

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

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(Question Serial No. 3439)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Donald NG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

It is stated that the Department will pay special attention to streamlining the application procedures for outside seating accommodation (OSA) of restaurants in this financial year. In this connection, please advise this Committee of:

1. the total number of OSA applications received from restaurant operators and the number of applications approved in the past year in tabular form;
2. the average time taken from receipt of the applications to their approval, as well as the staff establishment and public expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon CHOW Ho-ding, Holden (LegCo internal reference no.: 47)

Reply:

1. The information sought is provided as follows:

	2025
Number of applications for outside seating accommodation (OSA)	101
Number of applications approved ^{Note}	44

Note: The number includes applications received in that year and the years before.

2. At present, the processing time for OSA applications varies depending on the time spent by the applicants in complying with the relevant licensing requirements, settling objections raised by the public or other departments concerned and resolving relevant land issues. In 2025, the median time taken for processing applications for OSA of restaurants (from receipt to approval of the applications) was 12 months. To shorten the processing time, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the relevant departments have, as led by the Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration, streamlined procedures and established a new joint vetting mechanism. With the introduction of the new mechanism in 2026-27, applicants of simple and straightforward cases are expected to be given approval-in-principle and informed of the specific licensing requirements within approximately 1 month.

In 2025, there were 133 staff members responsible for handling applications for various types of licences, including those for OSA of restaurants, in the 3 licensing offices of the Department. It does not maintain a breakdown of the staff establishment and public expenditure involved in the work related to processing applications for OSA of restaurants.

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