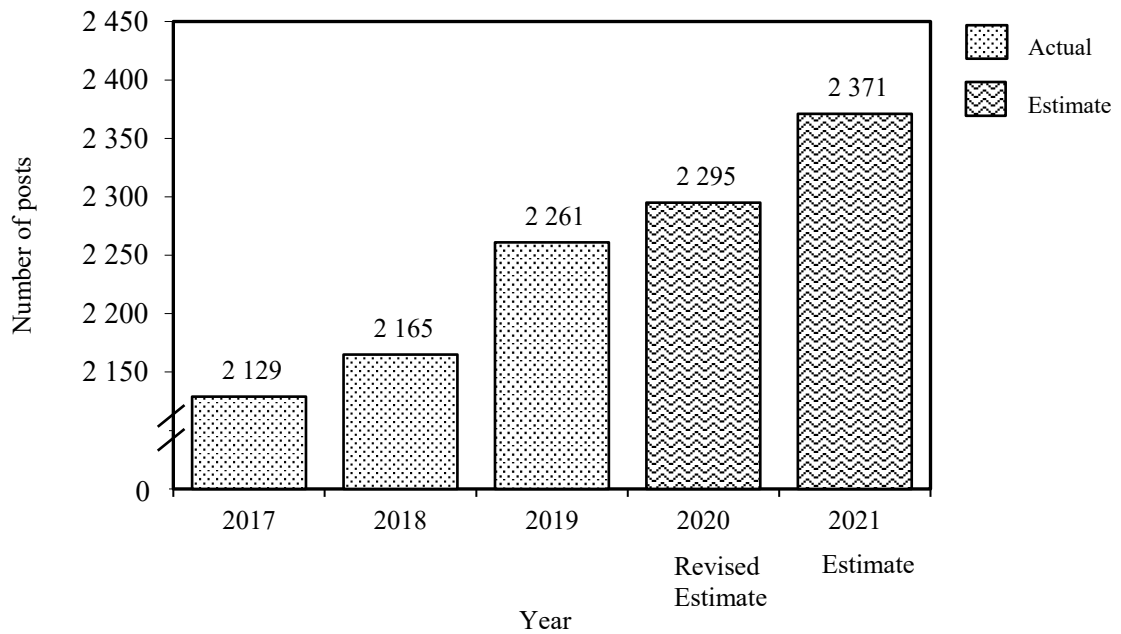
*Allocation of provision
to programmes
(2020-21)*



*Staff by programme
(as at 31 March 2021)*



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



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Sub-head (Code)	Actual expenditure 2018–19	Approved estimate 2019–20	Revised estimate 2019–20	Estimate 2020–21	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
Operating Account					
Recurrent					
000	Operational expenses	1,409,548	1,544,478	1,539,153	1,766,903
	Total, Recurrent.....	1,409,548	1,544,478	1,539,153	1,766,903
Non-Recurrent					
700	General non-recurrent	140,210	207,536	130,853	159,780
	Total, Non-Recurrent.....	140,210	207,536	130,853	159,780
	Total, Operating Account	1,549,758	1,752,014	1,670,006	1,926,683
Capital Account					
Plant, Equipment and Works					
609	Minor irrigation works in the New Territories (block vote).....	3,090	3,458	3,458	4,533
610	Minor recreational facilities and roadworks in country parks (block vote).....	19,738	21,767	22,384	17,200
661	Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote).....	26,162	44,034	30,136	30,202
	Plant, vehicles and equipment.....	6,110	—	—	—
	Total, Plant, Equipment and Works.....	55,100	69,259	55,978	51,935
	Total, Capital Account.....	55,100	69,259	55,978	51,935
	Total Expenditure	1,604,858	1,821,273	1,725,984	1,978,618

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Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2020–21 for the salaries and expenses of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department is \$1,978,618,000. This represents an increase of \$252,634,000 over the revised estimate for 2019–20 and \$373,760,000 over the actual expenditure in 2018–19.

Operating Account

Recurrent

2 Provision of \$1,766,903,000 under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is for the salaries, allowances and other operating expenses of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department. It represents an increase of \$227,750,000 (14.8%) over the revised estimate for 2019–20. This is mainly due to increased provision for a full-year effect of provision of vacancies filled in 2019–20, increase in expenditure for tackling the increasing nuisance of wild pigs, monkeys and other wildlife and the management and promotion of country parks.

3 The establishment as at 31 March 2020 will be 2 295 posts. It is expected that there will be an increase of 76 posts in 2020–21. Subject to certain conditions, the controlling officer may under delegated power create or delete non-directorate posts during 2020–21, but the notional annual mid-point salary value of all such posts must not exceed \$906,768,000.

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

	2018–19 (Actual) (\$'000)	2019–20 (Original) (\$'000)	2019–20 (Revised) (\$'000)	2020–21 (Estimate) (\$'000)
Personal Emoluments				
- Salaries.....	769,995	844,935	843,557	917,858
- Allowances.....	17,915	18,116	18,350	18,980
- Job-related allowances.....	8,627	10,054	8,974	10,772
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Mandatory Provident Fund contribution.....	4,834	7,017	5,521	7,108
- Civil Service Provident Fund contribution.....	43,049	53,071	51,466	61,483
Departmental Expenses				
- General departmental expenses	555,418	598,776	598,776	738,193
Other Charges				
- Minor conservation projects and studies ...	6,077	6,270	6,270	6,270
Subventions				
- Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Hong Kong)	1,000	1,500	1,500	1,500
- Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia and the Pacific	79	80	80	80
- Rehabilitation of wild animals	—	1,000	1,000	1,000
- Conservation and management of Ramsar site.....	759	759	759	759
- Animal welfare organisations	571	1,500	1,500	1,500
- Biodiversity Education	1,224	1,400	1,400	1,400
	1,409,548	1,544,478	1,539,153	1,766,903

Capital Account

Plant, Equipment and Works

5 Provision of \$4,533,000 under *Subhead 609 Minor irrigation works in the New Territories (block vote)* is for a programme to provide irrigation works to assist agricultural development in the New Territories up to a limit of \$10 million for each project. The provision for 2020–21 represents an increase of \$1,075,000 (31.1%) over the revised estimate for 2019–20. This is mainly due to increase in expenditure requirement for projects to be carried out in 2020–21.

6 Provision of \$17,200,000 under *Subhead 610 Minor recreational facilities and roadworks in country parks (block vote)* is for minor works such as construction of fire lookouts, shelters, water filling stations and roads and for building materials for recreational facilities such as barbecue pits, information boards, shelters and outdoor furniture, up to a limit of \$10 million for each project. The provision for 2020–21 represents a decrease of \$5,184,000 (23.2%) against the revised estimate for 2019–20. This is mainly due to decrease in expenditure requirement for upgrading various facilities in country parks in 2020–21.

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7 Provision of \$30,202,000 under *Subhead 661 Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote)* is for the procurement of minor plant, vehicles and equipment in 2020–21.

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Commitments

Sub-head (Code)	Item (Code)	Ambit	Approved commitment	Accumulated expenditure to 31.3.2019	Revised estimated expenditure for 2019–20	Balance
			\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<i>Operating Account</i>						
700		<i>General non-recurrent</i>				
	536	Setting up a marine sanctuary in the Sha Chau and Lung Kwu Chau area.....	21,000	19,329	50	1,621
	540	Artificial reefs project	80,100	75,075	316	4,709
	801	Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund	500,000	41,567	14,100	444,333
	802	One-off allowance to fishermen affected by new fisheries management strategy in marine parksΨ	125,000Ψ	—	—	125,000
	808	Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund	500,000	31,829	37,400	430,771
	852	One-off assistance package to trawler vessel owners, local deckhands and fish collector owners affected by the trawl ban and other related measures	1,726,800	1,198,294	45,581	482,925
		Total	2,952,900	1,366,094	97,447	1,489,359

Ψ This is a new item, funding for which is sought in the context of the Appropriation Bill 2020.