

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**ENB006**

**(Question Serial No. 0726)**

Head: (39) Drainage Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): Not specified

Programme: (2) Sewage Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Drainage Services (Alice PANG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Environment

Question:

Regarding the problem of sewage discharge in the New Territories rural areas, will the Government inform this Committee:

1. of the numbers of sewerage projects under planning/in progress/completed in 9 rural areas in the New Territories for last year and this year;
2. whether there is any policy and measure to improve the those unsewered villages; whether the Department has set any internal targets for the number of projects to be completed each year;
3. of the amounts of funding for sewage collection and treatment at the North East New Territories (NENT) Landfill over the past 3 years; of the way in which the Government monitors the relevant work; whether there has been any leakage of sewage resulting in water and soil pollution in the neighbouring areas;
4. whether the commencement and scale of the trunk sewerage project No. 4409DS will be affected by development projects for the Northern Metropolis?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Yuet-ming (LegCo internal reference no.: 6)

Reply:

1. The numbers of sewerage projects under planning /in progress/completed in 9 rural areas in the New Territories for last year and this year are as follows:

Sewerage Projects in 9 Rural Areas in the New Territories	No. of Projects		
	Under Planning	In Progress	Completed
From April 2020 to March 2021	34	25	2
From April 2021 to March 2022	31	29	1

2. Premises in rural areas that are currently not yet covered by the public sewerage systems are required to continue using on-site sewage treatment facilities, such as septic tanks and soakaway systems to treat domestic sewage. Villages that have not yet been included in

sewerage works programmes are mainly those located far away from the public sewerage network, scarcely populated or with local residents who did not accept the Government's proposed sewerage arrangement. In future planning, the Government will consider various factors, including level of improvement to the environment, density of village population, acceptability by residents, technical feasibility and cost effectiveness etc., to determine the priority of sewerage expansion programmes for progressive extension of sewage collection network.

3. The design and operation of the North East New Territories (NENT) Landfill comply with stringent international standards and various measures have been adopted to minimise its impact on the surrounding environment. The landfill area is designed and constructed as an enclosed containment incorporating multilayer composite liner system covering the entire area of the site, and gas and leachate generated from the landfill are collected and properly treated. The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has also put in place a comprehensive and stringent environmental monitoring system. On-site EPD staff are responsible for monitoring the landfill contractor's management and operational performance to ensure compliance with the contractual requirements. Enforcement officers of the Environmental Compliance Division of the EPD also conduct inspections of the relevant facilities at irregular time intervals to check whether the operation of the landfill is in compliance with the relevant environmental legislations. According to records, all the results of leachate surveillance conducted in the NENT Landfill in the past 3 years were in compliance with the contractual and statutory standards. Several months ago, the EPD, together with representatives from Ta Kwu Ling District Rural Committee and members of the Legislative Council, carried out site inspection to investigate suspected contaminated streams in Ta Kwu Ling and collected stream water samples for testing. The operational issues regarding the NENT Landfill were also discussed. Sample analysis results showed that the stream water of nearby villages was not contaminated by the leachate of the NENT Landfill.

Leachate collection and treatment is part of the daily integrated management of the NENT Landfill. There is no separate breakdown of the expenditure involved.

4. Public Works Programme No. 4409DS – “North East New Territories Sewerage System Upgrade” aims to upgrade the sewerage system in the vicinity of Ping Che, Ta Kwu Ling, Man Kam To and Sha Ling so that its handling capacity can be increased to cope with the implementation of the village sewerage programme and the development of other public facilities in the district. The project commenced in October 2021 for completion in 2027. Hence, the project will not be affected by development projects for the Northern Metropolis.

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