

**Thirty-seventh 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 21 December 2017.

Work progress of FRSTF

Measures to Facilitate Timely Processing of Applications for Water Supply

2. To enhance water safety, the Water Services Department (WSD) has strengthened the control and inspection of new plumbing installations. With a view to minimizing the impact on the food business in obtaining water supply, WSD has recently introduced the following facilitation measures which have shortened the department's processing time to 30 calendar days on average –

- (a) waiving the requirement of pipe alignment plans for approval of plumbing proposal;
- (b) providing a submission checklist and online tools for generating the required form to better facilitate the applicants in preparing their submissions; and
- (c) centralised processing of application with streamlined workflow to expedite the application process.

3. WSD briefed FRSTF at the meeting on 13 April 2018 on the above improvement measures. The Task Force appreciated the department's efforts to facilitate timely processing of water supply applications.

Facilitation Measure for Validation of Unauthorised Signboards

4. At the same FRSTF meeting, the Buildings Department (BD) briefed the Task Force that BD was working with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) on a new measure which would facilitate the validation of certain existing unauthorized signboards during the application for food business licences.

5. Under the proposed measure, trade operators who apply for food business licences could have the option of appointing building professionals to carry out two separate procedures, namely, the validation of unauthorised signboards under the Signboard Validation Scheme and the certification of the premises as free of unauthorised building works (a licensing requirement), in one go. Relevant forms are being revised with a view to implementing the initiative in late 2018 tentatively.

6. FRSTF appreciated the Government's efforts to facilitate the food business operators to validate unauthorised signboards.

Inspection Regime for Licensed Food Premises with ISO 22000 Certification

7. To encourage more food business operators to implement ISO 22000 standards which helps enhance food safety, FEHD briefed FRSTF at the same meeting on the merits of the inspection regime for food premises which have obtained ISO 22000 certification.

8. Under the regime, the concerned premises are inspected at a less frequent interval of once every five months¹, unless in the event of food safety incidents or complaints when FEHD would conduct additional inspections. While these premises are required to comply with legislation and licensing conditions, they are not subject to sanctions under the Demerit Points System².

9. FRSTF appreciated FEHD's efforts to streamline the inspection regime for food premises with ISO 22000 certification.

¹ For food premises which do not have ISO 2200 certification, FEHD would classify them into three risk types under the "Risk-based Inspection System", and they are inspected once every 20, 10 and 4 weeks accordingly.

² Under the Demerit Points System, a pre-determined number of demerit points ranging will be registered against a licensee upon conviction of an offence which are related to food safety and environmental hygiene under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132) and its subsidiary legislation. The food premises will have the licence suspended or cancelled due to accumulation of 15 demerit points within a specific period.

Way forward

10. 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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June 2018