

**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 2024–25 **\$2,307.7m**

Establishment ceiling 2024–25 (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 211 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2024 reducing by one post to 210 posts as at 31 March 2025 **\$161.8m**

In addition, there will be an estimated 12 directorate posts as at 31 March 2024 and as at 31 March 2025.

Commitment balance..... **\$5,424.9m**

Controlling Officer’s Report

Programmes

Programme (1) Director of Bureau’s Office This programme contributes to Policy Area 27: Intra-Governmental Services (Secretary for Environment and Ecology).

Programme (2) Power
Programme (3) Sustainable Development
Programme (4) Environmental Protection
Programme (5) Nature Conservation These programmes contribute to Policy Area 23: Environmental Protection, Conservation, Power and Sustainable Development (Secretary for Environment and Ecology).

Programme (6) Climate Change 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

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	19.7Δ	22.5	21.3 (–5.3%)	22.3 (+4.7%)
				(or –0.9% on 2023–24 Original)

Δ For comparison purpose, the figure includes relevant provision for Director of Bureau’s office which has 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 planning, co-ordination and implementation of all arrangements for the Secretary’s public, media and community functions.

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Programme (2): Power

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	1,758.4Δ	2,220.0	1,746.0 (–21.4%)	1,821.7 (+4.3%)

(or –17.9% on
2023–24 Original)

Δ For comparison purpose, the figure includes relevant provision for power which has 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 2023–24, 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);
- conducted an interim review of the SCAs with the two power companies, and assessed their Development Plans for the period of 2024 to 2028;
- 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 promoted the development of renewable energy in the private sector, including the implementation of measures to facilitate the installation of solar energy generation systems in open car parks;
- oversaw the trade consultation on the proposed legislative amendments to the Buildings Energy Efficiency Ordinance (Cap. 610), the implementation of the Building Energy Code and Energy Audit Code and the review of the two Codes and prepared the 2024 edition;
- took forward the Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme (MEELS) to Phase IV to cover additional types of products and increased 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 2023 Campaign including the Energy Saving Charter 2023 and 4T Charter 2023 to promote public awareness of energy efficiency and conservation measures;
- oversaw the distribution of electricity charges relief, including a new round commencing from 1 January 2024, to eligible residential electricity accounts to alleviate the increase in electricity charges during the transitional period in moving to a lower carbon future;

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- oversaw the enhanced 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; and
- oversaw the two power companies' establishment and operation of the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Terminal which allows them to purchase LNG from international market directly.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

7 During 2024–25, the Branch will:

- 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 audits as well as retro-commissioning, implement energy saving projects and install more renewable energy systems in government buildings and infrastructure to improve the overall energy performance of government premises by more than six per cent by 2024–25;
- take forward the third review of the Grading Standards under MEELS, which will cover three types of products;
- continue to promote energy efficiency and conservation in buildings, including taking forward the legislative amendment exercise on the Buildings Energy Efficiency Ordinance and finalising the Building Energy Code and Energy Audit Code 2024 edition for gazettal;
- accelerate the incorporation of DCS projects in New Development Areas; and
- continue to oversee the distribution of electricity charges relief.

Programme (3): Sustainable Development

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	32.1 ^Δ	39.0	36.0 (–7.7%)	40.9 (+13.6%)
				(or +4.9% on 2023–24 Original)

Δ For comparison purpose, the figure includes relevant provision for sustainable development (SD) which has 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 2024–25

10 During 2024–25, 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

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	94.8 Δ	153.1	75.2 (–50.9%)	153.8 (+104.5%)
				(or +0.5% on 2023–24 Original)

Δ For comparison purpose, the figure includes relevant provision for environmental protection which has 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 2024–25

13 During 2024–25, the Branch will:

- proceed with the legislative amendments to update the Air Quality Objectives and provisions in relation to specified process licence under the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (Cap. 311);
- continue to promote green transport through the New Energy Transport Fund including launching trials on electric taxis charging facilities with the aim to facilitate the green transformation of taxi trade; and implementing a subsidy scheme for wheelchair accessible electric taxis;
- formulate a green transformation roadmap for public buses and taxis, with a view to achieving zero vehicular emissions by 2050;
- launch and monitor trials of hydrogen fuel cell double-deck buses and heavy vehicles to explore the potential and possible applications of hydrogen fuel in green transport;
- proceed with the legislative amendments to (i) tighten the sulphur content limits of marine light diesel and industrial diesel; (ii) lift the restriction on use of liquid fuel and solid fuel in Sha Tin Fuel Restriction Area; and (iii) extend the control of volatile organic compounds to architectural paints and consumer products;
- proceed with legislative amendments of the Ozone Layer Protection Ordinance (Cap. 403) to regulate and phase down the manufacturing and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons in the light of the latest requirements under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer;
- oversee the operation of the amended Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499);
- oversee (i) the implementation of the road traffic noise policy; and (ii) review of the Noise Control Ordinance (Cap. 400) with a view to regulating domestic renovation noise and use of loudspeakers for street cries;
- oversee the retrofitting of electric charging facilities in petrol filling stations with a view to facilitating the transition to green transport;
- commission a feasibility study on providing green methanol bunkering for both local and ocean-going vessels, and promulgate an action plan to construct bunkering facilities and develop supply chains, and take forward the preparatory work for the provision of LNG bunkering for ocean-going vessels jointly with the Transport and Logistics Bureau;
- oversee the implementation of waste-to-resources management strategies and programmes, including the implementation of municipal solid waste charging;
- oversee the legislative amendment exercises to establish a common legislative framework for producer responsibility schemes, and regulate the proper collection and handling of recyclables in major housing estates and single-block buildings with relatively larger number of flats;
- oversee the implementation of the regulation on disposable plastic tableware and other plastic products; and
- oversee the administration of the Sewage Services Charging Scheme.

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Programme (5): Nature Conservation

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	106.2 Δ	149.3	96.4 (–35.4%)	116.8 (+21.2%)
				(or –21.8% on 2023–24 Original)

Δ For comparison purpose, the figure includes relevant provision for nature conservation which has 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 future generations.

Brief Description

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

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

16 During 2024–25, the Branch will:

- oversee the strategic feasibility study on the establishment of the Wetland Conservation Parks System for the implementation of a New Proactive Conservation Policy to achieve the dual objectives of conservation and development in the Northern Metropolis;
- oversee further studies and planning for the development of Sam Po Shue Wetland Conservation Park in the Northern Metropolis;
- oversee the designation of the proposed North Lantau Marine Park;
- oversee the management and operation of the new Robin's Nest Country Park;
- oversee the enhancement of recreational and educational facilities of country parks;
- 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 the pursuing of the amendments to the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (Cap. 170) to effect the (i) prohibition of feeding feral pigeons; (ii) increase in penalty for illegal feeding; and (iii) introduction of fixed penalty for illegal feeding; and review on relevant legislation and codes to enhance protection of marine animals;
- oversee the updating of the Hong Kong Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan based on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework endorsed at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- 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;
- provide secretariat support to the expert group for the 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 facilitate guesthouse and food business licence applications in countryside areas.

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Programme (6): Climate Change

	2022–23 (Actual)	2023–24 (Original)	2023–24 (Revised)	2024–25 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	108.9 Δ	147.0	143.9 (–2.1%)	152.2 (+5.8%)
				(or +3.5% on 2023–24 Original)

Δ For comparison purpose, the figure includes relevant provision for climate change which has 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.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25

20 During 2024–25, the Branch will:

- assist the 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;
- assist the Steering Committee on Climate Change and Carbon Neutrality in formulating the overall strategy and overseeing the co-ordination of various climate actions;
- formulate and promulgate the Strategy for Hydrogen Development in Hong Kong;
- enhance public awareness of climate change including the continuation of the two-year Carbon Neutrality Publicity Campaign;
- promote regional and international collaboration on climate change and carbon neutrality, including collaboration with cities in the Greater Bay Area;
- oversee the work of the Hong Kong Observatory in providing weather services and scientific support for climate actions; and
- continue to provide support to bureaux and departments in enhancing carbon management by carrying out carbon audits on major government buildings; and progressively extend the conduct of carbon audit to typical government infrastructures to identify room for carbon reduction.

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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) Director of Bureau’s Office	19.7	22.5	21.3	22.3
(2) Power	1,758.4	2,220.0	1,746.0	1,821.7
(3) Sustainable Development	32.1	39.0	36.0	40.9
(4) Environmental Protection	94.8	153.1	75.2	153.8
(5) Nature Conservation	106.2	149.3	96.4	116.8
(6) Climate Change	108.9	147.0	143.9	152.2
	<u>2,120.1‡</u>	<u>2,730.9</u>	<u>2,118.8</u> (–22.4%)	<u>2,307.7</u> (+8.9%)
				(or –15.5% on 2023–24 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 2024–25 is \$1.0 million (4.7%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the increased provision for operating expenses.

Programme (2)

Provision for 2024–25 is \$75.7 million (4.3%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the increased cash flow requirement for providing electricity charges relief.

Programme (3)

Provision for 2024–25 is \$4.9 million (13.6%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the increased provision for operating expenses.

Programme (4)

Provision for 2024–25 is \$78.6 million (104.5%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the increased cash flow requirement for the New Energy Transport Fund.

Programme (5)

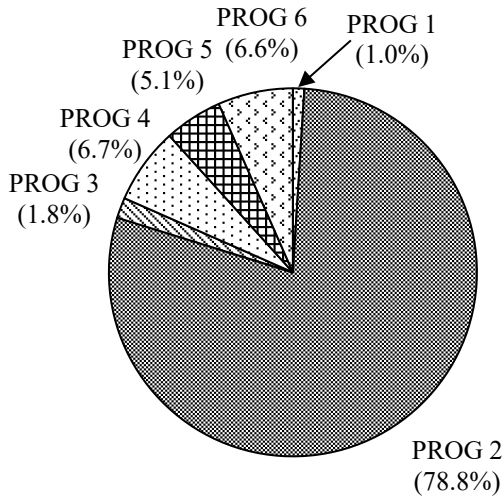
Provision for 2024–25 is \$20.4 million (21.2%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the increased cash flow requirement for the non-recurrent item “CCO”.

Programme (6)

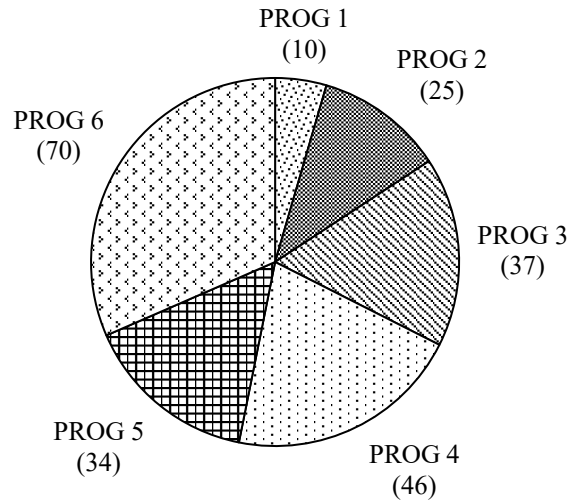
Provision for 2024–25 is \$8.3 million (5.8%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023–24. This is mainly due to the increased cash flow requirement for the Green Tech Fund. In addition, there will be a decrease of one post in 2024–25.

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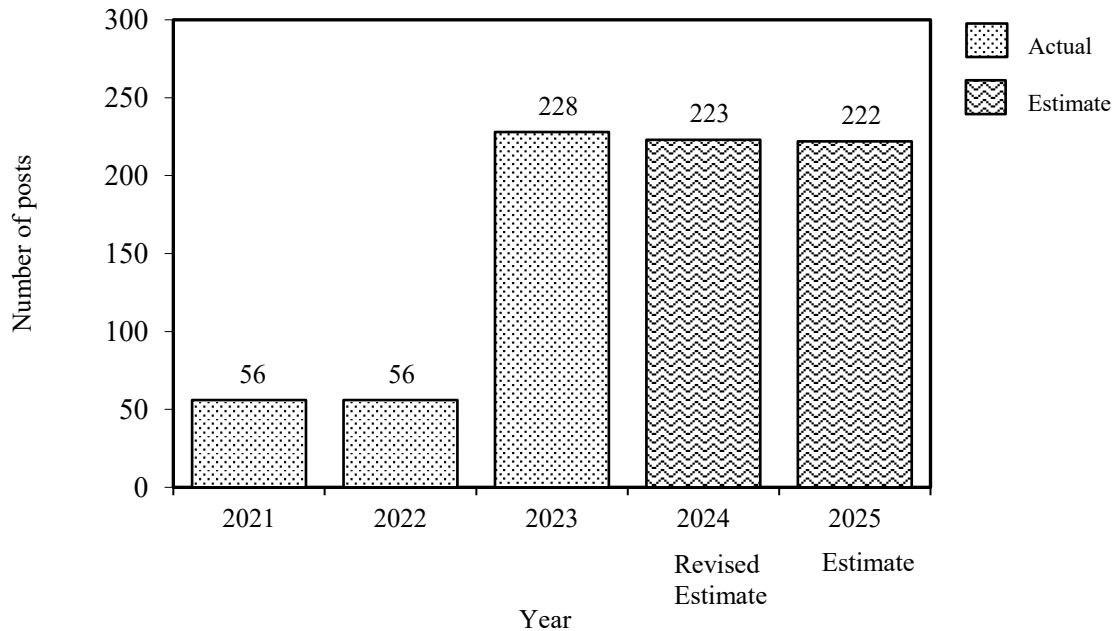
*Allocation of provision
to programmes
(2024-25)*



*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	132,687	337,850	330,195	338,034
	Total, Recurrent.....	<u>132,687</u>	<u>337,850</u>	<u>330,195</u>	<u>338,034</u>
Non-Recurrent					
700	General non-recurrent	1,755,210	2,392,339	1,788,169	1,969,662
	Total, Non-Recurrent.....	<u>1,755,210</u>	<u>2,392,339</u>	<u>1,788,169</u>	<u>1,969,662</u>
	Total, Operating Account	<u>1,887,897</u>	<u>2,730,189</u>	<u>2,118,364</u>	<u>2,307,696</u>
Capital Account					
Plant, Equipment and Works					
	Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote).....	783	760	434	—
	Total, Plant, Equipment and Works.....	<u>783</u>	<u>760</u>	<u>434</u>	<u>—</u>
	Total, Capital Account.....	<u>783</u>	<u>760</u>	<u>434</u>	<u>—</u>
	Total Expenditure	<u><u>1,888,680</u></u>	<u><u>2,730,949</u></u>	<u><u>2,118,798</u></u>	<u><u>2,307,696</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 Environment and Ecology Bureau (Environment Branch) is \$2,307,696,000. This represents an increase of \$188,898,000 over the revised estimate for 2023–24 and \$419,016,000 over the actual expenditure in 2022–23.

Operating Account

Recurrent

2 Provision of \$338,034,000 under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is for the salaries, allowances and other operating expenses of the Environment and Ecology Bureau (Environment Branch).

3 The establishment as at 31 March 2024 will be 223 posts. It is expected that there will be a net decrease of one post 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 \$161,818,000.

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	75,845	184,527	184,527	190,557
- Allowances	4,278	8,833	7,080	5,729
- Job-related allowances.....	110	72	72	72
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Mandatory Provident Fund contribution	152	1,871	517	601
- Civil Service Provident Fund contribution	4,824	16,520	16,038	18,815
Departmental Expenses				
- General departmental expenses	47,478	126,027	121,961	122,260
	<hr/> 132,687	<hr/> 337,850	<hr/> 330,195	<hr/> 338,034 <hr/>

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Commitments

Sub-head (Code)	Item (Code)	Ambit	Approved commitment \$'000	Accumulated expenditure to 31.3.2023 \$'000	Revised estimated expenditure for 2023–24 \$'000	Balance \$'000
<i>Operating Account</i>						
700	<i>General non-recurrent</i>					
052	Sustainable Development Fund.....		100,000	68,139	6,169	25,692
801	Electricity Charges Relief Scheme.....		8,700,000	6,815,258	1,403,000	481,742
803	Countryside Conservation Office.....		500,000	110,328	33,000	356,672
804	Electricity Charges Relief Scheme (2024–2025).....		3,544,000	—	291,000	3,253,000
819	Green Tech Fund.....		400,000	33,535	38,000	328,465
840	New Energy Transport Fund.....		1,100,000	103,669	17,000	979,331
	Total		<u>14,344,000</u>	<u>7,130,929</u>	<u>1,788,169</u>	<u>5,424,902</u>