

Professional Views on the Implementation Plan for Harbour Area Treatment Scheme Stage 2

For and on behalf of the Hong Kong Institute of Environmental Impact Assessment

Dr. Lai Pong Wai, Centre for Environmental Policy and Resource Management, Department of Geography and Resource Management, the Chinese University of Hong Kong

6 June 2005

The provision of the much needed upgrading of sewage treatment level in Hong Kong Island within the HATS catchment is fully supported. Discharges of sewage only preliminarily treated into the Victoria Harbour and Hong Kong Island South waters can no longer be considered as environmentally acceptable. The merits of centralized or distributed options have been subject to extensive reviews and debates. Given the current satisfactory performance records of the existing CEPT plants at the Stonecutter's Island and the feasibility of extending its capacity to cater for the sewage collected from the various nodes at Hong Kong Island, increased sewage volume due to future population growth and the possible need for treatment upgrade in the future, the proposed implementation plan represents a sound resource management practice aiming to improve the environment.

The distributed treatment option is severely constrained by limited space and proximity to the urban centres. Risks of adverse environmental impacts to adjacent land uses in case of failure of the mitigation measures cannot be ignored. Advances in sewage treatment technologies may make it possible for compact and/or underground treatment works to be sited in these congested areas. However, future upgrading would be severely restricted if at all possible. Stanley sewage treatment works, which was built within a cavern, is a good example.

HATS Stage 2 represents a very substantial investment by the Hong Kong people. However, it is not the end itself. The ultimate goal is to improve the marine environment of Hong Kong. Independent and unbiased environmental impact assessment is essential for safeguarding the achievement of this goal. A proper environmental data management system to monitor the performance of the new (upgraded) sewage treatment works, and the water quality and ecological conditions in Victoria Harbour and its surrounding waters, is critical to the success of the scheme. This includes not just data collection, but a design capable to detect any changes in the marine environment and to give adequate early warning for any need to upgrade. Information generated from the system should also be made available to policy makers and the general public timely to facilitate rational debates and decision making on the

way forward.

Overall, we support the proposed implementation plan for HATS Stage 2. It is a flexible plan making good use of current assets and resources to address existing urgent environmental needs while allowing for future changes.

就落實[淨化海港計劃]第二期計劃的專業意見

代表香港環境影響評估學會提交

黎邦懷博士

環境政策與資源管理研究中心，香港中文大學地理與資源管理學系

二零零五年六月六日

我們完全支持[淨化海港計劃]提升香港島的污水處理程度。從環境的角度來看，在維港及港島南海域排放只經初級處理的污水是不再能被接受。就集中和分散處理方案的利弊，各方人士已經有詳盡的查究和辯論。現有在昂船洲的污水處理廠運作表現令人滿意。為求達到改善環境，建議計劃擴大其容量足以接收港島各地點的污水、預備將來人口增長及可能需要的更高級的污水處理程序，不失是資源管理的良策。

因空間有限及鄰近市區中心，分散處理的方案有嚴重的限制。處理設施對毗鄰的土地用途會造成不良的環境影響；緩解措施運作失調的風險是不容忽視的。隨着污水處理技術的發展，在窄小的地點也可能設計出精緻或藏在地底的處理廠。但是將來如果要升級，就算可能，也有嚴重的局限。赤柱污水處理廠在山穴中建造，是一個很好的例子。

[淨化海港計劃]第二期計劃將是香港市民的一項非常巨大的投資，但卻不是最終目的；最終是要改善香港的海港環境。以確保能達到這目的，獨立和不偏的環評是必需的。計劃成功的關鍵亦有賴於一個完善的環境資料數據管理系統，以監察新污水廠的運作和維港及其鄰近水域的水質和生態的情況。這系統不單只是數據的收集，也要能夠偵測到海港環境的改變，提供污水處理需要升級的預警，為決策者和市民大眾提供適時的資訊，以助為下一步策劃作理性的討論和決策。

整體而言，我們支持建議落實[淨化海港計劃]第二期的計劃。這計劃善用現有的資產和資源以解決現時急切的環境需要，同時也為將來的改變作出適當的準備。