



28 June 2022

Dear Secretary of the Environment,

Comments on the “Optimising the  
Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance Process”

We refer to the Legislative Council Paper No. CB(1)92/2022(02) regarding the above and would like to make our suggestions regarding the ecological components of the EIA study.

Centralised Environmental Database (CED)

We fully support the inclusion of available ecological information and data in the establishment of the CED so that it can be used by consultants in conducting EIA studies, as well as for research and learning by academics and the general public. There are many EIAs, EcoIAs in planning applications and various consultancy studies sponsored by the Hong Kong SAR Government but these are not easily searchable or available. In addition, AFCD and DSD have biodiversity monitoring programme. The wealth of information generated from these would immensely enhance the understanding of Hong Kong biodiversity and can be used in future EIA studies not only to optimise the process, but to make a better assessment of the impacts so that they can be avoided, minimised and mitigated. Hence, we believe all these including the relevant consultancy reports should be included in the CED.

The handling of sensitive information has been discussed during the Hong Kong Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) process and there are good examples in other places that can be adopted in Hong Kong. Different levels of access should be designed in the CED so that highly sensitive information could only be viewed by consultants and researchers while non-sensitive, general information can be released to the general public.

Under the BSAP, the web-based Hong Kong Biodiversity Information Hub (HKBIH) has been established. Logically the CED and HKBIH should be linked to facilitate the dissemination of information.



### List of DPs

We think there is basis to consider adding hydrogen storage facilities to and deleting sewage pumping stations from the list; and also giving exemptions to helipads in public facilities. It would also be useful if more supporting information can be given for the revised list of DPs to enhance the planning of EIA study. On the other hand, while guidelines on the requirements for conducting a full EIA is clear, those for application for Direct Application of Environmental Permit, including but not limited to the survey methodology and approach are not. It would be a good chance to review and clarify the guidelines in this exercise.

### Review of past Mitigation and Compensation Measures

The EIAO has been implemented in Hong Kong for over two decades and there have been considerable experiences on various mitigation and compensation measures both on-site and off-site. However, there has not been a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of all these past actions undertaken in the EIAO process and the experience gained has not been effectively applied to improve the mitigations and compensations in future projects.

Hence, we would recommend such a review to be undertaken in due course so that the knowledge based on the lessons learnt (both positive and negative) and relevant research can be shared with EIA practitioners. Guidelines on the more commonly used mitigation and compensation measures such as mitigation translocation of plants and animals, woodland compensation, and, wetlands enhancement and creation should be produced based on the review and recent research to help increase their success rate of future projects. If properly planned and executed, the mitigation and compensation measures may even result in a positive gain in biodiversity conservation.

### Alignment of Deep Bay Buffer Zone 1 & 2 under EIA with Wetland Conservation Area (WCA) and Wetland Buffer Area (WBA) under Town Planning

The Deep Bay Buffer Zone 1 & 2 under EIA are not fully aligned with WCA and WBA. This is mainly due to the historical reason that the EIA system was in place earlier. However, the two systems are in place serving the same aim to ensure developments in the Deep Bay area will not result in negative impacts on the ecological value of the important Deep Bay wetlands ecosystem. Hence, we think it is logical to make these two systems align in their respective sensitive areas under this review.



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The suggestions above will not only increase the efficiency but also the effectiveness of the EIA process and would contribute towards sustainable development. We hope our suggestions will be duly considered.

Should you have any questions, please free to contact us at 5547 9784 or via email [info@hkwca.org.hk](mailto:info@hkwca.org.hk). Thanks a lot for your consideration.

Best regards,

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