

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**DEVB(W)103**

**(Question Serial No. 2096)**

Head: (60) Highways Department  
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified  
Programme: (2) District and Maintenance Works  
Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (YAU Kwok-ting)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

The Highways Department (HyD) has formulated performance targets for excavation permit (XP) applications from public utilities (such as the percentage of issuing excavation permits within 5 working days is 95% and 99% within 8 working days). Nevertheless, similar targets are not set for applications from non-public utilities (such as private developers, contractors, individuals) in the document. I would like to ask the following questions:

- (a) Over the past 3 years, how many XP applications were submitted by non-public utilities? What are the percentages of the total applications? What are the average approval times? Are there any noticeable differences compared to the average approval times for the applications from public utilities?
- (a) Why weren't there any performance targets formulated for XP applications from non-public utilities? Is it based on application numbers, complexity or other considerations? Will the Government consider formulating independent performance targets for regular road excavation works conducted by private developers or contractors in order to monitor the enhancement of approval efficiency?
- (b) The HyD indicated in the "Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2026-27" that it would "monitor and enhance the performance of the Excavation Permit Management System (XPMS) to facilitate control and co-ordination of road opening works". What is the optimisation plan for the XPMS? What functions will be added to the new system? When is the system upgrade expected to be completed? By how much is the approval time expected to be reduced after the system optimisation? By how much will the non-compliance rate be reduced? Has the Government set any specific performance indicators?

Asked by: Hon WONG Ho-ming, Augustine (LegCo internal reference no.: 74)

Reply:

- (a) The XP application numbers submitted by non-public utilities and their average approval times over the past 3 years are tabulated below:

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
Nos. of applications	894	759	761
Percentages of total application numbers (%)	8.7%	7.8%	7.8%
Average approval times (Days)	1.7	2.1	1.9

The average approval times for XP applications between non-public utilities and public utilities are comparable, with no significant differences.

- (b) Considering that the XP applications from non-public utilities only account for a small percentage of the total number (as shown in table above), the Highways Department (HyD) did not set a separate performance target. Nevertheless, the HyD noticed that the number of applications from non-public utilities remain steady and we have a plan to incorporate the issuance of those XP into existing performance pledge.
- (c) Apart from registering the proposed excavation plans with the HyD, the XP applicants need to submit temporary traffic arrangement (TTA) proposals before XP applications to ensure that impacts on traffic are acceptable, and obtain “no objection” from the Transport Department (TD) and Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF). In case the road excavation works would affect traffic sensitive routes<sup>Note 1</sup>, the TD and HKPF would request the XP applicants to carry out Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) beforehand to prove that the TTAs they submitted are practicably feasible.

In response to the requests of the Joint Utilities Policy Group (hereinafter referred to as “JUPG<sup>Note 2</sup>”), the HyD is currently optimising the Excavation Permit Management System (hereinafter referred to as “XPMS”) to shorten the time required for its members to prepare for XP applications. Through the system optimisation, a database will be established within the XPMS to store members’ approved TIA reports<sup>Note 3</sup> over the past 2 years for their reference during applications. If the area affected by the excavation works are comparable to those covered in the TIA reports stored in the database, and there are no major changes in development control parameters/planning of major transport infrastructure, etc. in the vicinity, applicants can cite the relevant past TIA reports as a basis<sup>Note 4</sup> when submitting the TTA proposals to the TD and the HKPF for approval. The trial application of the aforesaid optimisation plan is expected to be launched in the second quarter of 2026. The HyD will review its effectiveness in a timely manner following the trial.

Note 1: Reference can be made to the traffic sensitive routes listed in the Guidance Notes “Guidelines on Traffic Impact Assessment and Day-time Ban Requirements for Road Works on Traffic Sensitive Routes” issued by the HyD.

Note 2: Members of the JUPG include representatives from the HyD, TD, Water Supplies Department and Drainage Services Department, as well as senior representatives from other

public utilities. The JUPG meets quarterly to discuss policies related to utility works and road excavations.

Note 3: Upon the trial application of the optimisation plan, the XPMS will only begin to store TIA reports in the database for reference by the participating applicants, subject to the consent of the report owners to share their reports.

Note 4: When citing the relevant past TIA reports, XP applicants are still required to submit the latest traffic survey data to facilitate the approval by the TD and the HKPF. Afterwards, when carrying out excavation works, applicants shall update the TIA reports with the aforesaid latest traffic survey data and upload them to the XPMS before submitting the Completion Notices for the excavation works.

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