

Executive Summary

Direct Investigation Operation Report

Government's Determination of Slope Maintenance Responsibility and Risk Management of Private Slopes

Introduction

In recent years, extreme weather has brought torrential rains at times that increases the risk of severe landslides, threatening people's daily living, as well as their lives and property. The proper repair and maintenance of man-made slopes is crucial to the prevention of landslides. Currently, there are around 61,000 man-made slopes across Hong Kong, including around 38,600 government slopes, 15,800 private slopes and 6,300 slopes involving mixed responsibilities of the Government and private property owners. Under the Lands Department ("LandsD"), the Systematic Identification of Maintenance Responsibility of Slopes in the Territory Unit ("SIMAR Unit") of the Estate Management Section is tasked with determining the maintenance responsibility for man-made slopes.

2. Private property owners are responsible for the regular maintenance of private man-made slopes. To manage the risk of private man-made slopes, the Civil Engineering and Development Department ("CEDD") has implemented the Landslip Preventive Measures Programme (1977 to 2010) and the Landslip Prevention and Mitigation Programme (2010 to present) in succession. Under the Programme, a specified number of private man-made slopes are selected under a risk-based approach for safety screening studies every year to assess whether their condition meets safety standards. Where *prima facie* evidence of distress or potential danger is observed on private slopes, CEDD will recommend that the Buildings Department ("BD") serve dangerous hillside orders¹ on private property owners, requiring them to carry out investigation and necessary remedial or preventive works. To follow up on compliance with the orders, BD will vet the slope works proposals submitted by registered professionals appointed by owners, monitor the works progress, and instigate prosecutions against non-compliance cases. Depending on circumstances, BD carries out works on behalf of defaulting owners and recovers the costs from them upon completion.

3. Our investigation has revealed inadequacies that require improvements to increase efficiency, in LandsD's determination of maintenance responsibility for man-made slopes, handling of disputes, and granting of permission letters to carry out works

¹ Generally, a dangerous hillside order has two stages. Stage 1 dangerous hillside order requires private property owners to appoint registered professionals within a specified period to carry out ground investigation works, and submit a slope works proposal to BD for approval based on the investigation results. Stage 2 dangerous hillside order requires private property owners to appoint registered professionals within a specified period to coordinate, supervise and complete remedial or preventive works according to the proposal approved by BD.

on government land; as well as BD's issuance and follow-up of dangerous hillside orders and carrying out of default works. As for the inadequate maintenance of private slopes, CEDD can strengthen education and support to private property owners through safety screening studies. Moreover, there is still substantial room for improving inter-departmental collaboration in the risk management of private slopes and enforcement. During this investigation, all three departments responded positively to our findings and proactively proposed improvement measures. We truly appreciate the departments for their efforts. Our specific comments on each area are as follows.

Our Findings and Comments

(I) LandsD's Determination of Maintenance Responsibility for Man-made Slopes

Lengthy Determination Process

4. Between 2019 and 2024, LandsD took longer than one year to complete the determination in around 70% of cases and over two years in about 50% of cases. As at the end of April 2025, there was even a backlog of around 1,830 cases with maintenance responsibility not yet determined. In our view, it is unreasonable to take years just to determine which party should be responsible for slope maintenance. An excessively long time for determination is detrimental to slope safety because it defers the assumption of responsibility by the maintenance party.

5. Since the launch of our investigation and in response to our concern, LandsD has required its consultants to submit a determination report within two months for priority cases, thereby enabling LandsD to advise BD within the specified timeframe (i.e. 3.75 months). We are also pleased to learn that LandsD has drawn up target timeframes for determination cases of different complexity and implemented an internal monitoring mechanism. We recommend that LandsD continue to monitor the implementation of these improvement measures, striving to complete all cases within reasonable timeframes. Separately, LandsD should conduct systematic analysis of determination cases requiring a long completion time to examine the common causes and formulate corresponding measures, so as to facilitate the speedy completion of cases by the department and its consultants.

6. Apart from monitoring the completion time of cases, the quality of consultants' work is equally important. We recommend that LandsD analyse the common issues requiring attention and speedier handling in determination cases, and provide consultants with reminders and guidance.

7. We are pleased to learn that in order to clear backlog cases, LandsD has implemented a series of improvement measures. All backlog cases were cleared before the end of 2025.

Streamlining Inter-departmental Workflow for Determination Process

8. A newly-formed or modified slope is first handled by CEDD for delineation of slope boundary or area and registration. LandsD will then determine the maintenance responsibility. Moreover, LandsD will determine the maintenance responsibility again in the event of any change to a man-made slope's cadastral records. During the determination process and depending on the circumstances of the case, LandsD needs to obtain information and advice from relevant departments. We recommend that LandsD and CEDD jointly explore how to streamline the workflow and inter-departmental exchange of information, so as to enhance the efficiency of the determination process.

Failure to Inform Maintenance Parties of Determination Results

9. Upon completion of the determination process and before uploading the results to the Slope Maintenance Responsibility Information System, LandsD never notified the parties considered to have maintenance responsibility. We are concerned that some private property owners might have neglected their responsibility due to unawareness of it, resulting in slope deterioration. If private property owners only become aware of their responsibility upon receiving a dangerous hillside order issued by BD, not only have they already missed the opportunity for routine inspections and maintenance, but more importantly, the slope's structure may have become unstable or even dangerous by that time. Addressing potential disputes over maintenance responsibility at this stage is far too late from a public safety perspective.

10. In our view, LandsD should notify the maintenance parties of its determination results to ensure that they are fully aware of and fulfil their responsibility as soon as possible. Any disputes over maintenance responsibility can also be addressed early. We are pleased to note that our findings and recommendations are positively received by LandsD with relevant work already commenced.

Strengthening Inter-departmental Collaboration for Resolving Disputes over Maintenance Responsibility

11. Resolving disputes over maintenance responsibility often involves inter-departmental exchange of a vast amount of information and opinions. Where a department is requested to assist, its proactive cooperation is crucial for speedy resolution of disputes. In one case, LandsD requested CEDD to confirm whether adjustment was required for the boundary of a slope, which was the subject in dispute. As the dispute involved complex boundary issues, the boundary of the slope was revised twice. As a result, the entire review process took one year and five months from the initial enquiry to the final reply.

12. Meanwhile, should private property owners contest their maintenance responsibility or even lodge a statutory appeal with the Appeal Tribunal (Buildings) after BD has issued a dangerous hillside order, BD, as the respondent, will play a

coordinating role. It will seek information and professional advice from LandsD and CEDD to resolve the dispute. In one case where a private property owner contested his maintenance responsibility after receiving an order, BD attempted to enlist LandsD's assistance with surveying to delineate the lot boundary, but LandsD cited resource constraints and declined. Only after BD escalated the matter to the Development Bureau ("DEVB") did LandsD provide assistance. We consider that even after BD had issued a dangerous hillside order, LandsD remained obliged to make every effort to provide assistance, rather than stay aloof. LandsD's performance was unsatisfactory in this case but we are pleased to note that improvement has been made.

13. We recommend that the three departments establish a monitoring mechanism for cases involving disputes over slope maintenance responsibility to ensure timely information exchange and consultation among them. They should also step up staff training to ensure proactive assistance to other departments as required for speedy resolution of disputes.

14. While disputes cannot be entirely avoided, we note that in many cases LandsD revised its determination results after receiving information and grounds from the disputing party (with some archival records and information not kept by the Government). In fact, BD observed that in certain cases, the slope maintenance responsibility left room for dispute. We recommend that the three departments, through the regular inter-departmental coordination meetings and the database established by LandsD, carefully analyse past cases involving disputes over maintenance responsibility, particularly those where LandsD revised its determination results upon review or even the private property owners successfully appealed. The departments should exchange views and share experience to enhance the robustness of determination results at source. We consider that LandsD should take the lead in this exercise, with CEDD and BD actively supporting.

Maintaining Data on Cases Involving Disputes over Slope Maintenance Responsibility

15. At present, LandsD and BD do not maintain data on cases involving disputes over slope maintenance responsibility. Specialised solutions are needed to address these complex and time-consuming cases. In the absence of data, it is difficult to conduct objective analysis to fully understand the actual circumstances of these cases or their impact on the overall slope safety work. We recommend that the two departments establish a communication mechanism for maintaining the number and relevant data (such as processing time) of cases involving disputes over maintenance responsibility for analysis and monitoring purposes.

(II) BD's Issuance and Follow-up of Dangerous Hillside Orders

Issuing Dangerous Hillside Orders Promptly

16. Between 2021 and 2025, BD took an average of 4.9 months to issue a dangerous hillside order upon CEDD's referral, which is shorter than its target timeframe of 8 months. Yet, we consider that the overall processing time is still rather long. We recommend that BD, for complex cases, further review and explore any scope to streamline the workflow before issuing a dangerous hillside order and rationalise the consultation process with CEDD and LandsD, with a view to adopting a more ambitious target to issue orders as soon as possible.

17. We are pleased to learn that BD has included the issuance of dangerous hillside orders in the "to-do" list of its Building Condition Information System for better monitoring and reminding staff to follow up in a timely manner. We recommend that senior staff continue to make good use of the system to closely monitor the progress of issuance of orders by staff and ensure smooth operation.

Lengthy Time for Compliance

18. Of the dangerous hillside orders issued between 2016 and 2025, as of December 2025, about 40% of the stage 1 orders took over five years to comply with, and over 35% of the stage 2 orders took over three years to comply with. The Office's analysis revealed that the lengthy time taken for compliance was attributable to multiple issues.

Owners Delaying Appointment of Registered Professionals

19. Data show that after receiving stage 1 dangerous hillside orders, private property owners had serious delays in appointing registered professionals. In a case we studied, BD served a reminder on the owners after the order was due, but the owners ultimately took 22 months since the issuance of the order to appoint registered professionals. BD had considered prosecution but decided against it subsequently as registered professionals had been appointed and the slope works proposal had been approved. In our view, this might send a wrong message to private property owners that they could delay compliance with impunity.

20. The appointment of registered professionals is merely the initial step in compliance. If this first step has already taken years to complete, subsequent actions would only be further delayed. Moreover, in cases where the owners have not yet appointed registered professionals and the appeal process or prosecution by BD is ongoing, BD will engage consultants to monitor the safety of the slopes regularly, effectively shifting the relevant costs onto the Government. We recommend that for cases where private property owners have delayed appointing registered professionals, BD fully utilise the new function of the Building Condition Information System for timely follow-up, by issuing reminders and warning letters as required and stepping up the support for owners who face difficulties despite their willingness to comply with the

orders. On the other hand, it should take decisive enforcement action against those who show no intention of complying.

Failing to Offer Assistance Early

21. A case shows that after BD issued a stage 1 order in October 2014, it took a full decade before compliance was confirmed in October 2024. Having analysed the case, we found that there were practical challenges as well as other problems. No doubt, the feasibility of the design of the remedial or preventive works and construction method were affected by site constraints, thereby increasing the complexity of the case. Nevertheless, the registered professionals appointed by the private property owners had clearly expressed the difficulties they faced and requested the deployment and assistance of BD's Social Services Team, but BD provided assistance at a rather late stage to resolve the problem. Had BD stepped in and coordinated earlier, the process could have been expedited. We recommend that BD classify complex cases, such as those subject to consent from owners of adjacent lots or site constraints, and strengthen its follow-up mechanism with proactive intervention, coordination and support for owners in difficulties to facilitate their early compliance.

Repeated Submission and Vetting of Slope Works Proposals

22. To comply with stage 1 orders, registered professionals appointed by owners should submit proposals of remedial or preventive works to BD upon completing slope investigation. Meanwhile, BD needs to consult relevant departments on the proposals received. From case studies, we note that registered professionals often need to resubmit proposals time and again as the proposals could not meet the requirements stipulated in the Buildings Ordinance or the technical details were not agreed by CEDD. This process of repeated submission and vetting could drag on for years, leading to delays in compliance. We recommend that BD conduct systematic analysis of the slope works proposals submitted by registered professionals and collate opinions from relevant departments (including CEDD and LandsD), with a view to drawing up a list of common issues and difficulties encountered in complex cases for better communication with industry practitioners. This would help to avoid hindrance to the efficiency due to repeated rejections and submissions of proposals. Meanwhile, BD can compile a checklist of reports and documents to be submitted by registered professionals at different stages of the approval process for their compliance.

23. Currently, depending on circumstances, registered professionals appointed by owners may need to approach CEDD, LandsD and other departments directly to seek advice or approval when preparing slope works proposals. To strengthen inter-departmental communication and progress monitoring, we recommend that BD require registered professionals to copy all their correspondence with other departments regarding dangerous hillside orders to BD, so as to enable the department to have a better grasp of the compliance status and step in where necessary.

To Strengthen Enforcement Efforts

24. Where owners show no intention of complying with dangerous hillside orders, BD should take decisive enforcement action to cause them to pay the price. We note that in many cases where the deadline for compliance had expired, BD issued multiple reminders and warnings before considering prosecution. Prosecution was often initiated years after the specified deadline for compliance, not to mention cases that required repeated prosecutions against owners who remained unwilling to comply even after conviction. We are pleased to note that since the launch of this investigation, BD has commenced a review on the procedures for repeated prosecutions, including the reissuance of reminders and warning letters, prosecution criteria and target processing time. We recommend that BD complete the revision of guidelines as soon as possible to further enhance the enforcement efficiency and increase deterrence.

Failing to Fully Meet Targets for Handling Dangerous Hillside Orders

25. Each year, BD sets targets for handling outstanding dangerous hillside orders issued in different years. In 2025, BD exceeded or met seven of the ten targets, but failed to meet the remaining three. With improvement measures introduced in various areas, we expect improvements in BD's performance in handling outstanding orders. We recommend that BD continue to monitor the compliance status stringently, conduct timely review of the effectiveness of improvement measures and refine them to ensure the targets can be met.

(III) LandsD's Approval of Permission Letter to Carry Out Works on Government Land

26. In many cases, the remedial or preventive works of private slopes involve soil nailing on adjacent government land, or extension from private land to government land. Private property owners need to apply to LandsD for permission letters before carrying out such works. Our case studies reveal that LandsD's approval process took a relatively long time. Different problems were involved, including complex land issues and applicants' delay in replying. While the approval process was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and part of the delay was attributed to the failure of owners or their registered professionals to provide timely responses to the department's requests or views, we consider that on the whole LandsD's efficiency was still unsatisfactory. A lengthy approval process not only discourages owners from compliance, but also directly impacts on the commencement of works and harms slope safety. As the Government encourages owners to comply with dangerous hillside orders promptly, it is even more important for the regulatory authorities to lead by example by processing applications speedily.

27. We are pleased to learn that, since the launch of our direct investigation operation, LandsD has implemented a series of improvement measures. We recommend that LandsD continue to review the progress of vetting applications and the

implementation of newly established target processing times. LandsD should also continue to review the implementation of the reporting and monitoring mechanism to ensure proper supervision of subordinates by senior staff. All complex cases should be promptly escalated to senior management to ensure completion within a reasonable timeframe. Furthermore, we recommend that LandsD explore further enhancing the application and approval procedures to expedite the granting of permission letters to registered professionals appointed by owners. We also recommend that LandsD provide, via BD, private property owners subject to dangerous hillside orders and their registered professionals with a list of required documents and application forms. Through the implementation of the above improvement measures, LandsD expects to complete processing within four months from the date of receiving an application with relevant documents and plans.

(IV) Default Works Carried Out by BD

Timely Decision of Default Works

28. According to BD's guidelines, where an owner has passed away, has not been found or has been prosecuted for a second time, or where the case involves numerous owners and difficulty in compliance, BD will consider, within three months upon the expiry of the deadline for compliance of the dangerous hillside order or within three months upon the latest conviction, engaging consultants and contractors to carry out works on behalf of the owners. From a safety perspective, BD's undertaking of default works is practically necessary in cases where the owners are unable to comply with the order for various reasons, and such decisions should be made and implemented at the earliest. While there were records in case files, in the absence of holistic data, we are unable to ascertain BD's overall performance in this area. Accordingly, we recommend that in respect of dangerous hillside orders meeting the criteria for default works, BD properly maintain data on the actual times of deciding to carry out default works and works commencement for analysis and monitoring purposes, so as to avoid delay in decision-making.

Extremely Long Time for Carrying out Default Works

29. Between 2015 and 2025, BD completed default works for 256 cases. The annual average time for completion of default works ranged from 57 to 132 months, far exceeding BD's target timeframe of 44 months for simple default works. Among them, only 12% was completed within 44 months. Our case studies also reveal very long time taken for certain default works. We are pleased to note that BD has acknowledged the need to significantly improve the progress of default works at present, and to this end has introduced a series of measures to streamline procedures and clear the backlog. The implementation of default works has improved. To achieve systemic improvement, we recommend that BD further review its workflow for default works, and carefully examine potential areas for streamlining at each and every stage, so as to expedite completion.

30. Moreover, BD should address the problem of repeated submissions of reports and proposals for default works by its consultants due to non-compliance with requirements. We recommend that BD conduct a comprehensive analysis of such reports and proposals in the past as well as the feedback given by BD, CEDD and LandsD, with a view to consolidating common issues and areas for improvement for sharing with consultants, providing guidance and enabling lessons to be learned. Separately, in over 30% of default works, LandsD's permission was required for carrying out works on government land. In the past, the application and approval process again took years. Since the launch of our investigation, BD has reached out to LandsD to discuss measures for streamlining the approval process. According to BD's initial observation, the new procedures operate smoothly and shorten the processing time significantly. We recommend that BD and LandsD review the new procedures after implementation for a period, and jointly explore and discuss room for further refinement to enhance efficiency.

Setting More Ambitious Target for Completing Default Works

31. Currently, BD's target timeframe for completing simple default works is 44 months. Even after excluding the 7 months for the maintenance period and discharging of consultant's duties, the target processing time is still over 30 months. By contrast, BD allows only 14 months for private property owners to comply with both stage 1 and stage 2 orders. In practice, BD may exercise discretion to grant extensions to owners in difficulties. At the same time, it is likely that BD encounters more resistance and constraints when carrying out default works and more coordination efforts are required. Nevertheless, it calls into question whether BD is too conservative in setting a significantly longer time for itself to complete default works.

32. As the authority for regulating the safety of private slopes, BD should carry out default works efficiently to set an example for private property owners. We recommend that BD further review the target timeframe for each stage of default works, striving to set a more ambitious target where feasible. Depending on needs, BD may set corresponding target timeframes for cases of varying complexity.

(V) CEDD'S Safety Screening Studies for Private Man-made Slopes

Improper Maintenance of Private Slopes

33. Under the Landslip Prevention and Mitigation Programme, CEDD selects 100 private man-made slopes under a risk-based approach for safety screening studies every year. If problems are found in slope maintenance, CEDD will, depending on actual circumstances, consider issuing advisory letters to private property owners advising on the required repair works. Between 2020 and 2024, CEDD found maintenance problems in an average of about 69% of slopes selected for safety screening studies each year, and the department issued advisory letters to about 60% of these slopes.

34. We consider that while cases not warranting advisory letters involve relatively minor maintenance problems, CEDD can step up publicity and education on the relevant owners to ensure their awareness of the importance of proper maintenance of slopes. For such cases, we recommend that CEDD step up publicity and education, such as through posting information leaflets about slope maintenance, to encourage private property owners to carry out maintenance regularly. Furthermore, CEDD should explore setting a target timeframe for the issuance of advisory letters and information leaflets, with a view to swiftly relaying any problems identified in safety screening studies to private property owners.

Timely Follow-up on Private Slope Maintenance after Issuing Advisory Letters

35. The main objective of safety screening studies is to assess whether private slopes are dangerous or liable to become dangerous, with a view to making referrals to BD for issuance of dangerous hillside orders. In the past, for private slopes found to have minor maintenance problems only, CEDD generally would not follow up on the cases after issuing advisory letters. We are pleased to note that since the launch of our investigation, CEDD has enhanced its follow-up actions after issuing advisory letters and set a target timeframe to conduct timely inspection to monitor whether private property owners have properly carried out maintenance as advised. We recommend that CEDD continue to diligently follow up on all cases issued with advisory letters and provide support to private property owners in need.

Continue to Ensure the Efficiency of Safety Screening Studies

36. CEDD has proposed to gradually raise the annual targets under the Landslip Prevention and Mitigation Programme within three years from 2025, including increasing the number of private man-made slopes selected for safety screening studies from 100 to 130. It is commendable for CEDD to introduce forward-looking measures to strengthen the capability to cope with extreme weather. We recommend that CEDD ensure that the gradual increase of the target of safety screening studies would not affect the efficiency and, through extensive use of technology, select private man-made slopes more precisely and conduct safety screening studies more efficiently.

(VI) Publicity and Education

Enhancing Role of Property Management Companies

37. When providing property management services for clients, property management companies are often involved in managing private slopes associated with the property. Given their vital role in managing private slopes, we recommend that CEDD and BD strengthen cooperation with the Property Management Services Authority (“PMSA”) to promote a more proactive role of property management companies in the maintenance of private slopes, thereby facilitating the arrangement and coordination of routine maintenance and compliance with dangerous hillside orders by property owners.

Enriching Publicity and Educational Materials

38. CEDD is responsible for the safety screening studies of private slopes, while BD is the authority for the enforcement of dangerous hillside orders. Given their experience accumulated over the years, we recommend that CEDD and BD continue to systematically consolidate experience, identify common problems and bottlenecks encountered by private property owners in routine slope maintenance and compliance of dangerous hillside orders, and incorporate corresponding solutions into publicity and education materials, so as to enhance private property owners' capability to carry out routine maintenance and comply with orders.

(VII) Overall Risk Control for Private Slopes

Analysing Correlation Between Issuance of and Compliance with Dangerous Hillside Orders and Occurrence of Landslides

39. CEDD maintains data on landslides occurring on private slopes, while BD maintains data related to dangerous hillside orders. However, the extent of data analysis is limited as these two datasets are not organised. We are pleased to learn that CEDD targets to complete rollout of the Smart Slope Catalogue in 2026, gradually expanding the monitoring and management data, such as records of landslides and dangerous hillside orders. We recommend that CEDD and BD utilise the Smart Slope Catalogue for systematic analysis of the correlation between the issuance of and compliance with dangerous hillside orders and the occurrence of landslides. For instance, they should examine whether the selection of private slopes for issuance of the orders enabled timely prevention of hazards, and whether compliance with the orders adequately addressed the increasing risk of landslides. We believe that such data will provide an important basis for departments to assess the effectiveness of the entire mechanism for dangerous hillside orders.

Establishing Standing High-level Inter-departmental Working Group and Escalation Mechanism

40. The risk management of private slopes involves inter-departmental collaboration at various stages. There is no lack of complex cases concerning risk control of private slopes. For instance, the maintenance responsibility is often subject to disputes or even legal proceedings. Owners may have difficulty preparing and arranging for works. Also, BD is frequently required to undertake default works. Thorough discussion and careful rationalisation are essential for inter-departmental collaboration at each stage. Consequently, we recommend that LandsD join the regular coordination meetings between CEDD and BD, which should function as a standing high-level inter-departmental working group for the risk control of private slopes. The working group will provide a platform for the three departments to raise matters of concern, discuss solutions for swift resolution of complex cases, exchange information and share experience, so as to enhance regulation continuously. At the

same time, the three departments can take forward the various measures to enhance inter-departmental collaboration proposed above through the new platform.

41. Currently, the routine monitoring of private slopes by the three departments involves substantial information exchange and consultation among them at the case level. To ensure effective control and smooth operation, we recommend that the three departments compile case lists for different categories of work setting out cases pending information or advice from other departments. Any outstanding cases should be discussed and resolved promptly through the working group proposed above.

42. Furthermore, any disagreements remaining unresolved after discussion among the three departments should be escalated to a higher level without delay. DEVB should be a suitable platform for such purposes as all three departments are subordinate to it. We recommend that the three departments make good use of the existing mechanism² for escalation of inter-departmental disagreements to DEVB to achieve speedy resolution.

Recommendations

43. Overall, the Ombudsman makes the following recommendations to LandsD, BD and CEDD:

LandsD

- (1) continue to monitor the implementation of target timeframes for the determination of slope maintenance responsibility cases of different complexity and the internal monitoring system, striving to complete all cases within reasonable timeframes;
- (2) conduct systematic analysis of determination cases requiring a long completion time to examine the common causes and formulate corresponding measures, so as to facilitate the speedy completion of cases by LandsD and its consultants;
- (3) analyse the common issues requiring attention and speedier handling in determination cases and provide consultants with reminders and guidance, thereby ensuring their proper handling and avoidance of repeated revisions and submissions of reports;

² A mechanism is established under the Inter-departmental Meeting on Slope Matters, whereby departments can escalate disputes over slope maintenance responsibility to DEVB for handling by a Principal Assistant Secretary.

- (4) for determination cases involving newly-formed slopes and re-determination cases involving changes in cadastral records, notify the maintenance parties immediately upon completion or revision of the determination results;
- (5) for determination cases already completed in the past, issue notifications in batches to inform private property owners of their maintenance responsibility based on the latest situation of slopes and review the progress regularly;
- (6) continue to review the progress of vetting applications for permission letters to carry out works on government land under dangerous hillside orders, and the implementation of newly established target processing times;
- (7) continue to review the implementation of the reporting and monitoring mechanism to ensure proper supervision of subordinates by senior staff. All complex cases should be promptly escalated to senior management to ensure completion within reasonable timeframes;
- (8) explore further enhancing the application and approval procedures to expedite the granting of permission letters to registered professionals appointed by owners, thus enabling timely commencement of remedial or preventive works;
- (9) provide, via BD, private property owners subject to dangerous hillside orders and their registered professionals with a list of required documents and application forms, so as to further expedite processing of applications;

BD

- (10) for complex cases, further review and explore any scope to streamline the workflow before issuing a dangerous hillside order and rationalise the consultation process with CEDD and LandsD, with a view to adopting a more ambitious target to issue orders as soon as possible;
- (11) continue to make good use of its Building Condition Information System to closely monitor the progress of issuing dangerous hillside orders by staff and ensure smooth operation;
- (12) for cases where private property owners have delayed appointing registered professionals, fully utilise the new function of the Building Condition Information System for timely follow-up, by issuing reminders and warning letters as required and stepping up the support for owners who face difficulties despite their willingness to comply with the orders. On the other hand, it should take more decisive enforcement action against those who show no intention of complying;

- (13) classify complex cases, such as those subject to consent from owners of adjacent lots or site constraints, and strengthen its follow-up mechanism with proactive intervention, coordination and support for owners in difficulties to facilitate their early compliance;
- (14) conduct systematic analysis of the slope works proposals submitted by registered professionals appointed by owners and collate opinions from relevant departments (including CEDD and LandsD), with a view to drawing up a list of common issues and difficulties encountered in complex cases for better communication with industry practitioners, so as to avoid hindrance to the efficiency due to repeated rejections and submissions of proposals;
- (15) compile a checklist of reports and documents to be submitted by registered professionals at different stages of the approval process for their compliance;
- (16) require registered professionals to copy all their correspondence with other departments regarding dangerous hillside orders to BD, so as to enable the department to have a better grasp of the compliance status and step in where necessary;
- (17) complete the revision of guidelines on repeated prosecutions (including the reissuance of reminders and warning letters, prosecution criteria and target processing time) as soon as possible to further enhance the enforcement efficiency and increase deterrence;
- (18) continue to monitor the compliance status of dangerous hillside orders stringently, conduct timely review of the effectiveness of improvement measures and refine them to ensure the targets can be met;
- (19) in respect of dangerous hillside orders meeting the criteria for default works, properly maintain data on the actual times of deciding to carry out default works and works commencement for analysis and monitoring purposes, so as to avoid delay in decision-making;
- (20) further review the workflow for default works, and carefully examine potential areas for streamlining at each and every stage, so as to expedite completion;
- (21) conduct a comprehensive analysis of the reports and proposals prepared by its consultants for default works in the past, as well as the feedback given by BD, CEDD and LandsD, with a view to consolidating common issues and areas for improvement for sharing with consultants, providing guidance and enabling lessons to be learned;

- (22) further review the target timeframe for each stage of default works, striving to set a more ambitious target where feasible;

CEDD

- (23) for private slopes found to have minor maintenance problems in safety screening studies, step up publicity and education on the relevant owners to encourage them to carry out maintenance regularly to reduce the risk of landslides;
- (24) explore setting a target timeframe for the issuance of advisory letters and information leaflets, with a view to swiftly relaying any problems identified in safety screening studies to private property owners;
- (25) continue to diligently follow up on all cases issued with advisory letters and provide support to private property owners in need;
- (26) ensure that the gradual increase of the target of safety screening studies would not affect the efficiency and, through extensive use of technology, select private man-made slopes more precisely and conduct safety screening studies more efficiently;

Inter-departmental Collaboration

- (27) LandsD and CEDD jointly explore how to streamline the workflow and inter-departmental exchange of information, so as to enhance the efficiency of the determination process;
- (28) the three departments establish a monitoring mechanism for cases involving disputes over slope maintenance responsibility to ensure timely information exchange and consultation among them, and step up staff training to ensure proactive assistance to other departments as required for speedy resolution of disputes;
- (29) the three departments, through regular inter-departmental coordination meetings and the database established by LandsD, carefully analyse past cases involving disputes over maintenance responsibility, particularly those where LandsD revised its determination results upon review or even the private property owners successfully appealed. The departments should exchange views and share experience to enhance the robustness of determination results at source. LandsD should take the lead in this exercise, with CEDD and BD actively supporting;

- (30) LandsD and BD establish a communication mechanism for maintaining the number and relevant data (such as processing time) of cases involving disputes over maintenance responsibility for analysis and monitoring purposes;
- (31) in respect of applications for permission to carry out default works on government land, BD and LandsD review the new application and approval procedures after implementation for a period, and jointly explore and discuss further room for further refinement to enhance efficiency;
- (32) CEDD and BD strengthen cooperation with PMSA to promote a more proactive role of property management companies in the maintenance of private slopes, thereby facilitating the arrangement and coordination of routine maintenance and compliance with dangerous hillside orders by property owners;
- (33) CEDD and BD continue to systematically consolidate experience, identify common problems and bottlenecks encountered by private property owners in routine slope maintenance and compliance of dangerous hillside orders, and incorporate corresponding solutions into publicity and education materials, so as to enhance private property owners' capability to carry out routine maintenance and comply with orders;
- (34) CEDD and BD utilise the Smart Slope Catalogue for systematic analysis of the correlation between the issuance of and compliance with dangerous hillside orders and the occurrence of landslides;
- (35) LandsD join the regular coordination meetings between CEDD and BD, which should function as a standing high-level inter-departmental working group for the risk control of private slopes, to strengthen synergy;
- (36) the three departments compile case lists for different categories of work, setting out cases pending information or advice from other departments. Any outstanding cases should be discussed and resolved promptly through the working group mentioned in **paragraph 43(35)**; and
- (37) the three departments make good use of the existing mechanism for escalation of inter-departmental disagreements to DEVB to achieve speedy resolution.

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