

Head 139 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY BUREAU (FOOD BRANCH)

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

Estimate 2023–24 **\$206.1m**

Establishment ceiling 2023–24 (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 43 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2023 and as at 31 March 2024 **\$32.8m**

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

Controlling Officer's Report

Programmes

Programme (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety This programme contributes to Policy Area 2: Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety (Secretary for Environment and Ecology).

Programme (2) Environmental Hygiene This programme contributes to Policy Area 32: Environmental Hygiene (Secretary for Environment and Ecology).

Detail

Programme (1): Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

	2021–22 (Actual)	2022–23 (Original)	2022–23 (Revised)	2023–24 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)#	69.4	77.3	75.3 (–2.6%)	95.9 (+27.4%)
				(or +24.1% on 2022–23 Original)

For comparison purpose, the figures exclude relevant provisions which have been transferred to Head 140 — Government Secretariat: Health Bureau due to re-organisation of the Government Secretariat with effect from 1 July 2022.

Aim

2 The aim is to formulate and oversee implementation of policies to ensure that food available for human consumption is safe, respond to food incidents effectively, prevent the introduction and spread of zoonotic diseases and diseases in animals and plants, facilitate the sustainable development of the agricultural and fisheries industries, and oversee efficient operation of government wholesale marketing facilities for fresh food produce.

Brief Description

3 The Branch's main responsibility under this programme is to formulate and co-ordinate policies and programmes relating to the above activities. It made good progress in achieving the targets set for 2022.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2023–24

4 During 2023–24, the Branch will:

- formulate together with stakeholders a blueprint for the sustainable development of agriculture and fisheries to promote the modernisation and sustainable development of the agriculture and fisheries industries;
- implement the New Agriculture Policy to proactively support the modernisation and sustainable development of local agriculture, including monitoring the phased completion of the works project of Agricultural Park Phase 1 and its operation, the preparatory work for Agricultural Park Phase 2 and the consultancy study on Agricultural Priority Areas;
- designate four new fish culture zones in Wong Chuk Kok Hoi, outer Tap Mun, Mirs Bay and Po Toi (Southeast);
- monitor the progress of various measures introduced to sustain and upgrade the development of local fisheries, such as provision of support for Hong Kong fishermen to develop deep sea mariculture in Hong Kong and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, development of modernised pond fish culture and leisure fishing, and revitalisation of Aberdeen Wholesale Fish Market;

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- monitor the operation of the Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund and Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund under the enhanced mechanism and expanded scope, with a view to making good use of the funds to promote modernisation, enhance competitiveness of the industry and facilitate the transfer of knowledge;
- prepare for legislative amendments and other measures to introduce a positive duty of care on persons responsible for animals to enhance animal welfare and further protect animals from unnecessary suffering;
- continue to implement a strategic plan for reducing the levels of salt and sugar in food to promote healthy eating;
- continue to review and update local food safety standards, guidelines and regulatory arrangements, including legislation relating to additives and veterinary drug residues in food; and
- continue to work on the detailed proposal for re-provisioning and expanding the Food Safety Laboratory of the Government Laboratory to enhance its testing capability and operational efficiency.

Programme (2): Environmental Hygiene

	2021–22 (Actual)	2022–23 (Original)	2022–23 (Revised)	2023–24 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)#	92.6	85.0	85.4 (+0.5%)	110.2 (+29.0%)
				(or +29.6% on 2022–23 Original)

For comparison purpose, the figures exclude relevant provisions which have been transferred to Head 140 — Government Secretariat: Health Bureau due to re-organisation of the Government Secretariat with effect from 1 July 2022.

Aim

5 The aim is to provide quality environmental hygiene services in the territory, strengthen the management of public markets, minimise the risks and threats caused to public health by pest and other nuisances, increase the supply of public columbarium and crematorium facilities, enhance the regulation of private columbaria, promote green burial, enhance the effectiveness of regulatory control over food premises, and promote public involvement in the upkeep of personal and environmental hygiene standards.

Brief Description

6 The Branch's main responsibility under this programme is to formulate and co-ordinate policies and programmes relating to the above activities. It made good progress in achieving the targets set for 2022.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2023–24

7 During 2023–24, the Branch will:

- review the existing statutory powers and penalties regarding environmental hygiene, with a view to enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness and deterrence in handling thorny environmental hygiene problems and take forward the legislative proposal to increase the fixed penalty level under the Fixed Penalty (Public Cleanliness and Obstruction) Ordinance (Cap 570);
- oversee the development of new public markets at selected locations and the implementation of the Market Modernisation Programme to improve facilities of existing public markets;
- continue to implement measures to increase the supply of public columbarium and crematorium facilities and to promote the scattering of cremated human ashes at sea or in Gardens of Remembrance;
- oversee the implementation and review of the regulatory regime for private columbaria under the Private Columbaria Ordinance (Cap. 630);
- enhance anti-rodent measures and promote collaboration in mosquito and rodent control; and
- oversee the refurbishment programme of public toilets.

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ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

Programme	2021–22 (Actual) (\$m)	2022–23 (Original) (\$m)	2022–23 (Revised) (\$m)	2023–24 (Estimate) (\$m)
(1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety	69.4	77.3	75.3	95.9
(2) Environmental Hygiene	92.6	85.0	85.4	110.2
	162.0‡	162.3‡	160.7‡ (–1.0%)	206.1 (+28.3%)
				(or +27.0% 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. In addition, the figures also exclude the provisions for the Director of Bureau's office which have been transferred to Head 140 — Government Secretariat: Health Bureau due to the aforementioned Government re-organisation.

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

Programme (1)

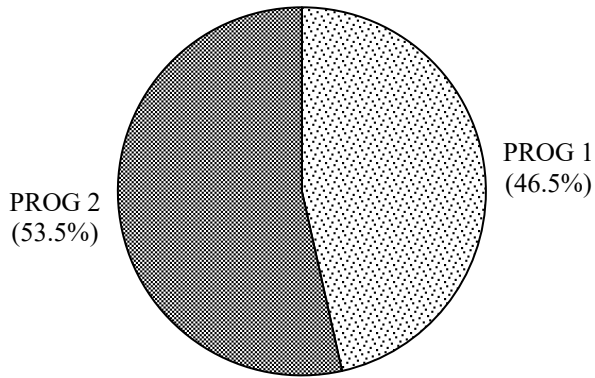
Provision for 2023–24 is \$20.6 million (27.4%) higher than the revised estimate for 2022–23. This is mainly due to the increased provision for operating expenses.

Programme (2)

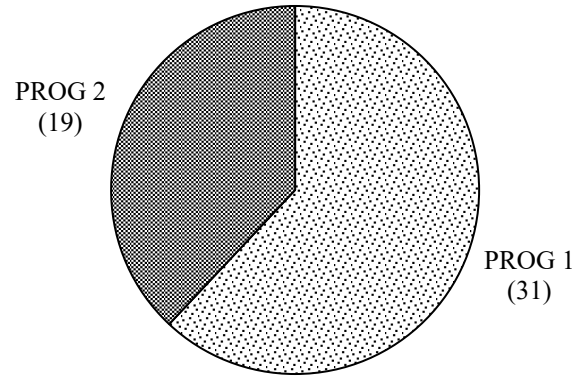
Provision for 2023–24 is \$24.8 million (29.0%) higher than the revised estimate for 2022–23. This is mainly due to the increased provision for operating expenses.

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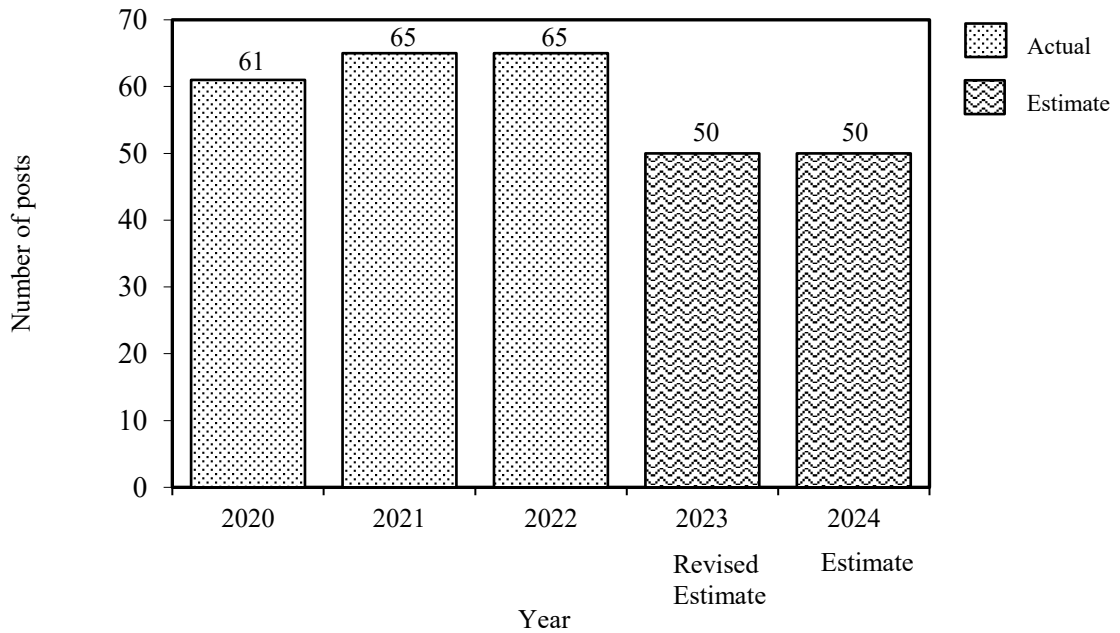
*Allocation of provision
to programmes
(2023-24)*



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



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



**Head 139 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY
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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	
Operating Account					
Recurrent					
000	Operational expenses	194,603	191,962	169,711	206,144
	Total, Recurrent.....	<u>194,603</u>	<u>191,962</u>	<u>169,711</u>	<u>206,144</u>
	Total, Operating Account	<u>194,603</u>	<u>191,962</u>	<u>169,711</u>	<u>206,144</u>
<hr/>					
	Total Expenditure	<u><u>194,603</u></u>	<u><u>191,962</u></u>	<u><u>169,711</u></u>	<u><u>206,144</u></u>

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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 Food Branch is \$206,144,000. This represents an increase of \$36,433,000 over the revised estimate for 2022–23 and \$11,541,000 over the actual expenditure in 2021–22.

Operating Account

Recurrent

2 Provision of \$206,144,000 under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is for the salaries, allowances and other operating expenses of the Food Branch. The increase of \$36,433,000 (21.5%) over the revised estimate for 2022–23 is mainly due to the increased requirement of operating expenses.

3 The establishment as at 31 March 2023 will be 50 posts, including one supernumerary post. No change in establishment is expected 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 \$32,784,000.

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	65,798	65,463	55,377	49,381
- Allowances	3,162	3,422	2,134	1,993
- Job-related allowances.....	3	2	2	2
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Mandatory Provident Fund contribution	148	132	158	101
- Civil Service Provident Fund contribution	4,130	5,494	4,088	5,001
Departmental Expenses				
- General departmental expenses	121,362	117,449	107,952	149,666
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	194,603	191,962	169,711	206,144
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