

## Head 137 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY BUREAU (ENVIRONMENT BRANCH)

**Controlling officer:** the Permanent Secretary for Environment and Ecology (Environment) will account for expenditure under this Head.

**Estimate 2023–24** ..... **\$2,730.9m**

**Establishment ceiling 2023–24** (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 216 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2023 reducing by five posts to 211 posts as at 31 March 2024 ..... **\$156.3m**

In addition, there will be an estimated 12 directorate posts as at 31 March 2023 and as at 31 March 2024.

**Commitment balance** ..... **\$7,185.2m**

### Controlling Officer's Report

#### Programmes

<b>Programme (1) Director of Bureau's Office</b>	This programme contributes to Policy Area 27: Intra-Governmental Services (Secretary for Environment and Ecology).
<b>Programme (2) Power</b>	These programmes contribute to Policy Area 23: Environmental Protection, Conservation, Power and Sustainable Development (Secretary for Environment and Ecology).
<b>Programme (3) Sustainable Development</b>	
<b>Programme (4) Environmental Protection</b>	
<b>Programme (5) Nature Conservation</b>	
<b>Programme (6) Climate Change</b>	This programme contributes to Policy Area 7: Public Safety (Secretary for Environment and Ecology) and Policy Area 23: Environmental Protection, Conservation, Power and Sustainable Development (Secretary for Environment and Ecology).

#### Detail

##### Programme (1): Director of Bureau's Office

	2021–22 (Actual)	2022–23 (Original)	2022–23 (Revised)	2023–24 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)Δ	20.0	22.1	21.9 (–0.9%)	22.5 (+2.7%)
				(or +1.8% on 2022–23 Original)

Δ For comparison purpose, the figures include relevant provisions for Director of Bureau's office which have been transferred from Head 44 — Environmental Protection Department due to the re-organisation of the Environment Branch of the Environment and Ecology Bureau and the Environmental Protection Department with effect from 1 January 2023.

#### Aim

- 2 The aim is to ensure the smooth operation of the Office of the Secretary for Environment and Ecology.

#### Brief Description

3 The Office of the Secretary for Environment and Ecology is responsible for providing support to the Secretary for Environment and Ecology in undertaking political work. This includes the support provided by the Under Secretary and the Political Assistant. The Office is also responsible for providing administrative support to the Secretary for Environment and Ecology in carrying out his duties. The work includes the planning, co-ordination and implementation of all arrangements for the Secretary's public, media and community functions.

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### Programme (2): Power

	2021–22 (Actual)	2022–23 (Original)	2022–23 (Revised)	2023–24 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)Δ	1,756.6	1,816.0	1,776.0 (–2.2%)	2,220.0 (+25.0%)

(or +22.2% on  
2022–23 Original)

Δ For comparison purpose, the figures include relevant provisions for power which have been transferred from Head 44 — Environmental Protection Department due to the re-organisation of the Environment Branch of the Environment and Ecology Bureau and the Environmental Protection Department with effect from 1 January 2023.

### Aim

4 The aims are to ensure safe, reliable and efficient energy supply at reasonable prices while minimising the environmental impact caused by the production and use of energy through the established monitoring arrangements for the operation of the two power companies and the town gas supply company; to enhance electrical and gas safety through the introduction and enforcement of safety standards; to promote competition and transparency in the local fuel market; to promote the adoption of renewable energy; and to raise public awareness of and achieve energy efficiency and conservation through education, promotion, and implementation of various programmes.

### Brief Description

5 The Branch's main responsibility under this programme is to formulate policies and programmes in relation to energy supply, electrical and gas safety, renewable energy as well as energy efficiency and conservation.

6 In 2022–23, the Branch:

- oversaw the implementation of the various programmes and schemes in relation to the promotion of energy efficiency and conservation and the development of renewable energy under the Scheme of Control Agreements (SCAs);
- promoted decarbonisation in electricity generation and energy efficiency and conservation as per the direction set out in the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050;
- worked with relevant bureaux and departments to formulate plans and take various measures with a view to improving the overall energy performance of government buildings and infrastructure by more than six per cent by 2024–25;
- encouraged the wider application of renewable energy at government buildings and facilities and promote the development of renewable energy in the private sector. It implemented measures to facilitate the installation of solar energy generation systems in open car parks;
- oversaw the implementation and review of the Building Energy Code and Energy Audit Code under the Buildings Energy Efficiency Ordinance (Cap. 610), including the promulgation of the 2021 edition of both Codes in 2022–23;
- commenced a legislative amendment exercise to expand the scope of the Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme (MEELS), with a view to increasing the total coverage of energy consumption in the residential sector by the scheme from about 50 per cent to about 80 per cent;
- oversaw the construction and operation of the District Cooling System (DCS) projects in the Kai Tak Development, took forward the implementation of DCS projects in the Kwu Tung North New Development Area and Tung Chung New Town Extension (East), and oversaw feasibility studies on implementing DCS projects in other New Development Areas;
- pursued the Energy Saving and Decarbonisation for All 2022 Campaign including the Energy Saving Charter 2022 and 4T Charter 2022 to promote public awareness of energy efficiency and conservation measures;
- oversaw the distribution of electricity charges relief, which commenced from 1 January 2019, to eligible residential electricity accounts to alleviate the increase in electricity charges during the transitional period in moving to a lower carbon future; and
- enhanced the Charter on External Lighting to encourage owners of and responsible persons for external lighting installations of decorative, promotional or advertising purposes affecting the outdoor environment to switch off such lighting installations at an earlier preset time.

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### *Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2023–24*

7 During 2023–24, the Branch will:

- conduct an interim review of the SCAs with the two power companies, and assess their Development Plans for the period of 2024 to 2028;
- oversee the two power companies' establishment and operation of the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Terminal which allows them to purchase LNG from international market directly;
- continue to oversee the implementation of the various programmes and schemes to promote energy efficiency and conservation and the development of renewable energy;
- continue to promote decarbonisation in electricity generation and energy efficiency and conservation as per the direction set out in the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050;
- conduct energy and carbon audits as well as retro-commissioning, implement energy saving projects and install more renewable energy systems to improve the overall energy performance of government premises by more than six per cent by 2024–25;
- take forward Phase IV of MEELS to cover additional types of products;
- continue to promote energy efficiency and conservation in buildings, including overseeing the implementation and review of the Building Energy Code and Energy Audit Code under the Buildings Energy Efficiency Ordinance to further enhance building energy efficiency and strengthening the promotion of retro-commissioning of existing private buildings;
- accelerate the incorporation of DCS projects in New Development Areas; and
- continue to oversee the distribution of electricity charges relief, including a new round commencing from 1 January 2024.

### **Programme (3): Sustainable Development**

	2021–22 (Actual)	2022–23 (Original)	2022–23 (Revised)	2023–24 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)Δ	33.6	33.4	32.3 (–3.3%)	39.0 (+20.7%)
				(or +16.8% on 2022–23 Original)

Δ For comparison purpose, the figures include relevant provisions for sustainable development (SD) which have been transferred from Head 44 — Environmental Protection Department due to the re-organisation of the Environment Branch of the Environment and Ecology Bureau and the Environmental Protection Department with effect from 1 January 2023.

### *Aim*

8 The aim is to promote SD in Hong Kong.

### *Brief Description*

9 The Branch's main responsibility under this programme is to ensure the incorporation of sustainability considerations into the Government's decision-making process through the sustainability assessment (SA) system; promote understanding and application of the SD principles as well as the SA system among bureaux and departments; and implement education and publicity programmes to promote public awareness and understanding of the principles of SD.

### *Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2023–24*

10 During 2023–24, the Branch will:

- implement education and publicity programmes, including the School Outreach Programme and the School Award Programme;
- monitor the implementation of the SA system; and
- provide training programmes for bureaux and departments on the SD principles and the SA system.

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### Programme (4): Environmental Protection

	2021–22 (Actual)	2022–23 (Original)	2022–23 (Revised)	2023–24 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)Δ	63.2	70.7	68.7 (–2.8%)	153.1 (+122.9%)
				(or +116.5% on 2022–23 Original)

Δ For comparison purpose, the figures include relevant provisions for environmental protection which have been transferred from Head 44 — Environmental Protection Department due to the re-organisation of the Environment Branch of the Environment and Ecology Bureau and the Environmental Protection Department with effect from 1 January 2023.

#### *Aim*

11 The aim is to promote a healthy and pleasant environment of Hong Kong for the benefit of the community and future generations.

#### *Brief Description*

12 The Branch's main responsibility under this programme is to formulate and oversee implementation of policies in relation to air and water quality improvement, pollution control of air, water and noise, waste management, environmental impact assessment and promotion of green transport.

#### *Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2023–24*

13 During 2023–24, the Branch will:

- take forward a new round of review of the Air Quality Objectives and air quality improvement measures to implement the Clean Air Plan for Hong Kong 2035;
- continue to promote green transport through the New Energy Transport Fund;
- prepare to launch a trial of hydrogen fuel cell electric buses and heavy vehicles;
- review the Ninth Technical Memorandum for Allocation of Emission Allowances in respect of Specified Licences for further tightening the emission caps on power plants;
- proceed with the legislative amendments to tighten the volatile organic compounds content limits of regulated architectural paints and extend the control to cleaning products;
- consult the trade on the control proposal to progressively phase down the manufacturing and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons in order to fulfil Hong Kong's international obligations under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer;
- amend the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499) with the aim to optimising procedures, improving operational efficiency, focusing more on environmental performance, and striking a balance between environmental protection and development needs;
- oversee the review of the Noise Control Ordinance (Cap. 400) to put control over domestic renovation noise and the use of loudspeakers for street cries, and introduce a Fixed Penalty Notice system for more effective control;
- oversee the implementation of waste-to-resources management strategies and programmes as set out in the Waste Blueprint for Hong Kong 2035, including the implementation of municipal solid waste charging;
- oversee legislative amendment exercises to regulate disposable plastics tableware and single-use plastics and to implement or enhance various producer responsibility schemes; and
- oversee the study on legislation for mandatory collection of separated recyclables in major housing estates and single-block buildings with relatively larger number of flats.

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### Programme (5): Nature Conservation

	2021–22 (Actual)	2022–23 (Original)	2022–23 (Revised)	2023–24 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)Δ	96.1	147.7	118.5 (–19.8%)	149.3 (+26.0%)

(or +1.1% on  
2022–23 Original)

Δ For comparison purpose, the figures include relevant provisions for nature conservation which have been transferred from Head 44 — Environmental Protection Department due to the re-organisation of the Environment Branch of the Environment and Ecology Bureau and the Environmental Protection Department with effect from 1 January 2023.

### *Aim*

14 The aim is to regulate, protect and manage natural resources that are important for the promotion of biological diversity of Hong Kong in a sustainable manner, taking into account social and economic considerations, for the benefit and enjoyment of the community and their future generations.

### *Brief Description*

15 The Branch's main responsibility under this programme is to formulate and oversee implementation of policies relating to the promotion of biodiversity and protection of endangered species and wild animals, as well as conservation of country parks and marine parks. It promotes countryside conservation and oversees the work of the Countryside Conservation Office (CCO).

### *Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2023–24*

16 During 2023–24, the Branch will:

- oversee the strategic feasibility study on the establishment of the wetland conservation park system proposed in the Northern Metropolis Development Strategy for exploring the implementation of a New Proactive Conservation Policy to achieve the dual objectives of meeting both conservation and development needs in the Northern Metropolis;
- oversee the designation of the proposed North Lantau Marine Park;
- enhance the recreational and educational potential of country parks, and oversee the designation of the proposed Robin's Nest Country Park;
- oversee the management strategy of the Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark;
- continue to oversee the strategies for enhanced protection of endangered species and management of wild animals, including management of the expanded Feeding Ban Area under the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (Cap. 170) and amendments to the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance to (i) increase the penalty for illegal feeding; (ii) introduce fixed penalty for illegal feeding; and (iii) expand the coverage to feeding of other animals (e.g. feral pigeons);
- continue to oversee the strategy for promotion of biodiversity;
- oversee the work of the CCO to plan, co-ordinate and implement minor improvement works in Lai Chi Wo and Sha Lo Tung as priority areas, as well as to oversee the strategy for proactive long-term conservation of Sha Lo Tung to enrich its biodiversity;
- continue to provide secretariat support to the Advisory Committee on Countryside Conservation to consider funding applications under the Countryside Conservation Funding Scheme; and
- continue to work with relevant bureaux/departments to jointly streamline the licensing requirements and procedures for guesthouses and catering business in countryside areas.

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### Programme (6): Climate Change

	2021–22 (Actual)	2022–23 (Original)	2022–23 (Revised)	2023–24 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)Δ	103.9	147.9	127.2 (–14.0%)	147.0 (+15.6%)

(or –0.6% on  
2022–23 Original)

Δ For comparison purpose, the figures include relevant provisions for climate change which have been adjusted due to the re-organisation of the Government Secretariat with effect from 1 July 2022 and the re-organisation of the Environment Branch of the Environment and Ecology Bureau and the Environmental Protection Department with effect from 1 January 2023.

#### *Aim*

17 The aim is to co-ordinate the Government's efforts in combatting climate change and to achieve carbon neutrality.

#### *Brief Description*

18 The Branch's main responsibility under this programme is to co-ordinate strategies and measures for combatting climate change and achieve carbon neutrality.

19 To align with the national "dual carbon" targets, Hong Kong Special Administration Region strives to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050 and reduce the total carbon emissions from the 2005 level by half before 2035. Under the vision of the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050, the Government has been taking forward four major decarbonisation strategies, namely "net-zero electricity generation", "energy saving and green buildings", "green transport" and "waste reduction" to lead Hong Kong towards carbon neutrality. Hong Kong has been actively involved in international co-operation and exchanges on climate actions, including the events organised by the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group. Since 2017–18, bureaux and departments have been conducting regular carbon audits on major government buildings and disclosing their audit results.

#### *Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2023–24*

20 During 2023–24, the Branch will:

- set up a new Council for Carbon Neutrality and Sustainable Development to offer advice on decarbonisation strategies and promote participation by different sectors of the community;
- monitor the work of bureaux and departments in the implementation of the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050 in support of Hong Kong's transition to carbon neutrality;
- launch publicity programmes on carbon neutrality;
- promote regional and international collaboration on climate change and carbon neutrality, including collaboration with cities in the Greater Bay Area; and
- oversee the work of the Hong Kong Observatory in providing weather services and scientific support for climate actions.

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### ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

	2021–22 (Actual) (\$m)	2022–23 (Original) (\$m)	2022–23 (Revised) (\$m)	2023–24 (Estimate) (\$m)
<b>Programme</b>				
(1) Director of Bureau's Office .....	20.0	22.1	21.9	22.5
(2) Power .....	1,756.6	1,816.0	1,776.0	2,220.0
(3) Sustainable Development .....	33.6	33.4	32.3	39.0
(4) Environmental Protection .....	63.2	70.7	68.7	153.1
(5) Nature Conservation .....	96.1	147.7	118.5	149.3
(6) Climate Change .....	103.9	147.9	127.2	147.0
	2,073.4‡	2,237.8‡	2,144.6‡ (–4.2%)	2,730.9 (+27.3%)
				(or +22.0% on 2022–23 Original)

‡ For comparison purpose, the figures have been adjusted to reflect the provisions for relevant programmes under this Head due to the re-organisation of the Government Secretariat with effect from 1 July 2022 and the re-organisation of the Environment Branch of the Environment and Ecology Bureau and the Environmental Protection Department with effect from 1 January 2023.

#### Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

##### Programme (1)

Provision for 2023–24 is \$0.6 million (2.7%) higher than the revised estimate for 2022–23. This is mainly due to the increased provision for operating expenses.

##### Programme (2)

Provision for 2023–24 is \$444.0 million (25.0%) higher than the revised estimate for 2022–23. This is mainly due to the increased cash flow requirement for the Electricity Charges Relief Scheme.

##### Programme (3)

Provision for 2023–24 is \$6.7 million (20.7%) higher than the revised estimate for 2022–23. This is mainly due to the increased provision for operating expenses.

##### Programme (4)

Provision for 2023–24 is \$84.4 million (122.9%) higher than the revised estimate for 2022–23. This is mainly due to the increased cash flow requirement for the New Energy Transport Fund.

##### Programme (5)

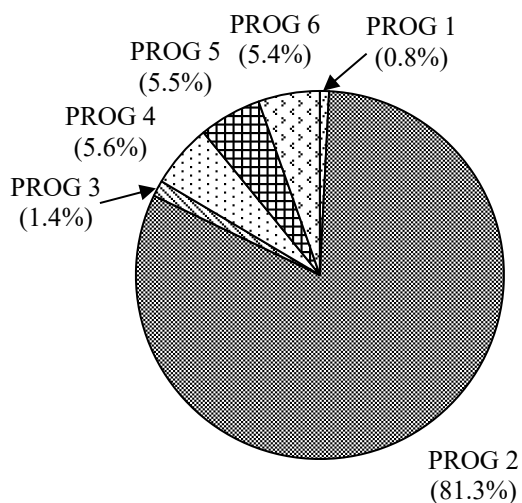
Provision for 2023–24 is \$30.8 million (26.0%) higher than the revised estimate for 2022–23. This is mainly due to the increased cash flow requirement for the non-recurrent item “CCO”. In addition, there will be a net decrease of two posts in 2023–24.

##### Programme (6)

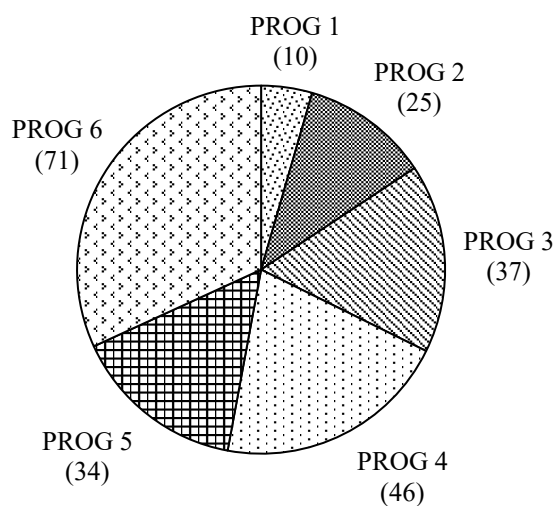
Provision for 2023–24 is \$19.8 million (15.6%) higher than the revised estimate for 2022–23. This is mainly due to the increased cash flow requirement for the Green Tech Fund. In addition, there will be a decrease of three posts in 2023–24.

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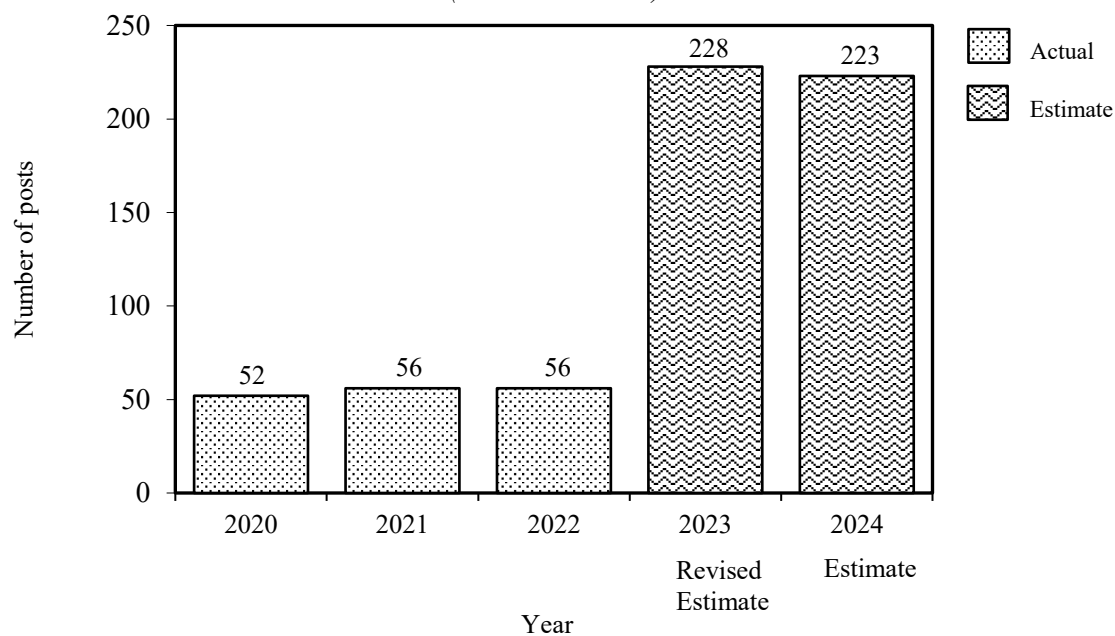
*Allocation of provision  
to programmes  
(2023-24)*



*Staff by programme  
(as at 31 March 2024)*



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





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Sub-head (Code)		Actual expenditure 2021–22	Approved estimate 2022–23	Revised estimate 2022–23	Estimate 2023–24
		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Operating Account</b>					
Recurrent					
000	Operational expenses .....	80,336	86,407	159,424	337,850
	Total, Recurrent.....	80,336	86,407	159,424	337,850
Non-Recurrent					
700	General non-recurrent .....	1,715,698	1,773,400	1,778,435	2,392,339
	Total, Non-Recurrent.....	1,715,698	1,773,400	1,778,435	2,392,339
	Total, Operating Account .....	1,796,034	1,859,807	1,937,859	2,730,189
<b>Capital Account</b>					
Plant, Equipment and Works					
661	Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote).....	—	—	360	760
	Total, Plant, Equipment and Works.....	—	—	360	760
	Total, Capital Account.....	—	—	360	760
	Total Expenditure .....	1,796,034	1,859,807	1,938,219	2,730,949

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### Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2023–24 for the salaries and expenses of the Environment and Ecology Bureau (Environment Branch) is \$2,730,949,000. This represents an increase of \$792,730,000 over the revised estimate for 2022–23 and \$934,915,000 over the actual expenditure in 2021–22.

#### *Operating Account*

##### Recurrent

**2** Provision of \$337,850,000 under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is for the salaries, allowances and other operating expenses of the Environment and Ecology Bureau (Environment Branch). This represents an increase of \$178,426,000 (111.9%) over the revised estimate for 2022–23. This is mainly due to the increase of provision for operating expenses arising from the re-organisation of the Environment Branch of the Environment and Ecology Bureau and the Environmental Protection Department with effect from 1 January 2023.

**3** The establishment as at 31 March 2023 will be 228 posts. It is expected that there will be a net decrease of five posts in 2023–24. Subject to certain conditions, the controlling officer may under delegated power create or delete non-directorate posts during 2023–24, but the notional annual mid-point salary value of all such posts must not exceed \$156,348,000.

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

	2021–22 (Actual) (\$'000)	2022–23 (Original) (\$'000)	2022–23 (Revised) (\$'000)	2023–24 (Estimate) (\$'000)
Personal Emoluments				
- Salaries .....	46,474	48,092	79,668	184,527
- Allowances .....	2,271	2,205	3,658	8,833
- Job-related allowances.....	49	52	172	72
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Mandatory Provident Fund contribution .....	114	61	594	1,871
- Civil Service Provident Fund contribution .....	3,229	3,320	6,642	16,520
Departmental Expenses				
- General departmental expenses .....	28,199	32,677	68,690	126,027
	80,336	86,407	159,424	337,850

#### *Capital Account*

##### Plant, Equipment and Works

**5** Provision of \$760,000 under *Subhead 661 Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote)* represents an increase of \$400,000 (111.1%) over the revised estimate for 2022–23. This is mainly due to increased requirement for procurement of equipment.

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**Commitments**

Sub-head (Code)	Item (Code)	Ambit	Approved commitment	Accumulated expenditure to 31.3.2022	Revised estimated expenditure for 2022–23	Balance
			\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b><i>Operating Account</i></b>						
700		<i>General non-recurrent</i>				
	052	Sustainable Development Fund.....	100,000	66,844	3,258	29,898
	801	Electricity Charges Relief Scheme.....	8,700,000	5,092,873	1,735,000	1,872,127
	803	Countryside Conservation Office.....	500,000	74,625	40,000	385,375
	804	Electricity Charges Relief Scheme (2024–2025)¶.....	3,544,000¶	—	—	3,544,000
	819	Green Tech Fund.....	400,000	15,273	27,000	357,727
	840	New Energy Transport Fund.....	1,100,000	91,003	12,880	996,117
		Total .....	14,344,000	5,340,618	1,818,138	7,185,244

¶ This is a new item, funding for which is sought in the context of the Appropriation Bill 2023.