

Head 22 — AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

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

Estimate 2024–25 **\$2,235.9m**

Establishment ceiling 2024–25 (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 2 366 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2024 reducing by 18 posts to 2 348 posts as at 31 March 2025..... **\$984.3m**

In addition, there will be an estimated eight directorate posts as at 31 March 2024 and as at 31 March 2025.

Commitment balance..... **\$2,337.2m**

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

Detail

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

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	603.6	515.9	457.4 (–11.3%)	586.6 (+28.2%)
				(or +13.7% on 2023–24 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	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Plan)
<i>Agriculture</i>				
accredited vegetable farms				
(total no.).....	305#	315	305	305
(total hectares).....	2 569β	2 573	2 477	2 569
<i>Fisheries</i>				
accredited fish farms				
(total no.).....	178α	158	168	178

The target is revised from 318 to 305 as from 2023.

β The target is revised from 2 718 ha to 2 569 ha as from 2023.

α The target is revised from 162 to 178 as from 2024.

Indicators

	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Estimate)
<i>Agriculture</i>			
composite productivity index (100 in 1985).....	165	164	164
production			
vegetables (tonnes).....	15 100	15 800	15 800
(\$m).....	235.0	201.0	201.0
livestock (tonnes).....	22 700	22 200	22 200
(\$m).....	912.0	628.0	628.0
throughput at Vegetable Marketing Organization market			
(tonnes).....	58 312	53 163	50 500
(\$m).....	568.4	464.3	440.0
new loans			
(no.).....	38	50	50
(\$m).....	4.6	6.1	6.1
new grants			
(no.).....	24	22	23
(\$m).....	28.6	14.7	41.0
<i>Fisheries</i>			
production			
capture (tonnes).....	77 200	86 578	86 600
(\$m).....	2,170.4	2,353.0	2,353.0
culture (tonnes).....	2 764	1 647	2 300
(\$m).....	128.8	96.0	122.0
throughput at Fish Marketing Organization markets			
(tonnes).....	35 672	39 471	40 000
(\$m).....	3,037.0	3,349.3	3,400.0
new loans			
(no.).....	229	204	200
(\$m).....	90.2	106.4	114.0
new grants			
(no.).....	2	169	700
(\$m).....	24.4	19.0	70.0
<i>Government fresh food wholesale markets</i>			
annual throughput (tonnes).....	392 000	392 000	392 000
rental market stall space occupied (%).....	100	98.6	99.0
area of wholesale markets managed (m ²).....	287 984	287 984	287 984
requests for assistance handled (no.).....	16 973	14 908	15 300
inspections conducted daily (no.).....	215	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 2024–25

5 During 2024–25, the Department will focus on taking forward the Blueprint for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture and Fisheries to promote the upgrading and transformation, modernisation and sustainable development of the agriculture and fisheries industries, which includes:

- assisting fishermen in switching to sustainable fisheries operations and fish farmers in developing sustainable aquaculture through technical support services and credit facilities, including assisting Hong Kong fishermen to develop deep-sea mariculture locally and in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area; developing modernised and ecologically friendly pond fish culture, offshore fisheries and recreational fisheries; and revitalising the Aberdeen Wholesale Fish Market;
- supporting the modernisation and sustainable development of local agriculture, such as operation of Agricultural Park Phase 1, preparation for the establishment of the Agricultural Park Phase 2 under the staged development approach, overseeing the consultancy study on Agricultural Priority Areas, and promotion of urban farming and leisure farming;
- administering the Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund and Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund under the enhanced mechanism and expanded scope, to help farmers/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 industries;
- facilitating livestock farmers to develop and adopt modernised and environmentally friendly operation in multi-storey buildings; and
- enhancing the promotion and marketing of local agricultural and fisheries products by diversifying sale and marketing channels as well as establishing premium brand image, so as to raise public awareness of and demand for local premium products and strengthen their overall competitiveness.

Programme (2): Nature Conservation and Country Parks

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	901.5	1,030.6	983.5 (–4.6%)	1,056.9 (+7.5%)
				(or +2.6% on 2023–24 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 reserve; 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 and Sha Lo Tung;
- the planning and implementation of the Wetland Conservation Parks System;
- the management of the Hong Kong Wetland Park and Long Valley Nature 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	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Plan)
country parks and special areas managed (hectares)	44 842 λ	44 312	44 312	44 842
marine parks and marine reserve managed (hectares)	8 517 γ	6 117	6 117	8 517
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

λ The target is revised from 44 312 ha to 44 842 ha as from 2024.

γ The target is revised from 6 117 ha to 8 517 ha as from 2024.

Indicators

	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Estimate)
seedlings produced	259 000	236 500	230 000
seedlings planted	249 000	231 000	220 000
ecological impact assessment applications and studies handled.....	175	163	160
participants in educational activities	200 000	270 000	250 000
visitors to country parks (million).....	12	13	13
hill fires attended to.....	21	22	23
endangered species licences/certificates	12 205	13 906	13 900
endangered species inspections	20 145	23 141	23 500
endangered species prosecutions.....	48	60	60

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

9 During 2024–25, the Department will focus on:

- the promotion of public education and publicity on nature conservation and compatible use of country parks and marine parks;
- updating the Hong Kong Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan;
- taking forward the development of Sam Po Shue Wetland Conservation Park;
- implementing measures to enhance the education and recreation functions of country parks;
- the management and operation of the new Robin's Nest Country Park;
- 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 North Lantau Marine Park; and
- implementing measures for enhanced management and protection of wild animals, including (i) the legislative amendments to the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (Cap. 170) to effect the prohibition of feeding feral pigeons, the increase in maximum penalty and introduction of fixed penalty for illegal feeding of wild animals and feral pigeons; and (ii) enhancement in education and publicity, and review on relevant legislation and codes to enhance protection of marine animals.

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

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	484.4	491.0	556.4 (+13.3%)	592.4 (+6.5%)
				(or +20.7% on 2023–24 Original)

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	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Plan)
<i>Animal and plant regulation</i>				
<i>prevention</i>				
reported cases of rabies	0	0	0	0
dogs vaccinated in strategic Rabies Control Areas (%)φ	80	80	80	80

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	Target	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Plan)
<i>enforcement</i>				
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
<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

	2022 (Actual)	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Estimate)
<i>Animal and plant regulation</i>			
<i>prevention</i>			
stray animals caught.....	1 179	1 642	1 900
animals vaccinated and quarantined	59 052	53 026	60 100
<i>enforcement</i>			
licences/permits.....	7 992	9 633	9 700
animal and plant health certificates.....	19 610	16 383	16 400
<i>Technical services</i>			
<i>ex-gratia payment assessment</i>			
area assessed for crop ex-gratia			
payment (hectares)Δ.....	84	108	150
area assessed for aquaculture fisheries ex-gratia			
payment (m ²)Δ.....	1 112	4 390	3 900
claims assessed for capture fisheries ex-gratia			
paymentΔ.....	48	0	1 000
licensing of livestock farms			
licences issued.....	23	22	26
control of pesticides			
pesticides registered	2	2	2
licences/permits issued.....	2 189	2 254	2 250
regulation of credit unions and co-operative societies			
accounts examined or audited	209	206	205

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 2024–25

14 During 2024–25, the Department will focus on:

- strengthening measures for stray animal management;
- strengthening promotion of animal welfare, including preparing 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; and
- enhancing surveillance on antimicrobial resistance and diseases in food animals in local farms.

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ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

Programme	2022–23 (Actual) (\$m)	2023–24 (Original) (\$m)	2023–24 (Revised) (\$m)	2024–25 (Estimate) (\$m)
(1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets	603.6	515.9	457.4	586.6
(2) Nature Conservation and Country Parks	901.5	1,030.6	983.5	1,056.9
(3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services	484.4	491.0	556.4	592.4
	1,989.5	2,037.5	1,997.3 (–2.0%)	2,235.9 (+11.9%)
				(or +9.7% on 2023–24 Original)

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

Programme (1)

Provision for 2024–25 is \$129.2 million (28.2%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the increased provision for operating expenses and the increased cash flow requirement for general non-recurrent expenditure and capital expenditure. There will be a net decrease of three posts in 2024–25.

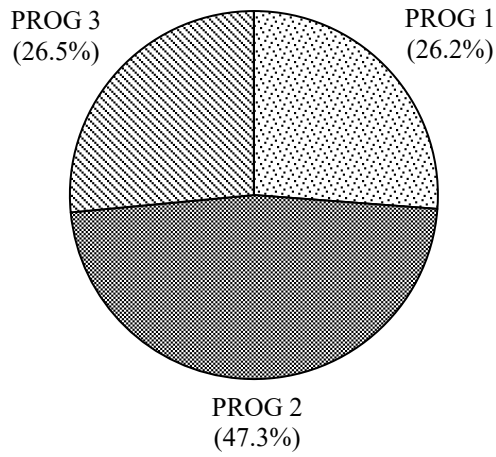
Programme (2)

Provision for 2024–25 is \$73.4 million (7.5%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the increased provision for operating expenses and the increased cash flow requirement for capital expenditure. There will be a net decrease of 11 posts in 2024–25.

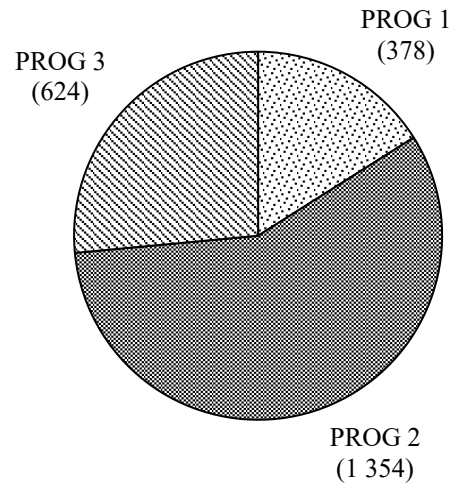
Programme (3)

Provision for 2024–25 is \$36.0 million (6.5%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the increased provision for operating expenses and the increased cash flow requirement for capital expenditure, partly offset by the decreased cash flow requirement for general non-recurrent expenditure. There will be a net decrease of four posts in 2024–25.

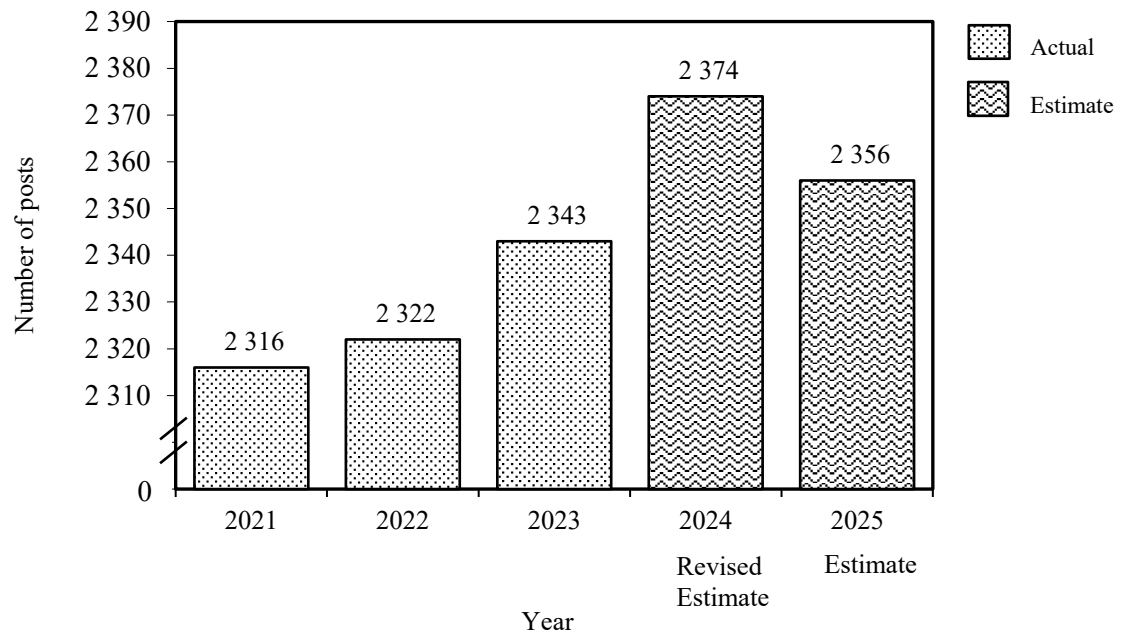
Allocation of provision to programmes (2024-25)



Staff by programme (as at 31 March 2025)



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



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Sub-head (Code)	Actual expenditure 2022–23	Approved estimate 2023–24	Revised estimate 2023–24	Estimate 2024–25	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
Operating Account					
Recurrent					
000	Operational expenses	1,744,178	1,842,828	1,835,107	1,909,757
	Total, Recurrent.....	<u>1,744,178</u>	<u>1,842,828</u>	<u>1,835,107</u>	<u>1,909,757</u>
Non-Recurrent					
700	General non-recurrent	184,439	100,091	112,133	150,400
	Total, Non-Recurrent.....	<u>184,439</u>	<u>100,091</u>	<u>112,133</u>	<u>150,400</u>
	Total, Operating Account	<u>1,928,617</u>	<u>1,942,919</u>	<u>1,947,240</u>	<u>2,060,157</u>
Capital Account					
Plant, Equipment and Works					
603	Plant, vehicles and equipment.....	—	30,079	4,125	69,433
609	Minor irrigation works in the New Territories (block vote).....	9,549	6,867	6,622	5,202
610	Minor recreational facilities and roadworks in country parks (block vote).....	10,891	16,233	13,370	24,400
661	Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote).....	40,412	41,431	25,901	76,689
	Total, Plant, Equipment and Works.....	<u>60,852</u>	<u>94,610</u>	<u>50,018</u>	<u>175,724</u>
	Total, Capital Account.....	<u>60,852</u>	<u>94,610</u>	<u>50,018</u>	<u>175,724</u>
	Total Expenditure	<u><u>1,989,469</u></u>	<u><u>2,037,529</u></u>	<u><u>1,997,258</u></u>	<u><u>2,235,881</u></u>

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Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2024–25 for the salaries and expenses of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department is \$2,235,881,000. This represents an increase of \$238,623,000 over the revised estimate for 2023–24 and \$246,412,000 over the actual expenditure in 2022–23.

Operating Account

Recurrent

2 Provision of \$1,909,757,000 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 2024 will be 2 374 posts. It is expected that there will be a net decrease of 18 posts in 2024–25. Subject to certain conditions, the controlling officer may under delegated power create or delete non-directorate posts during 2024–25, but the notional annual mid-point salary value of all such posts must not exceed \$984,328,000.

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

	2022–23 (Actual) (\$'000)	2023–24 (Original) (\$'000)	2023–24 (Revised) (\$'000)	2024–25 (Estimate) (\$'000)
Personal Emoluments				
- Salaries	885,025	953,854	947,955	991,275
- Allowances	25,350	21,413	22,961	23,004
- Job-related allowances.....	9,653	10,882	10,455	12,010
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Mandatory Provident Fund contribution	4,596	6,637	4,426	5,563
- Civil Service Provident Fund contribution	78,220	89,382	89,058	104,258
Departmental Expenses				
- General departmental expenses	729,924	749,551	748,863	762,258
Other Charges				
- Minor conservation projects and studies	5,117	6,270	6,550	6,550
Subventions				
- Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Hong Kong).....	1,200	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	1,000
- Conservation and management of Ramsar site	759	759	759	759
- Animal welfare organisations.....	1,614	1,500	1,500	1,500
- Biodiversity Education	1,641	—	—	—
	1,744,178	1,842,828	1,835,107	1,909,757

Capital Account

Plant, Equipment and Works

5 Provision of \$5,202,000 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 2024–25 represents a decrease of \$1,420,000 (21.4%) against the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the decreased cash flow requirement for projects to be carried out in 2024–25.

6 Provision of \$24,400,000 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 2024–25 represents an increase of \$11,030,000 (82.5%) over the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the increased cash flow requirement for projects to be carried out in 2024–25.

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7 Provision of \$76,689,000 under *Subhead 661 Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote)* represents an increase of \$50,788,000 (196.1%) over the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the increased cash flow requirement in 2024–25.

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Commitments

Sub-head (Code)	Item (Code)	Ambit	Approved commitment	Accumulated expenditure to 31.3.2023	Revised estimated expenditure for 2023–24	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	19,478	460	1,062
540		Artificial reefs project	80,100	75,391	—	4,709
801		Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund	1,000,000	124,935	24,700	850,365
803		Financial commitment for culling of pigs due to African Swine Fever	333,000	62,831	61,065	209,104
808		Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund	1,000,000	145,160	21,700	833,140
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	1,425,369	4,208	297,223
			<u>4,160,900</u>	<u>1,853,164</u>	<u>112,133</u>	<u>2,195,603</u>
<i>Capital Account</i>						
603		<i>Plant, vehicles and equipment</i>				
806		Establishment of deep sea cages at new fish culture zones	74,000	—	—	74,000
810		Replacement of Biosafety Level 3 Laboratory.....	27,000	—	—	27,000
856		To replace one and procure two patrol vessels for management of marine parks/ reserve and sea enforcement	45,000	314	4,125	40,561
			<u>146,000</u>	<u>314</u>	<u>4,125</u>	<u>141,561</u>
		Total	<u>4,306,900</u>	<u>1,853,478</u>	<u>116,258</u>	<u>2,337,164</u>