

LCQ8: Landscape architect

â€‹Following is a question by the Hon Tony Tse and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (June 4):

Question:

There are views that good public open space and green space design will help enhance Hong Kong's living environment, physical and mental health of its citizens, as well as increase its appeal to tourists from home and abroad, and that landscape architect profession can play a significant role in this regard. However, some members of the industry have reflected that the Government has failed to attach importance to and optimise the use of the landscape architect profession when launching related projects (such as construction of parks) or consultancy services. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether guidelines have been drawn up to specify that the relevant government departments will fully consult their in-house landscape architects when inviting tenders for the planning, design or construction contracts for projects or consultancy projects focusing on public open space or green space, or those with landscape design accounting for a significant proportion; if so, what are the contents of the guidelines and their implementation status; if not, whether it will consider formulating relevant guidelines;

(2) whether it will formulate uniform guidelines to specify that, when inviting tenders for projects focusing on public open space or green space, or those with landscape design accounting for a significant proportion, professional landscape consultancy companies should be allowed to bid in an independent capacity, and that they should not only act as sub-consultants of other professional consultancy companies; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) of the policies and measures in place to further optimise the use of and give full play to the profession of landscape architects, so as to make Hong Kong an even better city for living, working and travelling?

Reply:

President,

(1) Currently, the Government works departments' project administration handbooks and various technical circulars state that professional advice from landscape architects within the Government should be sought for projects related to public open spaces and landscape greening at various stages, including planning, design, engagement of consultants, and tendering for works contracts. As part of a multidisciplinary project team, landscape architects provide professional advice on greening and landscape matters at various stages of the project, including reviewing or formulating landscape

and visual impact assessments, tree preservation and removal proposals, and landscape master plans during the planning and design stage; evaluating the professional qualifications and technical proposals from tenderers during the selection of consultants and contractors; designing and preparing contract specifications for the arrangement of green spaces and recreational facilities during the design and tender documentation stage. Subsequently, they assist in monitoring the greening and landscape works of consultants and contractors during project implementation.

In addition, some landscape architects take on project management roles, co-ordinating various types of projects such as public open spaces and government buildings, overseeing project planning, construction, environmental compliance, cost control, and monitoring progress and quality. Landscape architects also provide professional advice in vetting assessment reports related to landscape and visual impacts under the Town Planning Ordinance and the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance.

(2) During the consultant selection process for public works projects, the Government follows the guidelines set out in the Architectural and Associated Consultants Selection Board Handbook or the Engineering and Associated Consultants Selection Board Handbook to ensure value for money, while maintaining open and fair competition. The Government's List of Consultants of the Architectural and Associated Consultants Selection Board includes a Landscape Architectural category. Eligible landscape architectural consultants are invited to bid independently as lead consultants for design and research projects related to greening and landscape, such as formulation of greening master plans, public open spaces designs, the Street Tree Selection Guide, the Guidelines on Soil Improvement, and similar initiatives. Departments will invite respective consultants from relevant categories to bid based on the project's overall nature and practical requirements.

(3) The Government has consistently strived to enhance liveability through various initiatives with the aim to build a liveable, sustainable and inclusive Hong Kong. The Hong Kong 2030+ outlines long-term strategies for green spaces, so as to strengthen blue-green infrastructure, and integrate such elements into both new and existing development areas. Through practice notes, technical circulars, etc, the Government promotes sustainable green building designs in both public and private developments, requiring 20 per cent to 30 per cent green coverage and the provision of public open spaces in private developments, etc. The professional expertise of landscape architects plays a crucial role in implementing these greening policies and measures.

Landscape architects in the Government play a key role in greening and landscape matters, in particular after the establishment of the Greening and Landscape Office under the Development Bureau (DEVB) in 2010. Landscape architects of the office are responsible for the central co-ordination of the Government's greening and landscape planning and design efforts. Landscape architect posts in various departments have gradually increased to meet the increasingly complex project requirements. For example, landscape architect posts were introduced to the DEVB's Harbour Office to advance waterfront open space projects, and to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department to

enhance public play spaces. The number of landscape architects managed by the DEVB has increased from about 60 to about 100, and three directorate posts at the rank of Chief Landscape Architect were created in 2017 and 2018. These measures demonstrate the importance that the Government attaches to the landscape architectural profession. To further strengthen the team's capabilities, we also provide systematic training for landscape architects, covering professional knowledge, project management, and innovative technologies. This continuous professional development supports Hong Kong's transformation into a sustainable and liveable city.

Furthermore, the Government maintains close collaboration with the landscape architectural industry and stakeholders, including the Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects and the Association of Landscape Consultants Hong Kong through meetings, and inviting practitioners from the landscape industry to join relevant committees (such as the Urban Forestry Advisory Panel, the Arboriculture and Horticulture Industry Development Advisory Committee, the Harbourfront Commission, etc) to gather professional opinions and facilitate exchange. To further advance the development of the landscape architectural profession, we will explore with relevant departments and encourage greater involvement of landscape architectural consultants in greening and public open space projects, while maintaining ongoing communication with various professional teams and stakeholders.