

**Thirtieth Meeting of  
the Business Facilitation Advisory Committee**

***Agenda Item 3(b) : Report on the work of the Food Business  
and Related Services Task Force***

**Purpose**

This paper reports on the work of the Food Business and Related Services Task Force (FRSTF) since the last Business Facilitation Advisory Committee (BFAC) meeting held on 20 July 2015.

**Work progress of FRSTF**

***Development of Proposed Regulatory Control on Disposal of Waste Cooking Oils from Licensed Food Premises***

2. As a follow-up to the discussion at the last FRSTF meeting held on 4 June 2015, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and Environmental Protection Department (EPD) have briefed members on the development of the proposed regulatory control on disposal of waste cooking oils<sup>1</sup> (WCO) from licensed food premises. At the invitation of FRSTF, two trade representatives attended the meeting to express their views.

3. In response to the concerns raised by members and the trade representatives at the last meeting, EPD advises that the chained restaurants which arrange centralised collection of WCO from their individual premises, the property management companies of shopping arcades which manage communal grease traps and the cleansing companies which collect grease trap waste from grease traps will be recommended to register with EPD as WCO collectors. Based on feedback from local recyclers, there shall be sufficient collectors to collect WCO even from restaurants in remote areas. FEHD also advises that after the proposed licensing condition has been imposed on licensed restaurants, factory canteens, food factories and bakeries, inspectorate officers will check whether WCO has been generated and stored

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<sup>1</sup> Waste cooking oils include grease trap waste, used cooking oil and unused edible oil which has to be disposed of for reasons like spoilage.

up during routine inspection of the food premises. If affirmative, relevant records of collection of the WCO by registered traders shall be provided for inspection by the inspectorate officers upon request. Verbal and written warnings will be issued to licensees in breach of the proposed licensing condition. For repeated breaches, FEHD will consider cancellation of their licences.

4. EPD plans to launch the registration scheme for WCO collectors/disposers/exporters in November 2015. Good practice guides for registered parties will be issued. Tentatively, the new licensing condition will be imposed on the relevant food business licences in early 2016. To facilitate the trade to keep their collection records, FEHD will provide a template for use by licensees. FEHD will also exercise flexibility to accept copies of collection records on the spot during inspection at chained restaurant outlets, with the original copies kept by the head offices to be provided afterwards.

5. As the proposed regulatory measures will have significant impact on the current practice of the food trade and the implementation details have yet to be finalised, FRSTF expresses grave concern on the Government's plan to impose the new licensing condition in early 2016. FRSTF suggests that a grace period of 12 months should be given for the trade to make preparation for the new requirements. In addition, hotline and guidelines should also be provided to help the trade, in particular SMEs, better understand the regulatory requirements.

***Implementation Details of Waiver of Licence Fees for Restaurants and Fees for Restricted Food Permits for 6 months***

6. FEHD has briefed FRSTF on the implementation details of waiver of licence fees for restaurants and fees for restricted food permits for 6 months as announced by the Financial Secretary in the 2015-16 Budget Speech.

7. The concession period will last for 12 months, commencing on 1 July 2015 and ending on 30 June 2016 (both dates inclusive). The fees payable for the issue or renewal of some 13 400 restaurant licences<sup>2</sup> and

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<sup>2</sup> Restaurant licences include the full and provisional licences of General Restaurant, Light Refreshment Restaurant and Marine Restaurant.

some 6 500 restricted food permits<sup>3</sup> commencing during the concession period will be waived for a maximum period of six months. For restaurant licences, the issue of a full licence following a provisional licence is regarded as one licence and the combined fee waiver period is subject to the 6-month cap. For transfer of a licence/permit taking place during the concession period, any fee waiver granted to the transferor will be treated as fee waiver already granted to the transferee (i.e. the combined fee waiver available to the transferor and the transferee is subject to the 6-month cap).

8. FRSTF welcomes smooth implementation of the support measure.

### ***Proper Use of Water Supply for Fresh Water Cooling Towers***

9. The Electrical & Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) and Water Supplies Department (WSD) have jointly briefed FRSTF on the requirements for proper installation and operation of fresh water cooling towers (FWCTs) in order to mitigate the risk of spreading of the Legionnaires' disease and to fulfill the provisions of the "Waterworks Ordinance".

10. FWCTs are used for heat dissipation purpose in the water-cooled air-conditioning systems. At present, there are some 2 000 FWCTs accepted into the "Fresh Water Cooling Towers Scheme for Air Conditioning Systems"<sup>4</sup> (the Scheme) operated by EMSD. Prior to installation of FWCTs, the owners should apply for participation in the Scheme. If the design of a FWCT meets the prescribed requirements, EMSD will accept it into the Scheme and notify WSD accordingly for processing the application for supply of water to it.

11. Some members point out that it took at least 9 months for them to obtain the necessary approvals from EMSD and WSD. Inevitably, the long processing time would delay the commencement of their business operations. The Convenor, therefore, suggests that the two departments should review and streamline the application processes concerned.

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<sup>3</sup> Restricted food permits involve the sale of any of the restricted foods such as non-bottled drinks, frozen confections, milk and milk beverages, cut fruit, Chinese herb tea, Leung Fan, sushi, sashimi, oysters to be eaten in raw state, meat to be eaten in raw state, live fish, shell fish and food sold by means of a vending machine as specified in Schedule 2 of the Food Business Regulation (Cap.132X).

<sup>4</sup> Details of the Scheme are provided in the brochure which can be accessed at [http://www.emsd.gov.hk/emsd/e\\_download/pee/Scheme\\_Brochure\\_eng\\_11-2010.pdf](http://www.emsd.gov.hk/emsd/e_download/pee/Scheme_Brochure_eng_11-2010.pdf).

## **Way forward**

12. Members are invited to note the work progress of FRSTF. FRSTF will continue to monitor the development of the above issues.

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Financial Secretary's Office  
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