

Head 22 — AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

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

Estimate 2022–23 **\$2,062.9m**

Establishment ceiling 2022–23 (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 2 357 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2022 rising by nine posts to 2 366 posts as at 31 March 2023 **\$920.8m**

In addition, there will be an estimated eight directorate posts as at 31 March 2022 and as at 31 March 2023.

Commitment balance..... **\$1,273.6m**

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

	2020–21 (Actual)	2021–22 (Original)	2021–22 (Revised)	2022–23 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	471.8	675.5	526.0 (–22.1%)	632.5 (+20.2%)
				(or –6.4% on 2021–22 Original)

Aim

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

Brief Description

- 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	2020 (Actual)	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Plan)
<i>Agriculture</i>				
accredited vegetable farms				
(total no.).....	318 [#]	313	315	315
(total hectares).....	2 718 ^β	2 717	2 573	2 573
<i>Fisheries</i>				
accredited fish farms				
(total no.).....	148 ^α	136	146	148

[#] The target is revised from 313 to 318 as from 2021.

^β The target is revised from 2 717 ha to 2 718 ha as from 2021.

^α The target is revised from 125 to 148 as from 2022.

Indicators

	2020 (Actual)	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Estimate)
<i>Agriculture</i>			
composite productivity index (100 in 1985).....	173	167	167
production			
vegetables (tonnes).....	15 000	15 300	15 300
(\$m).....	202.0	210.0	210.0
livestock (tonnes).....	23 600	21 900	21 900
(\$m).....	1,289.0	994.0	994.0
throughput at Vegetable Marketing Organization			
market			
(tonnes).....	76 954	68 534	70 000
(\$m).....	658.7	613.4	620.0
new loans			
(no.).....	46	45	47
(\$m).....	4.9	5.4	5.1
new grants			
(no.).....	36	44	51
(\$m).....	26.2	15.6	37.7
<i>Fisheries</i>			
production			
capture (tonnes).....	116 000	112 000	112 000
(\$m).....	2,707.0	2,767.0	2,767.0
culture (tonnes).....	3 322	3 381	3 380
(\$m).....	126.6	121.8	121.0
throughput at Fish Marketing Organization markets			
(tonnes).....	39 520	39 850	39 800
(\$m).....	2,818.0	3,065.6	3,065.0
new loans			
(no.).....	602	249	260
(\$m).....	132.2	99.8	155.0
new grants			
(no.).....	3	6	5
(\$m).....	41.9	31.1	46.2
<i>Government fresh food wholesale markets</i>			
annual throughput (tonnes).....	440 000	429 000	429 000
rental market stall space occupied (%).....	99.9	100	100
area of wholesale markets managed (m ²).....	287 984	287 984	287 984
requests for assistance handled (no.).....	15 630	14 300	15 600
inspections conducted daily (no.).....	213	215	215
recovery of rentable revenue in Cheung Sha Wan			
Wholesale Food Market and Western Wholesale			
Food Market (%).....	99	99	99

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Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2022–23

5 During 2022–23, the Department will focus 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 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;
- 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 preparing for the designation of new fish culture zone(s) and assisting fish farmers in developing deep-sea fish culture locally and in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area; 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

	2020–21 (Actual)	2021–22 (Original)	2021–22 (Revised)	2022–23 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	929.5	961.7	916.0 (–4.8%)	966.2 (+5.5%)
				(or +0.5% on 2021–22 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 reserve 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	2020 (Actual)	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Plan)
country parks and special areas managed (hectares)	44 312	44 312	44 312	44 312
marine parks and marine reserves managed (hectares)	6 117 ^γ	4 050	4 050	6 117
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

^γ The target is revised from 4 050 ha to 6 117 ha as from 2022.

Indicators

	2020 (Actual)	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Estimate)
seedlings produced	228 600	270 200	260 000
seedlings planted	220 100	261 300	250 000
ecological impact assessment applications and studies handled	160	177	165
participants in educational activities	130 000	150 000	130 000
visitors to country parks (million)	12	12	12
hill fires attended to	25	27	23
endangered species licences/certificates	11 272	13 439	13 000
endangered species inspections	19 476	22 309	22 300
endangered species prosecutions	25	38	38

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2022–23

9 During 2022–23, the Department will focus on:

- the promotion of public education and publicity on nature conservation and compatible use of country parks and marine parks;
- overseeing the implementation of management agreement projects for nature conservation and measures to enhance biodiversity;
- taking forward the strategic feasibility study on the development of wetland conservation parks proposed in the Northern Metropolis Development Strategy;
- implementing measures to enhance the education and recreation functions of country parks;
- continuing the preparation for the designation of the proposed Robin's Nest Country Park;
- exploring the feasibility of the incorporation of selected country park enclaves into country parks;
- strengthening promotion, conservation and education of geological and cultural heritages of the Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark;
- strengthening the control of trade in endangered species and combatting their illegal trade and smuggling;
- continuing the designation of the proposed South Lantau Marine Park and the proposed North Lantau Marine Park; and
- implementing measures for enhanced management of wild pigs.

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

	2020–21 (Actual)	2021–22 (Original)	2021–22 (Revised)	2022–23 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	478.2	455.8	466.8 (+2.4%)	464.2 (–0.6%)
				(or +1.8% on 2021–22 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	2020 (Actual)	2021 (Actual)	2022 (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	2020 (Actual)	2021 (Actual)	2022 (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

	2020 (Actual)	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Estimate)
<i>Animal and plant regulation</i>			
prevention			
stray animals caught.....	1 809	1 490	1 500
animals vaccinated and quarantined	52 941	62 885	58 000
enforcement			
licences/permits.....	11 036	9 124	9 100
animal and plant health certificates.....	11 447	19 181	19 200
<i>Technical services</i>			
ex-gratia payment assessment			
area assessed for crop ex-gratia			
payment (hectares)Δ.....	81	78	90
area assessed for aquaculture fisheries ex-gratia			
payment (m ²)Δ.....	8 539	134 213	0
claims assessed for capture fisheries ex-gratia			
paymentΔ.....	0	155	48
licensing of livestock farms			
licences issued.....	21	30	20
control of pesticides			
pesticides registered	8	3	3
licences/permits issued.....	2 210	2 273	2 270
regulation of credit unions and co-operative societies			
accounts examined or audited	195	210	210

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 2022–23

14 During 2022–23, the Department will focus on:

- strengthening measures for stray animals management;
- strengthening promotion of animal welfare, including preparing for the legislative amendment to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance (Cap. 169) to introduce a positive duty of care on persons responsible for animals, enhance enforcement powers to prevent and protect animals from suffering and increase the penalty for animal cruelty acts; and
- enhancing surveillance on antimicrobial resistance and diseases in food animals in local farms.

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ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

Programme	2020–21 (Actual) (\$m)	2021–22 (Original) (\$m)	2021–22 (Revised) (\$m)	2022–23 (Estimate) (\$m)
(1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets.....	471.8	675.5	526.0	632.5
(2) Nature Conservation and Country Parks.....	929.5	961.7	916.0	966.2
(3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services.....	478.2	455.8	466.8	464.2
	1,879.5	2,093.0	1,908.8 (–8.8%)	2,062.9 (+8.1%)
				(or –1.4% on 2021–22 Original)

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

Programme (1)

Provision for 2022–23 is \$106.5 million (20.2%) higher than the revised estimate for 2021–22. 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, which is partially offset by the reduced cash flow requirement in administration of the Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund and Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund and procurement of minor plant, vehicles and equipment. There will be a net increase of two posts in 2022–23.

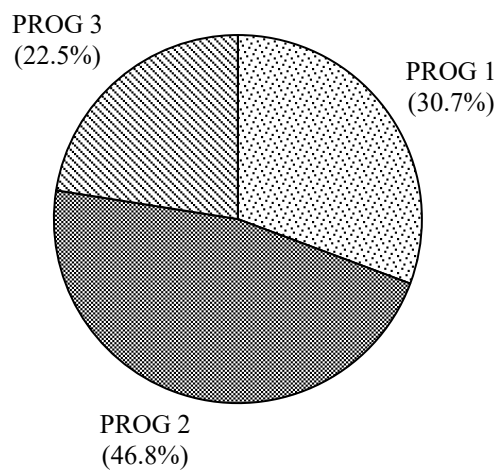
Programme (2)

Provision for 2022–23 is \$50.2 million (5.5%) higher than the revised estimate for 2021–22. This is mainly due to the full-year effect of vacancies filled in 2021–22, which is partially offset by the reduced cash flow requirement for the one-off allowance to fishermen affected by new fisheries management strategy in marine parks in 2022–23. There will be an increase of nine posts in 2022–23.

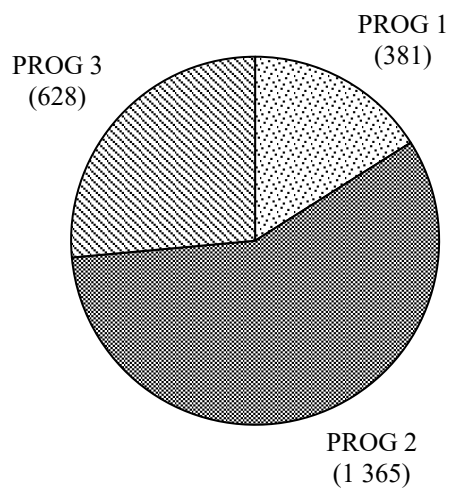
Programme (3)

Provision for 2022–23 is \$2.6 million (0.6%) lower than the revised estimate for 2021–22. This is mainly due to reduced cash flow requirement for procurement of minor plant, vehicles and equipment. There will be a net decrease of two posts in 2022–23.

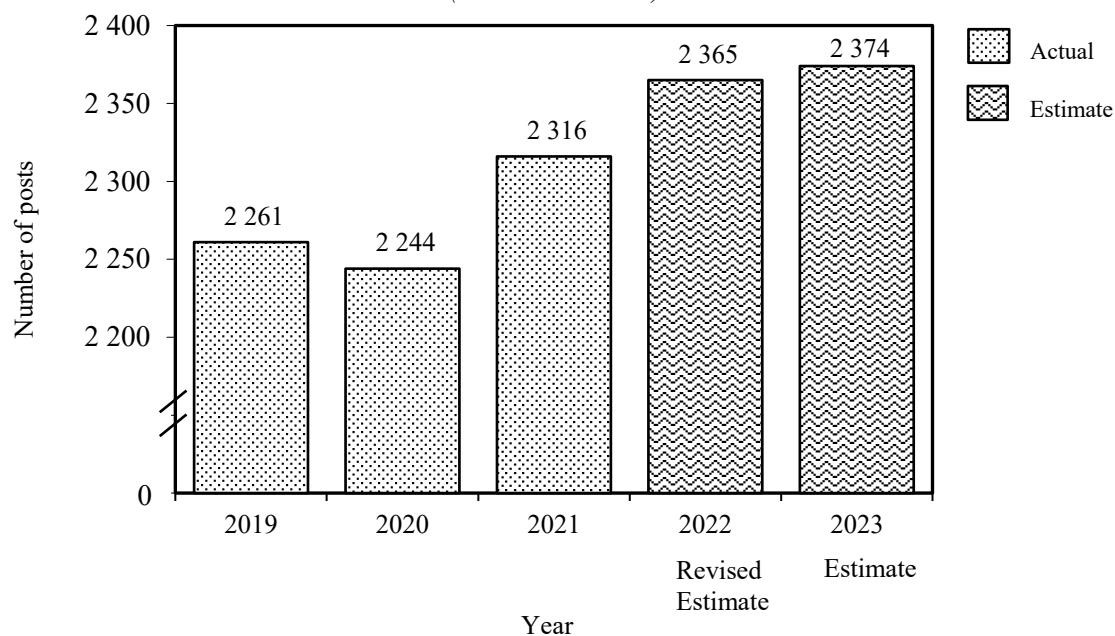
*Allocation of provision
to programmes
(2022-23)*



*Staff by programme
(as at 31 March 2023)*



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



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Sub-head (Code)		Actual expenditure 2020–21	Approved estimate 2021–22	Revised estimate 2021–22	Estimate 2022–23
		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Operating Account					
Recurrent					
000	Operational expenses	1,639,432	1,741,217	1,715,926	1,764,993
	Total, Recurrent.....	1,639,432	1,741,217	1,715,926	1,764,993
Non-Recurrent					
700	General non-recurrent	181,568	254,750	113,850	230,600
	Total, Non-Recurrent.....	181,568	254,750	113,850	230,600
	Total, Operating Account	1,821,000	1,995,967	1,829,776	1,995,593
Capital Account					
Plant, Equipment and Works					
603	Plant, vehicles and equipment.....	—	4,530	314	367
609	Minor irrigation works in the New Territories (block vote).....	4,169	4,200	4,200	9,867
610	Minor recreational facilities and roadworks in country parks (block vote).....	14,145	16,733	13,841	16,170
661	Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote).....	40,155	71,587	60,715	40,886
	Total, Plant, Equipment and Works.....	58,469	97,050	79,070	67,290
	Total, Capital Account.....	58,469	97,050	79,070	67,290
	Total Expenditure	1,879,469	2,093,017	1,908,846	2,062,883

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Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2022–23 for the salaries and expenses of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department is \$2,062,883,000. This represents an increase of \$154,037,000 over the revised estimate for 2021–22 and \$183,414,000 over the actual expenditure in 2020–21.

Operating Account

Recurrent

2 Provision of \$1,764,993,000 under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is for the salaries, allowances and other operating expenses of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department.

3 The establishment as at 31 March 2022 will be 2 365 posts. It is expected that there will be a net increase of nine posts in 2022–23. Subject to certain conditions, the controlling officer may under delegated power create or delete non-directorate posts during 2022–23, but the notional annual mid-point salary value of all such posts must not exceed \$920,764,000.

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

	2020–21 (Actual) (\$'000)	2021–22 (Original) (\$'000)	2021–22 (Revised) (\$'000)	2022–23 (Estimate) (\$'000)
Personal Emoluments				
- Salaries.....	845,451	927,632	878,500	927,632
- Allowances.....	19,483	18,910	20,797	21,049
- Job-related allowances.....	8,855	11,074	9,429	11,394
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Mandatory Provident Fund contribution.....	5,204	8,376	4,504	7,937
- Civil Service Provident Fund contribution.....	60,129	72,480	67,778	80,106
Departmental Expenses				
- General departmental expenses	688,562	690,236	721,509	704,366
Other Charges				
- Minor conservation projects and studies ...	5,804	6,270	6,270	6,270
Subventions				
- Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Hong Kong)	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
- Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia and the Pacific	78	80	80	80
- Rehabilitation of wild animals	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
- Conservation and management of Ramsar site.....	759	759	759	759
- Animal welfare organisations	1,373	1,500	1,500	1,500
- Biodiversity Education	1,234	1,400	2,300	1,400
	1,639,432	1,741,217	1,715,926	1,764,993

Capital Account

Plant, Equipment and Works

5 Provision of \$9,867,000 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 2022–23 represents an increase of \$5,667,000 (134.9%) over the revised estimate for 2021–22. This is mainly due to increase in expenditure requirement for the projects to be carried out in 2022–23.

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6 Provision of \$16,170,000 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 2022–23 represents an increase of \$2,329,000 (16.8%) over the revised estimate for 2021–22. This is mainly due to increase in expenditure requirement for upgrading various facilities in country parks in 2022–23.

7 Provision of \$40,886,000 under *Subhead 661 Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote)* is for the procurement of minor plant, vehicles and equipment in 2022–23. The provision for 2022–23 represents a decrease of \$19,829,000 (32.7%) against the revised estimate for 2021–22. This is mainly due to decrease in expenditure requirement for projects to be carried out in 2022–23.

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Commitments

Sub-head (Code)	Item (Code)	Ambit	Approved commitment	Accumulated expenditure to 31.3.2021	Revised estimated expenditure for 2021–22	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	19,429	50	1,521
	801	Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund	500,000	75,520	40,500	383,980
	802	One-off allowance to fishermen affected by new fisheries management strategy in marine parks	125,000	75,438	21,000	28,562
	808	Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund	500,000	97,375	38,000	364,625
	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	1,262,230	14,300	450,270
			<u>2,872,800</u>	<u>1,529,992</u>	<u>113,850</u>	<u>1,228,958</u>
<i>Capital Account</i>						
603		<i>Plant, vehicles and equipment</i>				
	856	To replace one and procure two patrol vessels for management of marine parks/ reserve and sea enforcement	45,000	—	314	44,686
			<u>45,000</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>314</u>	<u>44,686</u>
	Total		<u>2,917,800</u>	<u>1,529,992</u>	<u>114,164</u>	<u>1,273,644</u>