

The aim of the EIA Ordinance is to protect the environment as a whole; the environment for the entire community; the environment for present and future generations as well as the environment for sustainable development. To achieve this purpose requires a genuine and close relationship by all stakeholders including support and participation from the public with due regard for the environment.

In numerous cases over the past three years, proponents have taken a proactive approach to look for and explore various alternatives, to adopt the most environmentally friendly options, and have exchanges up-front, early dialogue with other stakeholders. This has proved to be a recipe for success. At the end, these proponents proceed through the statutory EIA process without major difficulties and the approval of EIA reports have in fact assisted them to resolve many other related issues.

## Foreword



Mr. Elvis Au  
Assistant Director (Environmental Assessment and Noise)

For the first 3 years of the operation of the EIA Ordinance from April 1998 to December 2001, more than 464 applications were submitted for projects worth over HK\$326 billion. 157 project profiles and 53 EIA reports were exhibited for public comment. 86 EIA study briefs were issued. 47 EIA reports were approved and 199 environmental permits were issued. Applications that successfully went through the statutory EIA process cover over 93 kilometres of highways and roads, 75 kilometres of railways, 355ha of site formation and development work and 164ha of airport decommissioning work.

Similarly, there has been other cases in which proponents and contractors maintained dialogue with other stakeholders during construction, thus gaining the confidence and acceptance of other stakeholders and minimizing environmental impacts.

The EIA Ordinance has made the difference for Hong Kong's environment. Over HK\$300 billion in projects have been designed to meet environmental requirements and over 1 million people are to be protected from adverse environmental consequences and many hectares of valuable ecological areas have been saved from destruction.

The statutory EIA process is a multi-stakeholders' process, involving many stakeholders such as the project proponents, consultants, green groups, academics, contractors and general members of the public. There is surely a need for the parties concerned to continue to build consensus and partnership throughout the whole process under the EIAO from the planning stage to the construction and even operation stage. The ever increasing demand for infra structure and development in Hong Kong has led to an ever increasing need for a stronger consensus and partnership in the implementation of the EIA Ordinance.

The implementation of the EIA Ordinance has opened up the entire EIA process for the public to participate. Both the public and the Advisory Council on the Environment are now closely involved in the statutory EIA process. Opportunities for the public to be involved in the EIA process are now far greater than with the previous EIA system, and much more than with any other ordinances in Hong Kong. It is also much more transparent with all key information readily accessible via the Internet. The process is one of the most transparent processes in Hong Kong and in the world.

Finally, there is no room for complacency. We are firmly committed to continued improvement and partnership building in order to achieve sustainable development in Hong Kong.

# Foreword



Professor K C Lam  
Chairman, EIA Sub-committee, The Advisory Council on the Environment

Since the coming into force of the EIA Ordinance on 1 April 1998, the Advisory Council on Environment (ACE) has gained a statutory role in the Environmental Impact Assessment process in Hong Kong. During the first two years of the operation of the Ordinance, the ACE EIA Sub-committee reviewed some 39 EIA reports and submitted their deliberations, findings and recommendations to the Council and the administration.

The ACE-EIA Sub-committee is pleased to have a role in the EIA process. In discharging our duties, we have strived to be efficient, independent and to add value to the projects concerned. We shall continue to offer views on how environmental problems can be preempted, and alignments, designs and constructing methods modified to achieve the best environmental results.

To further enhance the effectiveness of the EIA system in Hong Kong, the Sub-committee has encouraged early focus on potential environmental problems, better transparency, and greater public participation in the EIA process. The Sub-committee also promotes the strengthening of post-decision environmental monitoring and auditing, believing that proponents should be recognized for their actions, both good and bad.

“To endorse, or not to endorse; that is the question!” At times, deliberations of the ACE EIA Sub-committee were almost like a marathon. No single view or report was taken lightly for we are answerable not only to the community of today, but also to the generation of tomorrow. As we step into the new millennium, we look forward to working with all parties concerned to further enhance the EIA process so that we can make Hong Kong a green and clean model city of the world.

(Lam Kin Che)  
Chairman, ACE-EIA Sub-committee