

**Question on progress of works of
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB)
(Paper IDC 31/2015)**

Written reply of Highways Department

Question 1: As indicated in Highways Department's written reply of 23 June 2014, the above-mentioned labour shortage would not affect the project. However, it has recently been confirmed that the HZMB project would be delayed. Would Highways Department please report the latest progress and programme, including time table of construction activities and difficulties faced.

Question 2: In view of actual circumstance and difficulties during construction, would Highways Department take corresponding action to speed up the progress?

Answer: The Hong Kong – Zhuhai – Macao Bridge (HZMB) is an unprecedented cross boundary project jointly constructed by three governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao spanning over the Lingdingyang. From the Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities (HKBCF) to the Zhuhai-Macao Boundary Crossing Facilities, the bridge is 41.6 km long. Applying the latest technologies, after completion, the bridge will be the longest bridge cum tunnel sea-crossing in the world. The entire HZMB project consists of the HZMB Main Bridge in the Mainland waters being carried out by the HZMB Authority (HZMBA); and the link roads and boundary crossing facilities which are responsible by the three governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao.

As indicated by the Secretary for Transport and Housing at the Legislative Council Panel on Transport on 16 January this year, the Joint Works Committee of the Three Governments (JWC) opined that it would be very difficult for the entire HZMB project to be completed at the same time by end 2016. The JWC and the HZMBA will further conduct an in-depth and objective analysis on the programme. Besides, Mr Li Chun-hong, the Director of the Guangdong Development and Reform Commission, also said at the press conference of the third session of the 12th Guangdong Provincial People's Congress held on 10 February this year that

the HZMB project encountered many unforeseen difficulties and technical problems that it appeared that it would be very difficult to complete and commission the entire HZMB by end 2016.

The JWC and the HZMB Authority will continue to implement the relevant projects and to overcome the technical difficulties encountered and the pressure in meeting the programme schedule; and with safety and quality assurance as the major premises, to complete the HZMB Main Bridge as well as the related projects of the three side as early as practicable for the smooth commissioning of the HZMB project.

As for the local projects in Hong Kong, according to the original plan, the HKBCF should commence construction in end 2010. However, due to the judicial review (JR) case regarding the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report, the reclamation works of the HKBCF could only commence in about a year later, i.e. in November 2011; and the superstructure works commenced construction in April last year. Hence, the programme is extremely tight. At the same time, the project also faced construction difficulties and challenges such as the unstable supply of materials, shortage of labour, restriction in airport height and constraints in environmental protection requirement, etc.

The Hong Kong Link Road (HKLR) project was originally planned to commence construction in mid-2011. Also affected by the JR case regarding the EIA reports, the commencement of works had to be deferred to May 2012. Apart from the compressed programme, the project also faced challenges such as environmental protection restrictions, complex site conditions and the requirement of Construction Noise Permit, etc.

According to the current progress, it appears that the HKBCF and the HKLR projects cannot be completed in time by end 2016. As for the anticipated completion date, Highways Department is still reviewing it. Nevertheless, we will endeavour to complete the essential works of the projects in Hong Kong to dovetail with the commissioning of the HZMB.