

# PREFACE

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The Policy Objectives 2001 outlined that the EIA mechanism provided for under the EIA Ordinance (EIAO) plays a significant role in balancing the need to protect the environment and development needs. It helps project proponents to pay due regard to environmental protection requirements, through evaluating potential impacts on the environment and necessary prevention and mitigation measures, at the early stages of project planning and design. Effective operation of the EIA mechanism is very important as development pressures continue to increase.

The Policy Objectives 2001 thus targeted to enhance the advisory role of Environmental Protection Department (EPD) in the implementation of the EIAO and to draw up a training and capacity building programme for relevant government departments to enhance their understanding of the EIA mechanism.

The EIAO Support Section was established in June 2002 under the Environmental Assessment and Noise Division of EPD to provide further assistance to the continuous effort of EPD in promotion of better understanding of the EIA mechanism. Since implementation of the EIAO, with a view to improving communication and building up stakeholders' capacity, EPD has implemented a variety of actions/measures. They include the following:

- ❖ Four Users Liaison Groups have been run since May 2000 to provide forums for government departments, consultants, contractors and private developers & utility companies to enhance communication, share experience on the EIA process;
- ❖ Eight sets of guidance notes were issued in January 2002 to enhance good EIA practices;
- ❖ A "Cyber EIAO Help Bench" was launched in January 2002 with information on EIA Ordinance including guidelines, good EIA practices, approved EIA reports etc. to enhance users-friendly access of information and a "one-stop-shop" on-line help facility on EIA applications.

As the EIAO Support Section is committed to deliver a training programme for relevant government departments in 2002-03 to enable staff in works departments to build up their capacity to better manage and understand the EIA mechanism, the Director of Environmental Protection has commissioned a hire of service to provide tailor-made seminars and workshops; training materials and necessary technical and professional supports.

# Introduction

## I. ABOUT THE EIA TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

The training programme was conducted in 2002/03 with audience comprising professional engineers, architects and officers in works departments under the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau (ETWB) of the Hong Kong SAR Government. Works departments include Highways Department, Territory Development Department, Civil Engineering Department, Drainage Services Department, Water Supplies Department, Architectural Services Department, Electrical and Mechanical Services Department and Transport Department were participated in this training programme. Participants are in a majority responsible for management and/or implementation of projects that usually interact with the EIA mechanism.

The key objectives of the training programme are to:

- ❖ Enhance understanding of the EIA mechanism and roles of different parties in the process;
- ❖ Strengthen capacity and skills in EIA management for effective operation;
- ❖ Share experience over EIAs and good practices; and
- ❖ Introduce “know-hows” and practical tips to identify environmental impacts (and how to deal with these issues) at different stages of project lifecycle.

A half-day seminar was held on 13 November 2002 for approximately 180 senior engineers and professionals from various government departments aimed at providing a strategic overview of the EIA mechanism and other fundamental issues. Respectful speakers from the ETWB and the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE) were invited to talk on topics related to successful experiences of the EIA process with a view to demonstrating how EIA could assist, rather than hinder, development and infrastructure projects.

Also, a series of tailor-made workshops were held during November 2002 to February 2003 for eight works departments aimed at assisting them to further understand the EIA mechanism as well as providing professional advice and guidance for achieving better environmental outcomes through the EIA process. Workshops are designed to be interactive so that participants can explore the practical and effective execution of the EIA mechanism. Workshops are designed with specific themes for each department, e.g highways, drainage, reclamation works, etc. Key environmental issues associated with these themes have been discussed in details at the workshops. The common difficulties encountered during the EIA process and misconceptions of the process have been explored and clarified from the Authority, Project Proponent and Consultant’s point of views.

Approximately 200 professional engineers/architects from all eight works departments under the ETWB participated and were trained in the workshops.

## *II. ABOUT THIS TRAINING MANUAL*

This Training Manual has been developed based on the course materials and experiences gathered throughout the workshops. It aims at providing the project proponents, especially the engineers from the works departments, with knowledge, guidance, technical information and skill sets of conducting an effective EIA.

The Training Manual is to:

- ❖ Enhance understanding and knowledge on the EIA mechanism;
- ❖ Offer advice and assistance to deal with common concerns and questions raised by project proponents in the EIA mechanism;
- ❖ Provide information, tools and tactics for users to acquire knowledge and skill in conducting EIA and managing the consultants;
- ❖ Provide practical tips/techniques to users to overcome common encountered problems during the EIA process; and
- ❖ Clarify common misconceptions of EIA.

## *III. MANUAL CONTENT*

The information contained in this manual is arranged from the simple to the more advanced, allowing readers to understand basic principles from beginning of the EIA process and gradually work the way to more technical aspects. The manual is in seven parts:

### **Part 1: Before you start the EIA process**

Part 1 is basic information about how the EIA mechanism interacts with project life cycle. For better planning, a project proponent should get an understanding of the basics of the EIA mechanism before starting a project. Section 1.6 is a general guide on application of this Manual in conjunction with the Public Works Proponents.

### **Part 2: Learning the fundamentals**

Part 2 is the fundamentals and basic principles of the EIA mechanism. This is an extremely important section allowing a good start of the EIA process.

**Part 3: Getting an EIA process started**

Part 3 is a guide to start an EIA process including how to conduct EIAs with focus and what to look for from the environmental consultants.

**Part 4: Getting to know your EIA report**

Part 4 is on the knowledge and information about technical aspects of the EIA process.

**Part 5: Improving the EIA process**

Part 5 is dedicated to those readers who have mastered the fundamentals and want to improve and achieve a smoother and a more effective EIA process. A proactive management approach is very important.

**Part 6: Better environmental outcomes**

Part 6 will discuss the practical techniques and lessons learned from real cases. Once you have improved the knowledge and skills and have better appreciation of the EIA process, you should be able to contribute for better environmental outcomes.

**Part 7: Useful Resources and Guidelines**

Part 7 is some useful resources and materials for future reference and self-study purpose.

Throughout this Manual, you will notice a number of boxes and symbols, they are intended to emphasize certain points that are important to readers for the understanding of the EIA process.



**VIP**

Very Important Point.  
This symbol points out some basic principles that need thorough understanding before continuing.



Complete No-go.  
This is a common mistake or misconception. This is something we need to be aware of and not to do.



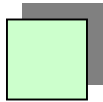
#### Hot Tip.

This is a suggestion and technique that comes from experiences learned. This will help in improving the EIA process.



#### FAQ.

This is the frequently asked question. This will provide you advice and assistance to deal with common concerns and questions raised by project proponents.



#### Definition and Fact Sheet.

This will contain terms, definitions and factual information in an easy-to-understand manner to give you extra appreciation of the information.



#### Watch Out.

This symbol points out a topic deserves careful attention. You need to know this information before continuing.



#### Getting Technical.

When the information is getting a bit technical, we will let you know so that you can study carefully.