

Index Page

Replies to initial questions raised by Legislative Council Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2024-25

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Security

Session No. : 16

Consolidated e-file name : SB-2-e1.docx

Reply Serial No.	Question Serial No.	Name of Member	Head	Programme
SB107	2327	CHAN Wing-yan, Joephy	70	(3) Control after Entry
SB108	1861	CHAU Siu-chung	70	(1) Pre-entry Control
SB109	1862	CHAU Siu-chung	70	(3) Control after Entry
SB110	1162	IP LAU Suk-ye, Regina	70	(1) Pre-entry Control
SB111	1177	IP LAU Suk-ye, Regina	70	(5) Nationality and Assistance to HKSAR Residents outside Hong Kong
SB112	0090	KWOK Ling-lai, Lillian	70	(4) Personal Documentation
SB113	0206	KWOK Ling-lai, Lillian	70	(3) Control after Entry
SB114	1823	LAM Chun-sing	70	(5) Nationality and Assistance to HKSAR Residents outside Hong Kong
SB115	0300	LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth	70	(2) Control upon Entry
SB116	0306	LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth	70	(2) Control upon Entry
SB117	1688	LUK Hon-man, Benson	70	(4) Personal Documentation
SB118	0710	NGAN Man-yu	70	(1) Pre-entry Control
SB119	3135	SHIU Ka-fai	70	(1) Pre-entry Control
SB120	3136	SHIU Ka-fai	70	(2) Control upon Entry
SB121	1260	TSE Wai-chun, Paul	70	(3) Control after Entry
SB122	2793	WONG Chun-sek, Edmund	70	(1) Pre-entry Control
SB123	2794	WONG Chun-sek, Edmund	70	(1) Pre-entry Control
SB124	1532	WONG Kwok, Kingsley	70	(1) Pre-entry Control (4) Personal Documentation
SB125	1951	YIU Pak-leung	70	(2) Control upon Entry

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB107

(Question Serial No. 2327)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Control after Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the contravention of the Immigration Ordinance, would the Government inform this Committee of:

the statistics on overstayers, illegal immigrants, illegal workers and other immigration offenders by month, nationality, age and sex in the past 3 years?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Wing-yan, Joephy (LegCo internal reference no.: 28)

Reply:

The numbers of overstayers (Note) in the past 3 years are tabulated by their country/region of origin as follows:

Country/region of origin Year/month		Africa	Asia and the Pacific Region (Other than Mainland China)	Europe	Mainland China	North America	South America	Total
		2021	Jan	5	45	1	163	0
Feb	0		39	0	104	1	3	147
Mar	0		45	0	125	1	1	172
Apr	1		36	1	79	0	1	118
May	3		39	5	75	1	0	123
Jun	4		35	0	120	0	6	165
Jul	2		37	4	81	1	7	132
Aug	1		16	2	65	0	2	86
Sept	0		29	2	68	0	0	99
Oct	1		17	4	60	2	0	84
Nov	0		24	1	70	1	1	97
Dec	1		16	0	82	0	1	100
Total	18	378	20	1 092	7	25	1 540	

Country/region of origin Year/month		Africa	Asia and the Pacific Region (Other than Mainland China)	Europe	Mainland China	North America	South America	Total
		2022	Jan	2	14	1	90	0
Feb	1		21	0	78	0	3	103
Mar	1		23	1	124	0	3	152
Apr	0		11	0	53	0	0	64
May	0		32	1	89	0	0	122
Jun	0		13	0	87	0	1	101
Jul	2		32	1	93	0	1	129
Aug	0		21	1	84	0	0	106
Sept	0		18	1	92	0	0	111
Oct	1		24	0	78	0	2	105
Nov	3		29	3	66	0	1	102
Dec	4		31	0	91	1	2	129
Total	14		269	9	1 025	1	15	1 333
2023	Jan	1	27	1	113	0	0	142
	Feb	1	33	0	55	1	3	93
	Mar	1	39	2	71	0	0	113
	Apr	3	50	0	51	0	1	105
	May	4	68	2	98	0	1	173
	Jun	3	64	0	75	0	0	142
	Jul	10	70	0	110	0	0	190
	Aug	3	100	0	85	0	0	188
	Sept	4	102	0	107	1	0	214
	Oct	16	132	1	117	1	0	267
	Nov	8	169	0	150	0	1	328
	Dec	9	132	0	111	1	1	254
	Total	63	986	6	1 143	4	7	2 209

Note: Those allowed to leave Hong Kong after completing the extension of stay formalities are excluded.

The numbers of illegal immigrants intercepted in the past 3 years are tabulated by their country/region of origin as follows:

Country/region of origin Year/month		Mainland China	Vietnam	Pakistan	Bangladesh	India	Others	Total
		2021	Jan	119	82	14	3	7
Feb	79		44	17	4	9	0	153
Mar	194		57	16	5	7	1	280
Apr	101		54	15	7	3	1	181
May	119		59	17	8	4	2	209
Jun	109		54	17	9	2	3	194
Jul	113		72	2	4	3	0	194

Country/region of origin Year/month		Mainland China	Vietnam	Pakistan	Bangladesh	India	Others	Total
			Aug	112	35	11	4	2
Sept	118		39	5	5	1	2	170
Oct	106		39	9	3	6	1	164
Nov	94		26	9	3	1	1	134
Dec	112		25	9	2	7	2	157
Total	1 376		586	141	57	52	14	2 226
2022	Jan	109	39	15	2	6	1	172
	Feb	11	126	1	0	2	0	140
	Mar	40	58	1	2	3	0	104
	Apr	23	14	1	1	0	1	40
	May	65	18	2	3	2	2	92
	Jun	71	18	6	4	5	1	105
	Jul	83	8	10	7	6	0	114
	Aug	48	15	2	7	0	0	72
	Sept	78	4	8	4	2	1	97
	Oct	53	7	5	2	3	2	72
	Nov	55	16	10	6	5	0	92
	Dec	37	12	4	0	1	1	55
Total	673	335	65	38	35	9	1 155	
2023	Jan	39	11	1	2	1	1	55
	Feb	25	4	5	0	1	0	35
	Mar	27	14	8	4	2	1	56
	Apr	23	26	0	2	1	3	55
	May	38	42	1	4	2	0	87
	Jun	14	26	8	7	1	1	57
	Jul	16	36	7	16	0	2	77
	Aug	45	53	39	71	5	4	217
	Sept	17	54	43	77	15	3	209
	Oct	29	38	126	172	25	3	393
	Nov	51	52	69	111	15	2	300
	Dec	27	22	26	30	15	3	123
Total	351	378	333	496	83	23	1 664	

The numbers of illegal workers (including illegal immigrants, visitors, foreign domestic helpers and other non-permanent residents of Hong Kong) who were arrested by the Immigration Department (ImmD) in the past 3 years are tabulated by their country/region of origin as follows:

Country/region of origin Year/month		Number of persons arrested		
		Mainland China	Others	Total
2021	Jan	39	35	74
	Feb	20	56	76
	Mar	36	86	122
	Apr	34	60	94
	May	25	53	78
	Jun	35	43	78
	Jul	26	77	103
	Aug	26	64	90
	Sept	21	79	100
	Oct	35	72	107
	Nov	30	72	102
	Dec	23	56	79
	Total	350	753	1 103
2022	Jan	14	72	86
	Feb	4	3	7
	Mar	6	10	16
	Apr	13	36	49
	May	24	53	77
	Jun	14	76	90
	Jul	40	85	125
	Aug	13	53	66
	Sept	37	59	96
	Oct	21	50	71
	Nov	21	112	133
	Dec	15	55	70
	Total	222	664	886
2023	Jan	6	42	48
	Feb	18	53	71
	Mar	42	86	128
	Apr	26	43	69
	May	39	84	123
	Jun	61	55	116
	Jul	58	62	120
	Aug	73	77	150
	Sept	45	57	102
	Oct	75	58	133
	Nov	68	82	150
	Dec	47	47	94
	Total	558	746	1 304

The numbers of other immigration offenders arrested in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Year/Month		Number of persons arrested
2021	Jan	80
	Feb	67
	Mar	149
	Apr	104
	May	99
	Jun	100
	Jul	110
	Aug	90
	Sept	108
	Oct	92
	Nov	98
	Dec	84
	Total	1 181
2022	Jan	72
	Feb	5
	Mar	24
	Apr	40
	May	77
	Jun	95
	Jul	94
	Aug	81
	Sept	117
	Oct	116
	Nov	108
	Dec	86
	Total	915
2023	Jan	65
	Feb	82
	Mar	148
	Apr	152
	May	236
	Jun	171
	Jul	197
	Aug	233
	Sept	198
	Oct	296
	Nov	357
	Dec	287
	Total	2 422

The ImmD does not maintain other breakdown statistics mentioned in the question.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB108

(Question Serial No. 1861)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below also concerns the policy purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB). The reply was prepared by the Immigration Department and vetted by the LWB.]

Question:

Regarding the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS), would the Government inform this Committee of:

- (1) the total number of persons approved for admission to Hong Kong under the QMAS in the past year and this year to date, and among which, the respective numbers of persons assessed under the General Points Test or Achievement-based Points Test;
- (2) the average processing time for each approved application under the QMAS;
- (3) how the Immigration Department (ImmD) verified the proof of academic qualifications, professional qualifications and work experience, etc. submitted by the QMAS applicants, and whether the ImmD would conduct sampling reviews on the proof of qualifications submitted by applicants who had been approved for admission to Hong Kong; and
- (4) the numbers of (i) applications refused, (ii) criminal investigations initiated and (iii) prosecutions instituted and cases of conviction by court on the grounds that the QMAS applicants had submitted false or misrepresented information in each of the past five years and this year to date?

Asked by: Hon CHAU Siu-chung (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

(1) The statistics of the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS) in the past 2 financial years are tabulated as follows:

Financial year		2022-23	2023-24 (As of February 2024)
No. of applications received		28 732	76 985
No. of applications approved	General Points Test (GPT)	4 459	12 643
	Achievement-based Points Test (APT)	19	46
	Total	4 478	12 689

Note 1: Applications approved in a financial year may not totally be the applications submitted in the same year.

Note 2: The numbers of applications approved denote the numbers of applications that passed the selection by the Advisory Committee on Admission of Quality Migrants and Professionals (the Advisory Committee).

(2)

The QMAS seeks to attract highly skilled or talented persons to settle in Hong Kong in order to enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness. During the selection process, applicants who satisfy both the prerequisites and the minimum passing mark (under the GPT) or the one point-scoring factor (under the APT) will be short-listed for further assessment by the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee will consider the socio-economic needs of Hong Kong, the sectoral mix of candidates and other relevant factors, and make recommendations to the Immigration Department (ImmD) for assessing the applications.

The processing time required for each application will vary depending on factors such as the information and supporting documents provided by the applicants, the advice from the Advisory Committee and the number of applications received etc.

(3) The ImmD has all along been assessing each application in a rigorous manner. In assessing the applications, the ImmD will consider whether the applicants meet the specific eligibility criteria under the relevant admission schemes/arrangements as well as normal immigration requirements, and will take into account the individual circumstances of each application to ensure that only persons who are in compliance with the relevant immigration policies will be admitted into Hong Kong.

The ImmD has adopted stringent standard in verifying qualification proof submitted by applicants. In assessing the QMAS applications, the ImmD requires applicants to submit relevant proof of academic qualifications, professional qualifications and work experience, including the verification results of his/her academic qualifications by relevant authorised institutions (such as respective education departments or authorities, the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications, or relevant educational

institutions) or the documentary proof of professional qualifications validated by relevant notaries public, so as to establish that he/she has met the prerequisites and eligibility for relevant scores under the respective point-scoring factors. In case of doubts about the authenticity of the documents submitted by the applicants, the ImmD will promptly conduct follow-up investigations and take enforcement actions when necessary.

It is an offence for any persons to furnish false information or make false representation to the ImmD in their applications for visas or entry permits. If such cases are found, apart from rejecting such applications, the ImmD will also initiate criminal investigations into the cases concerned. Besides, should any person be unveiled for obtaining his/her visa or entry permit to Hong Kong by illegal means, the visa or entry permit so obtained will become null and void according to the law, and the person concerned will be subject to repatriation to his/her place of origin. Even if the person has obtained the right of abode in Hong Kong, it will be declared invalid according to the law, and he/she will be subject to repatriation to his/her place of origin.

(4) The ImmD does not maintain the breakdown statistics mentioned in the question.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB109****(Question Serial No. 1862)**Head: (70) Immigration DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (3) Control after EntryControlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

With regard to the work related to combatting illegal workers, would the Government inform this Committee:

- (1) of the respective numbers of anti-illegal worker enforcement operations conducted by the Government, as well as the numbers of illegal workers arrested in the operations in each of the past 3 years and this year to date;
- (2) of the respective numbers of employers of illegal workers prosecuted and convicted, as well as the penalties imposed on the convicted persons in each of the past 3 years and this year to date; and
- (3) given that observations have been reflected by the renovation, catering, domestic work industries, etc., that there has been a clear increasing trend in unlawful employment in recent years, whether the Government will consider initiating on-going and targeted anti-illegal worker operations? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHAU Siu-chung (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)

Reply:

- (1) The numbers of operations conducted by the Immigration Department (ImmD) against unlawful employment and the numbers of illegal workers arrested in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of operations	Number of illegal workers arrested
2021	16 132	1 103
2022	15 759	886
2023	17 248	1 304
2024 (as of February)	3 552	184

- (2) The numbers of employers of illegal workers prosecuted by the ImmD and convicted in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	Employers of illegal workers	
	Number of persons prosecuted	Number of persons convicted
2021	185	105
2022	138	85
2023	109	99
2024 (as of February)	38	26

From 2021 to end of February 2024, most of the convicted employers of illegal workers had been sentenced to imprisonment or fine. The imprisonment periods ranged from 4 weeks to 19 months, whereas the fines ranged from HK\$1,000 to HK\$54,000. One of the employers was convicted in court in February 2024 for employing persons not lawfully employable and sentenced to 19 months' imprisonment. The sentence reflected the gravity of unlawful employment.

- (3) The ImmD always monitors the trend of unlawful employment related crimes and timely conducts enforcement actions against unlawful employment in different industries, with a view to protecting job opportunities for the local workforce. During the period from 2021 to February 2024, the ImmD conducted 38 operations codenamed "Contribute" targeting at renovation related unlawful employment, among which nearly 75% were conducted after the pandemic and a total of 26 persons (including 22 illegal workers and 4 employers) were arrested. In addition, the ImmD conducted 3 727 anti-illegal employment operations codenamed "Twilight" to extensively combat unlawful employment in different industries. The targeted locations included renovation units, restaurants, residential flats, etc., and a total of 904 illegal workers and 296 employers were arrested. Furthermore, based on the analysis of intelligence and reported information, the ImmD will take enforcement actions against unlawful employment in the renovation, catering and domestic work industries. The ImmD will also continue to closely monitor the trend of unlawful employment related crimes, step up inspections and timely initiate publicity to educate residents of housing estates not to employ illegal workers for domestic work, renovation, etc., with a view to raising public awareness and strengthening education. Last year, the ImmD neutralised a crime syndicate specialising in undertaking outsourced cleaning contracts with restaurants and arranging illegal workers to take up cleaning and dishwashing duties. The syndicate members would enter into cleaning contracts with a number of restaurants, claiming to provide lawfully employable workers with cleaning and dishwashing services while recruiting illegal workers at a lower cost to profit from it. The estimated amount involved in the case exceeded HK\$17 million. In fact, the ImmD has been stepping up its efforts in carrying out anti-illegal worker operations over the past 3 years. In 2023, a total of 17 248 relevant operations were conducted, representing increases of 6.9% and 9.4% over 2021 and 2022 respectively, which reflected the ImmD's determination to combat unlawful employment.

The ImmD is also aware that some industries have turned to operate online stores for soliciting business, including renovation companies and domestic work agencies employing illegal workers. The ImmD has established the Cybercrime and Forensics Investigation Group, which is dedicated to assisting frontline investigators in collecting digital evidence so as to strengthen the ability in case investigation and evidence collection.

Moreover, the ImmD has proactively stepped up the publicity campaign in order to let the employers understand the serious consequences of employing illegal workers, and raise public awareness of not employing illegal workers. For example, the ImmD has deployed officers and promotional vehicles to black spots of unlawful employment from time to time to distribute “Don’t Employ Illegal Workers” leaflets to employers. The employers are provided with information on how to identify persons who are lawfully employable and are reminded to inspect the original Hong Kong identity cards of job seekers for verification. Information and videos about not to employ illegal workers and the points to note for employers before employing a job seeker are uploaded on the ImmD’s website for public reference. The ImmD has also disseminated the message of “Employing Illegal Workers Is an Offence” through the ImmD’s official account on social media platforms. Besides, the ImmD has set up a dedicated hotline (2824 1551) and email account (anti-crime@immd.gov.hk) for the public to report unlawful employment.

The ImmD will continue to closely monitor the trend of unlawful employment crimes, step up enforcement actions against unlawful employment, disseminate the serious consequences of employing illegal workers on multiple fronts, raise public awareness of not to employ illegal workers and take resolute enforcement actions.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB110

(Question Serial No. 1162)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The 2023 Policy Address proposed to relax the visa policy in respect of employment for Vietnamese talent. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the respective numbers of applications received, pending approval, approved and rejected since the relaxation of the policy;
2. the age, gender, marital status, highest academic qualification of and professional qualifications possessed by the successful applicants;
3. the industries/sectors to which the successful applicants belong and their salaries received before entry to Hong Kong; and
4. the increase in the establishment and the estimated expenditure in the light of this scheme?

Asked by: Hon IP LAU Suk-ye, Regina (LegCo internal reference no.: 11)

Reply:

In consultation with the Labour and Welfare Bureau, the reply to various parts of the question is as follows:

1. to 3.

In the past, Vietnamese talent could only take up employment in Hong Kong through the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates. Under the relaxation measures introduced in October 2023, Vietnamese talent may apply for entry for employment in Hong Kong through other talent admission schemes, including the General Employment Policy and the Top Talent Pass Scheme. The numbers of applications received and processed as at end of February 2024 are as follows:

	25 October 2023 to 29 February 2024
Number of applications received	42
Number of applications approved	31
Number of applications rejected	0
Number of applications withdrawn by the applicants/which could not be processed further	6
Number of applications being processed	5

Relevant government departments do not maintain other statistics mentioned in the question.

4.

The Immigration Department will handle the work relating to the relaxation of visa policy through the flexible deployment of its existing manpower and resources. There is no separate breakdown of the establishment and expenditure involved.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB111

(Question Serial No. 1177)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (5) Nationality and Assistance to HKSAR Residents outside Hong Kong

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) under the Immigration Department (ImmD) is tasked with duties including rendering assistance to Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong and their family members. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the number of requests for assistance received by the ImmD and the number of assistance seekers concerned in the past year by nature of the cases;
2. the number of requests for assistance received by the ImmD in the past year by region of the assistance seekers;
3. the specific assistance rendered to Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong in the past year; and
4. the staff establishment and estimated expenditure of the AHU in 2024-25?

Asked by: Hon IP LAU Suk-ye, Regina (LegCo internal reference no.: 26)

Reply:

In the past year, the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) of the Immigration Department (ImmD) received a total of 3 035 requests for assistance, involving 3 035 persons. A breakdown of the numbers of requests for assistance by nature of the cases and by region where residents outside Hong Kong sought assistance is tabulated as follows:

Nature of the case	2023
Loss of Travel Document	1 725
Traffic Accident	85
Hospitalisation, Illness and Death	683
Others (such as missing, being detained, etc.)	542
Total	3 035

Region where residents outside Hong Kong sought assistance	2023
Mainland China	634
Japan	465
United Kingdom	403
Thailand	174
Australia	172
Korea	131
U.S.A.	109
Israel	89
France	81
Canada	62
Others	715
Total	3 035

Upon receipt of requests for assistance from Hong Kong residents or their families, the AHU will seek to understand the situation through various channels including the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), the Chinese Diplomatic and Consular Missions, offices of the HKSAR Government in the Mainland and overseas or relevant government departments, and provide practicable assistance to the subjects having regard to the actual circumstances of the cases and their requests.

The staff establishment and total annual salary costs (in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary) of the AHU in the financial year of 2024-25 are as follows:

Year	Staff establishment	Total annual salary costs in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary
2024-25	30	\$20.52 million

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB112

(Question Serial No. 0090)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (4) Personal Documentation

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Under this programme, the work of the Immigration Department (ImmD) is to counteract illegal immigration and enhance the maintenance of law and order by providing all legal residents with a secure form of identity card and all consequential services related to identity cards; to register births, deaths and marriages and provide all consequential services related to such civil registration; to assess right of abode claims; and to facilitate international travel of Hong Kong residents by providing them with travel documents. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- a. Please list the quantities and usage counts of the Travel Document Submission Kiosks (TDSKs), and the average cost of each machine in the past 3 years.
- b. Does the ImmD maintain any statistics on the manpower and expenditure saved through the introduction of TDSKs? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?
- c. Will the ImmD consider making various document application services go electronic? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ling-lai, Lillian (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

a. At present, there are a total of 33 Travel Document Submission Kiosks (TDSKs) installed at the Immigration Department (ImmD) Headquarters and its 7 branch offices to facilitate eligible applicants in submitting applications for a Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) passport in a self-service manner.

In the past 3 years, the numbers of HKSAR passport applications submitted through the TDSKs are tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of applications
2021	75 273
2022	202 550
2023	509 209

The TDSKs are one of the initiatives under the Next Generation Electronic Passport System (e-Passport-2 System) of the ImmD. The annual recurrent expenditure on maintenance of e-Passport-2 System is around \$22.2 million, covering the daily operation of the system, the document production system, and all equipment of the TDSKs, etc. As the expenditure on maintenance of the TDSKs is part of the overall expenditure on maintenance of the e-Passport-2 System, a separate breakdown is not available.

b. Apart from enhancing the ImmD's efficiency in processing HKSAR passport applications, the introduction of the TDSKs also streamlined the processing of applications by staff at the counters. This enables the ImmD to be more flexible in deploying staff to handle other work processes, thereby enhancing the ImmD's overall capacity in processing travel document applications to meet the keen public demand for relevant services. As the processing of HKSAR passport applications submitted through the TDSKs forms part of the ImmD's daily work, the ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown of the resources involved.

c. The ImmD has been committed to applying innovative technology in different work areas in support of the HKSAR Government's policy to promote digitalisation of government services with a view to providing more professional and quality services to the public. In respect of the application for personal documentation, the ImmD has put in place various measures to facilitate submission of HKSAR passport applications. In particular, members of the public are encouraged to submit their applications via the ImmD website or the Immigration Department Mobile Application (ImmD Mobile App). Alternatively, they may also choose to submit their applications through the self-service TDSKs. At present, about 80% of the applications are submitted online or in a self-service manner. In addition to the HKSAR passport applications, the processing of applications for identity cards and other travel documents (including the Document of Identity for Visa Purposes and the Re-entry Permit) has also gone electronic. Members of the public can make advance booking for applying for identity cards and travel documents via the ImmD website or the ImmD Mobile App, and pre-fill the forms via the aforesaid channels; or obtain tags from the Self-service Tag Kiosks at various offices for making applications. There are also Self-service Electronic Form-filling Desks at the Registration of Persons Offices to facilitate the members of the public in filling in the electronic application form in a self-service manner. On the collection of documents, self-service collection is currently available for both HKSAR passports and identity cards.

To further utilise technology to bring greater convenience to the public and enhance the handling capacity of identity card applications, the ImmD plans to install new Personal Documentation Submission Kiosks (PDSKs) and Personal Documentation Collection Kiosks (PDCKs) at its offices. PDSKs will integrate the functions of submitting applications for both identity cards and HKSAR passports. Eligible applicants can submit applications for replacement of identity cards and HKSAR passports in one-go in a fully self-service manner. Regarding the collection of documents, the new PDCKs will enable members of the public to collect both identity cards and HKSAR passports at the same time in a fully self-service manner. In the long run, it is anticipated that the application for or collection of documents can be done outside office hours through the self-service kiosks. Looking ahead, the ImmD will continue to utilise technology to introduce more electronic services so as to enhance the public's experience in using the relevant services, and from time to time review and explore

other measures to facilitate the application for and collection of documents with a view to further enhancing convenience and efficiency of the services.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB113

(Question Serial No. 0206)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Control after Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

As mentioned under this Programme, the Immigration Department is to exercise immigration control by granting or refusing extension of stay; investigating and prosecuting offenders under the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115), Immigration Service Ordinance (Cap. 331), Registration of Persons Ordinance (Cap. 177), Marriage Ordinance (Cap. 181), Births and Deaths Registration Ordinance (Cap. 174), and certain provisions under the Crimes Ordinance (Cap. 200); removing or deporting illegal immigrants, overstayers and undesirable persons from Hong Kong; and implementing a unified screening mechanism, based on the procedures under the statutory torture claim screening mechanism, to assess non-refoulement claims made on all applicable grounds and effect timely removal of those whose claim is rejected. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- a. Please list the respective numbers of cases involving persons seeking entry into Hong Kong under the disguise of marriages with Hong Kong residents as well as successful prosecutions in the past 5 years. What was the average time of handling such cases?
- b. In connection with the above question, what were the average manpower and expenditure required for handling such cases?
- c. What are the details of estimated expenditure of the Department for strengthening enforcement actions against persons seeking entry into Hong Kong under the disguise of marriages with Hong Kong residents?
- d. Will the Department consider allocating resources to step up publicity with a view to achieving a stronger deterrent effect? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ling-lai, Lillian (LegCo internal reference no.: 27)

Reply:

- a. Over the past 5 years, the numbers of bogus marriage cases investigated by the Immigration Department (ImmD) and the relevant numbers of persons successfully prosecuted are tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of cases investigated	Number of persons successfully prosecuted
2019	644	71
2020	292	45
2021	227	43
2022	383	67
2023	627	87
Total	2 173	313

The ImmD does not maintain a breakdown of other statistics mentioned in the question.

- b-c. After the re-organisation of the Investigation Sub-division of the ImmD in June 2023, the staff establishment of the Special Task Force for the investigation of bogus marriages is 37 in total. The aforementioned manpower involves a total annual salary cost of about \$19.66 million (in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value).

Apart from the Special Task Force, the ImmD also carries out work related to the investigations of bogus marriages at control points, births and marriage registries and visa offices. As the above work is part of the regular duties of the ImmD, there is no separate breakdown of the resources involved. The ImmD will continue to flexibly deploy manpower for strengthening the enforcement against bogus marriages having regard to its operational needs.

- d. On stepping up publicity, the ImmD has from time to time disseminated information on crackdowns on bogus marriage syndicates and successful prosecutions of intermediaries and persons engaged in bogus marriages through press briefings, press releases, media interviews, etc. to remind members of the public, including young people, of the consequences of engaging in bogus marriages and the serious implications of committing related offences. In addition, the ImmD will continue to disseminate relevant information through various popular publicity channels, for example, producing publicity video clips and uploading them to the ImmD's video sharing channel and social media platforms.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB114

(Question Serial No. 1823)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (5) Nationality and Assistance to HKSAR Residents outside Hong Kong

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the “assistance outside Hong Kong”, would the Government inform this Committee of:

- (1) the number of requests for assistance received by the Immigration Department (ImmD) from Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong and their family members in the past 2 years, with a breakdown by region of the assistance seekers and nature of the cases;
- (2) the establishment and strength of staff of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit in the past 2 years, and the total amount of annual salary costs involved; and
- (3) the number of requests for assistance received by the ImmD from Hong Kong residents in Taiwan since the temporary suspension of operation of the Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office (Taiwan), and the nature of those requests?

Asked by: Hon LAM Chun-sing (LegCo internal reference no.: 15)

Reply:

(1) In the past 2 years, the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) of the Immigration Department (ImmD) received a total of 4 714 requests for assistance, involving 4 714 persons. A breakdown of the numbers of requests for assistance by nature of the cases and by region where residents outside Hong Kong sought assistance is tabulated as follows:

Nature of the case	2022	2023
Loss of Travel Document	639	1 725
Traffic Accident	7	85
Hospitalisation, Illness and Death	344	683
Others (such as missing, being detained, etc.)	689	542
Total	1 679	3 035

Region where residents outside Hong Kong sought assistance	2022	2023
Mainland China	452	634
Japan	105	465
United Kingdom	266	403
Thailand	112	174
Australia	72	172
Korea	43	131
U. S. A.	92	109
Israel	0	89
France	49	81
Canada	53	62
Others	435	715
Total	1 679	3 035

(2) The establishment and strength of staff, and the total annual salary costs (in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value) of the AHU in the past 2 financial years are as follows:

Financial year	2022-23	2023-24
Establishment	26	30*
Strength^	38 (as at 31 March 2023)	32 (as at 1 March 2024)
Total annual salary costs (in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value)	\$17.41 million	\$19.7 million

* With the creation of 4 additional posts of Senior Immigration Assistant by the ImmD in the financial year of 2023-24, the staff establishment of the AHU has increased from 26 to 30.

^ The strength figure was higher than that of the establishment due to the flexible deployment of internal manpower by the ImmD for meeting operational needs in response to actual circumstances.

(3) Upon the suspension of operation of the Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office (Taiwan) and covering the period until 31 December 2023, the AHU received a total of 49 cases requesting for assistance from Hong Kong residents in distress in Taiwan, including cases of hospitalisation, illness and death. A total of 49 persons were involved. The AHU has, on a case-by-case basis, provided appropriate and practical assistance to assistance seekers and their families.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB115

(Question Serial No. 0300)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

As mentioned in the Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25, the Department will prepare for the extension of the operating hours for passenger clearance of the Shenzhen Bay Control Point to 24 hours, and the extension of operating hours for cargo clearance of the Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point to 24 hours. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. What is the progress of the extension of passenger clearance at the Shenzhen Bay Control Point to 24 hours, and that of cargo clearance at the Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point to 24 hours? What is the earliest time for implementing the extension?
2. Will there be any adjustments for the establishment and expenditure of the abovementioned 2 control points in the light of the implementation of round-the-clock clearance? If yes, what are the details?
3. Are there any plans to implement round-the-clock clearance at other immigration control points in addition to the 2 above?

Asked by: Hon LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 14)

Reply:

1. and 3. In view of the resumption of normal travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong since early February last year, the governments of Hong Kong and Shenzhen have been closely monitoring the demand for clearance services at various land Boundary Control Points (BCPs). On the basis of the 24-hour passenger clearance services currently provided at Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Hong Kong Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, the HKSAR Government will liaise with the Mainland authorities on extending the operating hours of the passenger clearance services of individual land BCPs as and when necessary to further facilitate the flow of people between the two sides.

2. To tie in with future operation needs of the Shenzhen Bay Control Point and the Heung Yuen Wai BCP, the Immigration Department will take various measures, in the light of the actual situation, including flexible deployment of manpower, optimisation of workflow, and effective use of information technology, etc., to enhance the handling capacity and efficiency of the control point, and seek additional resources through established mechanisms when

necessary.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB116

(Question Serial No. 0306)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is estimated that the number of passengers/vehicles/vessels examined by land in 2024 will be 252 470 000, representing an increase of about 38% over the actual number in 2023. However, there will be a net decrease of 173 posts under this Programme in 2024-25. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee:

1. of the statistics on inbound and outbound passenger trips at various immigration control points in Hong Kong in the past 5 years and the coming year;
2. of the staff establishment as well as operating expenses and salary costs for various immigration control points in Hong Kong in the past 5 financial years and the coming financial year;
3. of the (i) sections/units, (ii) ranks, (iii) duties and (iv) remuneration expenditure involved in the reduction in posts and staff establishment; and
4. whether the Government has assessed the sufficiency of the existing staff establishment and resources to cope with the anticipated increase in the inbound and outbound passenger trips in 2024, and whether the targets and indicators of the performance measures under this Programme can be maintained?

Asked by: Hon LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)

Reply:

1. The numbers of inbound and outbound passenger trips at various control points from 2019 to 2023 and in 2024 are set out at Annex 1.
2. The staff establishment and salary costs of the Immigration Department (ImmD) for various control points under Programme (2) from 2019-20 to 2023-24 and in 2024-25 are set out at Annex 2.
3. The ImmD will have a total net decrease of 170 non-directorate posts responsible for immigration control at various control points under Programme (2) in 2024-25. The total annual salary costs involved, in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value, will be about \$59.36 million. There will also be a total net decrease of 3 non-directorate posts at service units other than the control points, and the total annual salary costs involved will be about \$190,000.
4. The ImmD will make flexible deployment of manpower as needed for exercising immigration control, and continue to review its manpower and other resources taking into account the actual situation of inbound and outbound travels, with a view to providing passengers with convenient and efficient immigration clearance services within the pledged waiting time.

Numbers of inbound and outbound passenger trips at various control points

Control Point ^{Note 1}	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 (Estimate)
Airport	48 997 829	5 709 065	677 108	4 141 363	31 716 381	41 648 000
Lo Wu ^{Note 3}	78 234 223	5 455 893	10 179	0	45 334 772	62 261 000
Hung Hom	1 989 302	108 537	0	0	0	0
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line ^{Note 3}	50 156 435	3 516 742	13 955	0	40 845 069	56 095 000
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou- Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	16 732 428	975 897	0	0	19 653 992	26 992 000
Lok Ma Chau	24 801 949	1 621 157	0	0	8 397 262	11 532 000
Man Kam To	3 625 307	243 202	0	0	1 029 876	1 414 000
Sha Tau Kok	2 681 506	191 046	0	0	0	0
Shenzhen Bay	38 526 032	3 713 745	836 891	927 608	22 685 338	31 155 000
Hong Kong- Zhuhai-Macao Bridge	19 423 296	1 641 553	122 698	192 883	21 570 170	29 623 000
Heung Yuen Wai ^{Notes 3 & 4}	-	-	10 470	301	12 450 061	17 098 000
Harbour Control	51 415	47 971	22 855	21 102	37 464	52 000
Macau Ferry Terminal	10 177 654	620 904	0	0	6 465 246	9 025 000
China Ferry Terminal	3 760 366	196 733	0	0	1 089 083	1 520 000
Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal	520 301	28 724	-	-	-	-
River Trade Terminal	134	42	1	6	19	30
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal ^{Note 5}	1 585 929	135 864	257 718	12 167	479 367	669 000
Total ^{Note 2}	301 264 106	24 207 075	1 951 875	5 295 430	211 754 100	289 086 000

Note 1:

The following boundary control points (BCPs) had suspended services during the COVID-19 epidemic with details as follows:

- Lo Wu (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 5 February 2023)
- Lok Ma Chau Spur Line (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 14 January 2023)
- Lok Ma Chau (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 5 February 2023)
- Man Kam To (services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- China Ferry Terminal (services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- Macau Ferry Terminal (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 7 January 2023)

- Kai Tak Cruise Terminal (services suspended from 5 February 2020; passenger clearance service resumed for Hong Kong residents between 30 July 2021 and 6 January 2022 for operating the “cruise-to-nowhere” itineraries; international cruise service resumed on 8 March 2023)
- Heung Yuen Wai (full operation, including cargo and passenger clearance services, commenced since 6 February 2023)
- Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal has ceased operation since 30 January 2020.
- Hung Hom Control Point has ceased to operate since 30 January 2020 upon suspension of the Intercity Through Train services.
- Passenger clearance services at the Sha Tau Kok Control Point have been suspended since 30 January 2020 to facilitate the redevelopment of the Sha Tau Kok Port.

Note 2: There may be a slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total as shown in the above table due to rounding.

Note 3: During the above services suspension periods, the Lo Wu Control Point, Lok Ma Chau Spur Line Control Point and Heung Yuen Wai BCP were opened as “BCP Polling Stations” on 19 December 2021 to facilitate registered electors in the Mainland to return to Hong Kong for voting in the 2021 Legislative Council General Election.

Note 4: The Mainland medical support team arrived Hong Kong SAR via the Heung Yuen Wai BCP on 16 March 2022.

Note 5: The numbers of inbound and outbound passenger trips included trips made by passengers of cruise liners berthing at the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal, the Ocean Terminal and other anchorages.

Staff establishment and salary costs of the ImmD for various control points

2019-20

Control point	Number of posts ^{Note 1}	Salary costs ^{Note 2} (\$m)
Airport	980	441
Lo Wu	738	334
Hung Hom	93	43
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	250	113
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	407	188
Lok Ma Chau	378	164
Man Kam To	87	37
Sha Tau Kok	53	24
Shenzhen Bay	387	169
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port	503	228
Heung Yuen Wai	204	95
Harbour Control	109	52
Macau Ferry Terminal	189	86
China Ferry Terminal	168	76
River Trade Terminal	40	21
Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal	30	15
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal	94	43
Total	4 710	2,127

Note 1: The actual manpower at various control points will be flexibly deployed according to operational needs.

Note 2: In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value. There may be a slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total as shown in the above table due to rounding.

2020-21

Control point	Number of posts ^{Note 1}	Salary costs ^{Note 2} (\$m)
Airport	990	469
Lo Wu	738	352
Hung Hom	93	45
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	250	119
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	407	198
Lok Ma Chau	381	175
Man Kam To	87	39

Control point	Number of posts ^{Note 1}	Salary costs ^{Note 2} (\$m)
Sha Tau Kok	53	25
Shenzhen Bay	481	222
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port	503	240
Heung Yuen Wai	204	99
Harbour Control	109	55
Macau Ferry Terminal	189	90
China Ferry Terminal	168	80
River Trade Terminal	40	22
Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal	30	16
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal	94	45
Total	4 817	2,290

Note 1: The actual manpower at various control points will be flexibly deployed according to operational needs.

Note 2: In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value. There may be a slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total as shown in the above table due to rounding.

2021-22

Control point	Number of posts ^{Note 1}	Salary costs ^{Note 2} (\$m)
Airport	992	471
Lo Wu	737	351
Hung Hom	93	45
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	250	119
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	407	198
Lok Ma Chau	381	175
Man Kam To	87	39
Sha Tau Kok	53	25
Shenzhen Bay	481	222
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port	503	240
Heung Yuen Wai	204	99
Harbour Control	109	55
Macau Ferry Terminal	189	90
China Ferry Terminal	168	80
River Trade Terminal	40	22
Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal	30	16
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal	94	45
Total	4 818	2,292

Note 1: The actual manpower at various control points will be flexibly deployed according to operational needs.

Note 2: In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value. There may be a slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total as shown in the above table due to rounding.

2022-23

Control point	Number of posts ^{Note 1}	Salary costs ^{Note 2} (\$m)
Airport	1003	504
Lo Wu	737	372
Hung Hom	93	47
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	250	126
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	407	209
Lok Ma Chau	381	185
Man Kam To	87	41
Sha Tau Kok	53	26
Shenzhen Bay	481	234
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port	503	253
Heung Yuen Wai	204	105
Harbour Control	109	58
Macau Ferry Terminal	189	96
China Ferry Terminal	168	85
River Trade Terminal	40	23
Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal	30	16
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal	94	47
Total	4 829	2,429

Note 1: The actual manpower at various control points will be flexibly deployed according to operational needs.

Note 2: In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value. There may be a slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total as shown in the above table due to rounding.

2023-24

Control point	Number of posts ^{Note 1}	Salary costs ^{Note 2} (\$m)
Airport	1003	517
Lo Wu	737	382
Hung Hom	93	49
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	250	129

Control point	Number of posts ^{Note 1}	Salary costs ^{Note 2} (\$m)
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	407	215
Lok Ma Chau	381	190
Man Kam To	87	42
Sha Tau Kok	53	27
Shenzhen Bay	481	240
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port	503	260
Heung Yuen Wai	204	108
Harbour Control	109	60
Macau Ferry Terminal	189	98
China Ferry Terminal	168	87
River Trade Terminal	70	40
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal	94	48
Total	4 829	2,490

Note 1: The actual manpower at various control points will be flexibly deployed according to operational needs.

Note 2: In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value. There may be a slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total as shown in the above table due to rounding.

2024-25

Control point	Number of posts ^{Note 1}	Salary costs ^{Note 2} (\$m)
Airport	970	528
Lo Wu	722	394
Hung Hom	74	44
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	240	132
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	399	221
Lok Ma Chau	364	193
Man Kam To	87	44
Sha Tau Kok	40	23
Shenzhen Bay	481	251
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port	488	266
Heung Yuen Wai	199	111
Harbour Control	97	58
Macau Ferry Terminal	188	102
China Ferry Terminal	166	90
River Trade Terminal	52	35
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal	92	50

Control point	Number of posts ^{Note 1}	Salary costs ^{Note 2} (\$m)
Total	4 659	2,542

Note 1: The actual manpower at various control points will be flexibly deployed according to operational needs.

Note 2: In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value. There may be a slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total as shown in the above table due to rounding.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB117

(Question Serial No. 1688)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (4) Personal Documentation

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

As shown in the Indicators, the number of applications for HKSAR passports is estimated to increase from 684 000 in 2022 to 910 000 in 2024. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- a) Is there a need for the Department to increase manpower to cope with the rise in HKSAR passport applications?
- b) How much manpower is estimated to be deployed to cope with the demand for application for HKSAR passports?
- c) As the peak times of identity card replacement have gradually passed, will the Department's additional resources be deployed for handling matters relating to HKSAR passports?

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 21)

Reply:

- a) and b) In 2022, the Immigration Department (ImmD) received a total of about 680 000 applications for Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) passports. Following the gradual resumption of normalcy in society after the pandemic, the ImmD received a total of over 1.45 million HKSAR passport applications in 2023, more than doubled of that in 2022, with over 195 000 applications recorded in the month of March 2023. Both the application figures by year or by month reached record highs since the ImmD commenced issuing HKSAR passports in July 1997. To cope with the surge in the number of applications, the ImmD deployed resources and manpower to ensure that the cases could be processed in a timely manner. Meanwhile, by utilising technology and flexibly deploying resources, the ImmD has been constantly enhancing the passport application procedures and workflow to further enhance its processing capacity. Therefore, despite the surge in the number of HKSAR passport applications, the ImmD was able to meet its performance pledges all along.

In the first two months of 2024, the ImmD received more than 170 000 HKSAR passport applications, reflecting the public's keen demand for the related services. As a number of citizens had already renewed their HKSAR passports last year, it is anticipated that the number of HKSAR passport applications for 2024 will decline to about 910 000, which is however still higher than the pre-pandemic level of 720 000 applications in 2019. The ImmD will continue to closely monitor the demand for application for HKSAR passports, utilise existing resources and make appropriate manpower deployment to handle the related work, with a view to continuously providing the public with flexible, highly efficient and quality services.

- c) It is estimated that the total number of various types of identity card applications will reach about 1.15 million in 2024, which is nearly a double of the annual number of about 600 000 applications before the pandemic. Resources have already been earmarked in the 2024-25 Estimates to support the ImmD in continuously implementing measures to enhance the processing capacity of identity card applications. The ImmD will continue to closely monitor the public's demand for various types of public services, including passport application, and flexibly deploy resources and manpower as appropriate to handle the related work, having regard to the actual circumstances and demand.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB118

(Question Serial No. 0710)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Immigration Department (ImmD) is responsible for processing applications for entry into Hong Kong for employment, investment, training, residence and study in accordance with prevailing policies and procedures. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

- What were the numbers of applications for employment visas for foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) received and approved in the past 3 years? Please provide a breakdown by type of work and nationality.
- In each of the past 3 years, what was the number of cases of premature termination of employment contracts between employers and FDHs? (Please provide a breakdown by reason involved.)
- What was the number of FDHs who did not leave Hong Kong upon expiry of their limit of stay each year, in breach of the requirement of remaining in Hong Kong for not more than 2 weeks after contract termination? What follow-up actions were taken or what penalties were imposed?
- The ImmD set up a special duties team in June 2013. In assessing FDH visa applications, the ImmD will refer suspected cases to the special duties team for investigation. How many cases were handled by the special duties team in each of the past 3 years and what were the relevant details?

Asked by: Hon NGAN Man-yu (LegCo internal reference no.: 27)

Reply:

(1)

The statistics on the applications from foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) processed by the Immigration Department (ImmD) in the past 3 years with a breakdown by the applicants' nationality are tabulated as follows:

Region	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24 (as of February 2024)	
	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved
The Philippines	34 157	29 892	46 116	40 313	42 242	42 423
Indonesia	24 680	23 058	35 014	31 856	33 797	34 085
India	1 309	1 031	2 155	1 757	2 116	1 950
Thailand	395	287	501	454	429	451
Sri Lanka	265	169	415	327	379	343
Bangladesh	124	94	229	210	227	205
Myanmar	14	10	24	25	29	20
Others	262	150	274	139	278	91
Total	61 206	54 691	84 728	75 081	79 497	79 568

Note: Applications approved in a year may not totally be the applications received in the same year.

(2) and (3)

The ImmD has been following established procedures in investigating cases of overstaying of FDHs, including gathering intelligence from different channels and conducting proactive follow-ups and investigation. The numbers of FDHs arrested for overstaying in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Financial year	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 (as of February 2024)
Number of FDHs arrested for overstaying	675	1 050	889

An FDH who has overstayed is in breach of his/her condition of stay. According to the Immigration Ordinance, offenders are liable on conviction to a fine of \$50,000 and to imprisonment for 2 years. If an FDH has any adverse records or breaches, the records will be one of the factors to be taken into account when processing any future applications made by him/her for an employment visa or extension of stay. Apart from prosecuting FDHs who have overstayed and contravened the conditions of stay, the ImmD will also carry out enforcement operations against intermediaries or agents which aid and abet them. In addition, the ImmD will continue to enhance publicity to remind the public that hiring illegal workers is a criminal offence and that employers must inspect documents of job-seekers before hiring them, and to encourage the public to report suspected cases of illegal employment.

The ImmD does not maintain other statistics mentioned in the question.

(4)

The numbers of cases of FDH visa applications referred to the special duties team, the numbers of applications rejected, and the numbers of applications withdrawn by the applicants or which could not be further processed in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Financial year	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 (as of February 2024)
Number of referral cases	5 469	2 350	1 237
Number of applications rejected	2 922	1 428	266
Number of applications withdrawn by the applicants or which could not be further processed	366	114	123

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB119

(Question Serial No. 3135)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below also concerns the policy purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB). The reply was prepared by the Immigration Department and vetted by the LWB.]

Question:

With the implementation of policies for attracting and retaining outside talent, professionals and entrepreneurs for career development in Hong Kong, the number of entry visa applications received by the Immigration Department (ImmD) has continued to increase from 241 507 in 2022 to 579 777 in 2023, and is expected to reach 783 500 in 2024. In this connection, does the ImmD need to deploy additional resources and manpower for processing applications? If yes, what are the details and the estimated expenditure? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon SHIU Ka-fai (LegCo internal reference no.: 40)

Reply:

The establishment and salary costs for processing applications made under various immigration policies/schemes in 2024-25 as estimated by the Immigration Department (ImmD) are tabulated as follows:

Talent admission scheme		2024-25
Top Talent Pass Scheme	Establishment (no. of posts)	15
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	12.38
General Employment Policy &	Establishment (no. of posts)	28
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	21.15
Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals	Establishment (no. of posts)	24
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	15.98
Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates	Establishment (no. of posts)	14
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	9.15
Technology Talent Admission Scheme	Establishment (no. of posts)	3
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	2.6
Quality Migrant Admission Scheme	Establishment (no. of posts)	114
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	88.71
Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents	Establishment (no. of posts)	12
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	6.65

& Including Employment Stream and Investment Stream.

* In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value.

In 2024-25, the ImmD will create 89 posts for processing applications made under various talent admission schemes, and the salary costs to be involved are \$70.34 million (in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value).

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB120

(Question Serial No. 3136)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In 2024-25, the Immigration Department (ImmD) will prepare for the extension of the operating hours for passenger clearance of the Shenzhen Bay Control Point and cargo clearance of the Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point to 24 hours. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. What are the work details of the extension of the operating hours for clearance of the above 2 control points, including the timetable, manpower deployment and estimated expenditure?
2. Given that the passenger clearance through the Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point on weekdays has reached the design maximum throughput of 30 000 passengers per day, will the ImmD also consider extending the operating hours for passenger clearance of the control point so as to achieve a better diversion effect? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon SHIU Ka-fai (LegCo internal reference no.: 41)

Reply:

1. In view of the resumption of normal travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong since early February last year, the governments of Hong Kong and Shenzhen have been closely monitoring the demand for clearance services at various land Boundary Control Points (BCPs). On the basis of the 24-hour passenger clearance services currently provided at Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Hong Kong Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, the HKSAR Government will liaise with the Mainland authorities on extending the operating hours of the passenger clearance services of individual land BCPs as and when necessary to further facilitate the flow of people between the two sides.

2. According to the information provided by the Development Bureau in 2017, the designed daily handling capacity of the Heung Yuen Wai BCP is 30 000 passenger trips. The Heung Yuen Wai BCP has been very popular among the public since its commissioning, with an

average daily passenger throughput of about 34 000 in 2023. Although its utilisation is higher than its designed capacity, the relevant departments have been taking various measures in the light of the actual situation, including flexible deployment of manpower, optimisation of workflow, and effective use of information technology, etc., to enhance the handling capacity and efficiency of the control point in coping with the cross-boundary passenger flow. We will continue to closely monitor the operation of the control point.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB121

(Question Serial No. 1260)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Control after Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention that the Immigration Department will step up enforcement actions against persons seeking entry into Hong Kong under the disguise of marriages with Hong Kong residents. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (1) What were the respective numbers of bogus marriage cases of which investigation was initiated by the authorities and reported cases received in the past 3 financial years? Among them, what were the numbers of convicted cases and their respective year-on-year changes?
- (2) What tactics are currently used to investigate suspected offences relating to bogus marriages allegedly committed by Hong Kong residents who married Mainlanders?
- (3) How will the enforcement actions against bogus marriages be strengthened in the new financial year? What are the manpower and resources required for the relevant policy?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (LegCo internal reference no.: 37)

Reply:

(1) Over the past 3 financial years, the numbers of reports of bogus marriages received and cases investigated by the Immigration Department (ImmD), and the numbers of persons arrested and convicted are tabulated as follows:

Financial year	Number of reports	Number of cases investigated	Number of persons arrested	Number of persons convicted	Year-on-year change in the number of persons convicted
2021-22	597	223	622	43	-
2022-23	920	512	600	65	+51.2%
2023-24 (as of February)	1 462	545	769	88	+35.4%*
Total	2 979	1 280	1 991	196	-

*Figures for March 2024 are not included.

The ImmD does not maintain a breakdown of other statistics mentioned in the question.

(2) and (3) The Special Task Force of the ImmD (Special Task Force) for the investigation of bogus marriages has been collecting intelligence on suspected bogus marriages through various channels as well as investigating into and detecting bogus marriage cases. It has also proactively taken enforcement actions and stepped up publicity, with a view to combating persons seeking entry into Hong Kong by engaging in bogus marriages with Hong Kong residents through multi-pronged measures. The specific measures include:

- (1) to step up immigration examination on arrivals

When conducting immigration examination on arriving passengers, the ImmD will critically scrutinise suspicious visitors visiting their spouses in Hong Kong on the strength of “Tanqin” (visiting relatives) exit endorsements, and will refuse their entry if their purposes of visit are in doubt. If any person is found to have contravened the laws of Hong Kong, such as making a false statement to the ImmD, enforcement officers of the ImmD will conduct in-depth investigations and prosecution actions will be taken.

- (2) to conduct anti-illegal worker operations

In the past, many of those who entered into Hong Kong by engaging in bogus marriages aimed to take up unlawful employment. The ImmD therefore pays particular attention to Mainland residents holding “Tanqin” exit endorsements during anti-illegal worker operations. In-depth investigations will be mounted into any suspected cases of “Tanqin” exit endorsements obtained by engaging in bogus marriages.

- (3) to step up operations against intermediaries

In the past, many bogus marriage cases involved marriage intermediaries arranging for Mainland residents to contract bogus marriages with Hong Kong residents and then apply for the requisite documents to enter Hong Kong. Therefore, the ImmD has all

along been paying attention to and conducting investigations into suspicious marriage intermediaries, as well as exchanging intelligence and cooperating with the Mainland enforcement authorities in combating intermediaries and syndicates involved in cross-boundary crimes.

Besides, the Special Task Force also proactively keeps track of the crime trend and collects intelligence through various channels, including advertisements with wording of “quick money” and “cross-boundary matchmaking” in social networking and instant messaging mobile applications, newspapers, webpages, etc. It will also conduct in-depth investigations into suspicious marriage intermediaries.

(4) to step up checking of suspected marriage registration cases

Apart from the Special Task Force, Marriage Registries of the ImmD also take part in combating bogus marriages. Marriage Registries will pay attention to and check each suspected marriage registration case to more effectively identify dubious cases of suspected double marriages in the Mainland and Hong Kong. Meanwhile, the Investigation Sub-division will also initiate investigations into suspected bogus marriage cases. With these measures in place, a number of suspected cases were swiftly detected and the offenders were successfully prosecuted and convicted.

(5) to exchange intelligence and cooperate with the Mainland authorities

The ImmD will notify the Mainland enforcement authorities of information of Mainland residents who have committed offences relating to bogus marriages, enabling the Mainland authorities to strictly scrutinise their future applications for exit endorsements. The Mainland enforcement authorities will also refer cases of suspected bogus marriages to the ImmD for follow up. The ImmD will conduct joint enforcement operations with the Mainland authorities when necessary.

(6) to prevent singly non-permanent residents to give birth in Hong Kong by means of bogus marriages

The ImmD also obtains delivery booking records from private hospitals for analysis and investigation, with a view to deterring attempts of Mainland pregnant women to give birth in Hong Kong by obtaining the “Confirmation Certificate on Delivery Booking” through bogus marriages.

(7) to step up publicity

The ImmD has from time to time disseminated information on crackdowns on bogus marriage syndicates and successful prosecutions of intermediaries and persons engaged in bogus marriage through press briefings, press releases, media interviews, etc. to remind members of the public, including young people, of the consequences of engaging in bogus marriages and the serious implications of committing related offences. In addition, the ImmD will continue to disseminate relevant information through various popular publicity channels, for example, producing publicity video clips and uploading them to the ImmD’s video sharing channel and social media platforms.

After the re-organisation of the Investigation Sub-division of the ImmD in June 2023, the staff establishment of the Special Task Force is 37 in total. The aforementioned manpower involves a total annual salary cost of about \$19.66 million (in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value). Apart from the Special Task Force, the ImmD also carries out work related to the investigations of bogus marriages at control points, births and marriage registries and visa offices. As the above work is part of the regular duties of the ImmD, there is no separate breakdown of the resources involved. The ImmD will continue to flexibly deploy manpower for strengthening the enforcement against bogus marriages having regard to its operational needs.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB122

(Question Serial No. 2793)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below also concerns the policy purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB). The reply was prepared by the Immigration Department and vetted by the LWB.]

Question:

Would the Immigration Department please provide specific data on the processing of applications under the Top Talent Pass Scheme (TTPS) and the Talent List in 2023-24, including the number of applications received under each category; the academic qualifications, occupations and incomes of applicants under each category; the number of applications approved; as well as the information on the academic qualifications, occupations, incomes of the successful applicants under each category, together with the number and age profile of their dependants?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 6)

Reply:

Top Talent Pass Scheme (TTPS)

The numbers of applications received and approved under the TTPS in 2023-24 (as at end of February 2024) are as follows:

	Category A	Category B	Category C	Total
Number of applications received	15 491	26 369	9 242	51 102
Number of applications approved [^]	11 779	26 169	8 549	46 497

Note:

[^] Applications approved may not totally be those received in that year.

Category A refers to persons with an annual income of HK\$2.5 million or above in the year preceding the application.

Category B refers to persons who have obtained a bachelor’s degree from eligible universities prescribed in the designated aggregate list with at least 3 years of work experience over the past 5 years preceding the application.

Category C refers to persons who have obtained a bachelor’s degree from the eligible universities over the past 5 years preceding the application, but with less than 3 years of work experience. An annual quota of 10 000 is set for this category. To optimise the use of quotas, the number of arrivals in Hong Kong in respect of those approved talent will be taken as the criterion for calculating quota usage.

In 2023-24 (as at end of February 2024), statistics on successful applicants by income in the preceding year are tabulated as follows:

Income in the preceding year (HK\$)	Approved applications		
	Category A	Category B	Category C
2.5 million to less than 3 million	2 591	Applicants are not required to submit relevant information	
3 million to less than 5 million	5 100		
5 million to less than 10 million	2 162		
10 million or above	1 926		
Total	11 779		

Regarding academic qualifications, applicants under Category A are not required to provide information on academic qualifications, whereas applicants under Categories B and C are only required to prove their award of a bachelor’s degree by the eligible universities, and do not need to declare other academic qualifications.

In 2023-24 (as at end of February 2024), the statistics on approved applications for visas/entry permits of dependants under the TTPS are tabulated as follows:

TTPS	Category A	Category B	Category C	Total
Number of applications approved	20 882	31 559	435	52 876

Successful TTPS applicants will normally be granted an initial stay of 24 months to explore opportunities in Hong Kong without other conditions of stay. If talent have taken up employment or established/joined in business in Hong Kong during their stay, they are not required to notify the Immigration Department (ImmD). Yet, when applying for an extension of stay, applicants should provide the ImmD with credible information and documents to prove that they have taken up employment or established/ joined in business in Hong Kong in order to be granted an extension of stay. Since the TTPS was only launched in the end of 2022, the ImmD does not maintain statistics on the employment of incoming talent in Hong Kong for the time being.

In November last year, the Labour and Welfare Bureau conducted follow-up surveys with TTPS applicants who were granted visas/entry permits and have come to Hong Kong for more than 6 months to understand the situation of their settlement in Hong Kong, including their

employment, accommodation and children’s education in Hong Kong. The findings of the surveys reveal that 54% of the incoming talent have taken up employment, and are mainly engaged in managerial and professional jobs with median monthly employment earnings of around \$50,000. About 25% of the talent have a monthly income reaching \$100,000 or above, and about 10% even have an income reaching \$200,000 or above. A breakdown of employed talent by industry is as follows:

Industry	Proportion in the employed talent
Financial Services	31%
Innovation and Technology / Information and Communications Technology Service	18%
Commerce and Trade	17%
Insurance / Brokerage Services	8%
Academic Research and Education	4%
Others	22%

The ImmD does not maintain other statistics mentioned in the question.

Talent List

The purpose of drawing up the Talent List by the Government is to identify quality talent in need in Hong Kong that are in shortage and are difficult to be nurtured locally in a short time. The Talent list is applied under the relevant talent admission schemes to enable employers to recruit outside talent to meet their needs, in support of Hong Kong’s development into a high value-added and diversified economy. The Talent List, currently with a coverage of 51 professions, is applicable to the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS), the General Employment Policy (GEP) and the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals (ASMTP).

The number of applications that met the eligibility criteria under the Talent List and the number of approved applications under the above 3 talent admission schemes since the first Talent List promulgated in August 2018 up to 29 February 2024 is tabulated as follows:

Profession		Number of applications that met eligibility criteria under Talent List**	Number of applications approved**
Business Support			
1	Professionals in Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) (other than Financial Professionals)	10	10
Creative Industries, Arts and Culture, Performing Arts			
*	Creative Industries and Performing Arts Professionals	30	30
2	Arts Promoters	2	1

	Profession	Number of applications that met eligibility criteria under Talent List**	Number of applications approved**
3	Conservators for Movable Cultural Heritage	1	1
4	Creative Industries Professionals in Publishing	3	3
5	Digital Marketing and Branding Specialists	12	12
6	Creative Industries Professionals in Film	7	6
7	Performing Arts Professionals in Arts Technology	5	5
8	Creative Industries Professionals in Music	4	4
9	Creative Industries Professionals in Digital Entertainment	2	2
Development and Construction			
10	Architectural Professionals	38	37
11	Civil and Structural Engineering Professionals	52	50
12	Building Services Engineering Professionals	11	11
13	Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Professionals	15	14
14	Building Surveying Professionals	0	0
15	Quantity Surveying Professionals	16	16
16	Land Surveying Professionals	1	1
17	Landscape Architectural Professionals	2	2
18	Town Planning Professionals	2	2
19	Construction Managers/Builders	4	4
20	Building Information Modelling (BIM) Manager	2	2
Environmental Technology Services			
21	Waste Treatment Specialists/Engineers	21	21
Financial Services			
22	Professionals in Compliance in Asset and Wealth Management	56	55
23	Management Professionals in Asset and Wealth Management	116	110
24	Financial Professionals in Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)	15	15
25	Specialist Insurance Professionals	19	19
26	Actuaries	16	14
27	Professionals in Fintech	108	101

Profession		Number of applications that met eligibility criteria under Talent List**	Number of applications approved**
Healthcare Services			
28	Doctors	7	7
29	Dentists	0	0
30	Dental Hygienists	0	0
31	Nurses	0	0
32	Midwives	0	0
33	Chinese Medicine Practitioners	1	0
34	Pharmacists	1	1
35	Occupational Therapists	0	0
36	Physiotherapists	1	1
37	Medical Laboratory Technologists	0	0
38	Optometrists	0	0
39	Radiographers	2	2
40	Chiropractors	5	5
Innovation and Technology			
41	Artificial Intelligence (AI) Specialists	25	25
42	Cloud Infrastructure Specialists	3	3
43	Software Specialists	46	45
44	Innovation and Technology (I&T) Experts	120	119
*	Data Scientists and Cyber Security Specialists	59	59
45	Data Scientists	14	12
46	Cyber Security Specialists	9	4
Legal and Dispute Resolution Services			
*	Dispute Resolution Professionals and Transactional Lawyers	6	6
47	Dispute Resolution Professionals	3	3
48	Legal Professionals (other than Dispute Resolution Professionals)	10	10
Maritime Services			
49	Shipping Finance Professionals	4	4
50	Marine Superintendents	18	18
51	Naval Architects	8	7
	Total	912	879

Note:

- * The profession has been incorporated into the Talent List since 2018, and was split into two or more professions with effect from 16 May 2023.
- ** The number of approved applications under the QMAS denotes the number of applications that passed the selection by the Advisory Committee on Admission of Quality Migrants and Professionals (Advisory Committee). Among the applicants meeting the eligibility criteria of the Talent List, there were 33 QMAS applicants whose applications were pending discussion by the Advisory Committee.

The numbers of applicants meeting the eligibility criteria of the Talent List and having been approved under the QMAS, the GEP and the ASMTP by age, remuneration and academic qualifications are tabulated as follows:

Age	Number of applications approved
18 to 39	599
40 to 44	146
45 to 50	86
51 or above	48
Total	879

Monthly remuneration	Number of applications approved under GEP and ASMTP [#]
Below \$20,000	34
\$20,000 to \$39,999	216
\$40,000 to \$79,999	242
\$80,000 or above	84
Total	576

Note:

- [#] Successful applicants under the QMAS are not required to have secured an offer of employment before entering Hong Kong. Therefore, the ImmD does not maintain breakdown statistics on those applicants by monthly remuneration.

Academic qualification	Number of applications approved under QMAS ^{##}
Doctoral degree/ two master's degrees or more	91
Master's degree/ two bachelor's degrees or more	148
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	64
Total	303

Note:

Generally speaking, all successful applicants under the GEP and the ASMTP hold a bachelor's degree in the relevant field. The ImmD does not maintain any further subcategories of the relevant statistics.

The ImmD does not maintain other statistics mentioned in the question.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB123

(Question Serial No. 2794)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

What are the manpower and other resources required by the Immigration Department for handling the new Capital Investment Entrant Scheme (CIES) in 2024-25? Has the Government estimated the number of applications for the CIES to be received from 2024-25 to 2026-27? If yes, what are the estimate findings? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 7)

Reply:

In consultation with the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, the reply to various parts of the question is as follows:

Under the New Capital Investment Entrant Scheme (New CIES), the New CIES Office under Invest Hong Kong is responsible for assessing whether the applications under the New CIES fulfil the financial requirements concerned, while the Immigration Department (ImmD) is responsible for assessing the applications for visa/entry permit and extension of stay, etc. In 2024-25, the establishment and salary costs for processing applications made under the New CIES as estimated by the ImmD are tabulated as follows:

Admission scheme/policy		2024-25
New CIES^	Establishment (no. of posts)	4
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	2.91

^ In the light of the number of applications for the scheme, the ImmD will handle the work relating to this admission scheme through flexible deployment of its existing manpower and resources.

* In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value.

The Government is confident that the New CIES will be well-received by investors interested in investing and pursuing development in Hong Kong, thereby channelling funds to Hong Kong's capital market and strengthening Hong Kong's status as an international asset and wealth management hub. While not setting a hard performance target for the New CIES, the Government will suitably evaluate its effectiveness to ensure the relevant arrangements and measures can attract target asset owners to deploy and manage their wealth, and fully realise the diverse investment opportunities in Hong Kong.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB124

(Question Serial No. 1532)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control, (4) Personal Documentation

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Territory-wide Identity Card Replacement Exercise ended in March 2023, but the estimate under Programme (4) Personal Documentation of the Immigration Department is higher than the 2023-24 original estimate by 6.1%. It is also expected that the number of identity cards and certificates of registered particulars issued will continue to increase with the implementation of and/or enhancement to immigration admission schemes. Please advise on:

1. the expected increase in the number of entrants under immigration admission schemes in 2024-25;
2. the average cost of identity card replacement for members of the public and the production cost per physical identity card in the Territory-wide Identity Card Replacement Exercise that ended in March 2023.

Asked by: Hon WONG Kwok, Kingsley (LegCo internal reference no.: 24)

Reply:

1. In consultation with the Labour and Welfare Bureau, the reply is as follows:

The Immigration Department (ImmD) expects to receive about 783 500 applications for entry visas under various immigration admission schemes/arrangements/policies in 2024, representing an increase of about 200 000 applications when compared with the actual figure of 2023. The Government has set a 3-year key performance indicator to trawl for talent, i.e. to admit at least 35 000 talent annually with an intended duration of stay of at least 12 months from 2023 to 2025, registering an increase of 40% over the average number in 2020 and 2021. There is no separate estimation of the numbers of entrants under various immigration admission schemes.

2. To facilitate the introduction of the Next Generation Smart Identity Card System (SMARTICS-2) in replacement of the old system for more effective support of work relating to the issuance of identity cards, the ImmD began issuing new smart identity cards on 26 November 2018 and launched the Territory-wide Identity Card Replacement Exercise

(Replacement Exercise) on 27 December 2018. The Replacement Exercise ended on 3 March 2023, during which around 6.84 million identity card holders had their identity cards replaced, representing about 85% of those Hong Kong residents who have to replace their identity cards.

The SMARTICS-2 supports the entire application process of smart identity card, from appointment booking, registration, production to issuance, as well as the related records management. During the Replacement Exercise, the SMARTICS-2 supported Smart Identity Card Replacement Centres, Registration of Persons Offices, the Identity Card Personalisation Centre, etc. in handling the work relating to the issuance of identity cards. There is no separate breakdown of the expenditure involved, which is part of the overall operational expenses of the SMARTICS-2.

In addition, as it is part of the ImmD's regular duties to process identity card replacement applications under the Replacement Exercise, no separate breakdown of the resources involved is available. Therefore, the ImmD does not maintain a breakdown of statistics mentioned in the question.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB125

(Question Serial No. 1951)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please list in a table a breakdown of visitor arrivals in 2019 and 2023 by region (by province for the Mainland) and country.

Asked by: Hon YIU Pak-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

According to the statistics from the Hong Kong Tourism Board, the top ten tourist markets in terms of visitor arrivals by country/ territory of residence of the visitors in 2019 and 2023 are tabulated as follows:

Country/territory of residence	2019
Mainland China*	43 774 685
Taiwan, China	1 538 915
Macao, China	1 238 709
U.S.A.	1 107 165
Japan	1 078 836
Korea	1 042 540
The Philippines	875 897
United Kingdom	518 378
Australia	505 253
Thailand	467 048
Others	3 765 183
Total	55 912 609

Country/territory of residence	2023
Mainland China*	26 760 453
Macao, China	1 223 905
Taiwan, China	783 778
The Philippines	763 778
U.S.A.	594 752
Thailand	450 372
Korea	402 999
Singapore	400 029
Japan	346 389
Malaysia	258 191
Others	2 015 014
Total	33 999 660

*The Immigration Department does not maintain a breakdown by province.

- End -