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ACE Paper 4/2012
For advice on 7 February 2012

Report on the 119th Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee Meeting

PURPOSE

At the meeting on 9 January 2012, the Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee (EIASC) considered the following four EIA reports on "Shatin to Central Link" project (hereafter known as the SCL project) submitted by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRC) under section 6(2) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO) –

(i) SCL – Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section (ACE-EIA Paper 1/2012 refers);
(ii) SCL – Mong Kok East to Hung Hom Section (ACE-EIA Paper 2/2012 refers);
(iii) SCL – Hung Hom to Admiralty Section (ACE-EIA Paper 3/2012 refers); and
(iv) SCL – Stabling Sidings at Hung Hom Freight Yard (ACE-EIA Paper 4/2012 refers).

ADVICE SOUGHT

2. Members are requested to consider the views of the EIASC and to advise on the four EIA reports.

BACKGROUND

3. There are a total of five EIA reports in respect of the SCL project, namely –

(a) SCL Protection works at Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter;
(b) SCL – Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section;
(c) SCL – Mong Kok East to Hung Hom Section;
(d) SCL – Hung Hom to Admiralty Section; and
(e) SCL – Stabling Sidings at Hung Hom Freight Yard.

4. The EIA report for the "SCL Protection works at Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter" was submitted on 30 September 2010; discussed at the EIASC meeting on 24 January 2011; endorsed by the ACE without condition via letter dated 23 February 2011; and approved by the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) without condition under the EIAO on 25 February 2011. The Environment Permit was granted on 4 April 2011 and construction commenced on 21 November 2011.

5. The other four EIA reports were submitted together by MTRC for approval under the EIAO on 12 October 2011. The public inspection period of the EIA reports was from 24 November to 23 December 2011. Public comments received by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) before the EIASC meeting had been circulated to Members for reference. MTRC's response to the comments raised by a Member on the reports had also been circulated for information of Members before the Subcommittee meeting.

THE FOUR EIA REPORTS UNDER STUDY

A. Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section (SCL(TAW-HUH))

Need for the project

6. The EIA report points out that SCL is a strategic rail corridor for forming an expanded railway network in Hong Kong that will bring various benefits to the community. SCL(TAW-HUH) is also an extension of the Ma On Shan Line to connect to the West Rail Line.

Description of the project

7. The project (see **Annex A**) is to construct and operate an approximately 11km long railway which connects the Tai Wai Station of the Ma On Shan Line and the Hung Hom Station of the West Rail Line as to allow commuters to travel in a direct line from Ma On Shan to Tuen Mun. Seven stations are to be provided at Hin Keng, Diamond Hill, Kai Tak, To Kwa Wan, Ma Tau Wai, Ho Man Tin and Hung Hom. Diamond Hill, Ho Man Tin and Hung Hom will become the integrated interchange stations with the existing Kwun Tong Line, the future Kwun Tong Line Extension and the Cross Harbour Section of the SCL respectively. This section of the SCL alignment will be largely underground while the associated ventilation building, ventilation shafts, plant rooms and station entrances are above-ground structures.

8. The project covers the following designated project (DP) elements under Part I, Schedule 2 of the EIAO –

(i) Item A.2 – a railway and its associated stations;
(ii) Item A.4 – a railway siding or depot (as an alternative option should the preferred proposed sidings at the former Hung Hom Freight Yard described in a separate EIA report is not accepted)
(iii) Item A.7 – a railway tunnel more than 800m in length between portals;
(iv) Item A.8 – a railway bridge more than 100m in length between abutments; and
(v) Item K.10 – an explosive depot in a stand-alone, purpose built building.

Consideration of alternative options

9. The EIA report presents various options and alternatives of project design and construction methods that have been reviewed and considered in the course of the development and selection of the preferred scheme of the SCL, taking into account the engineering feasibility, site constraints, programme, environmental aspects, etc.. The various alternatives/options considered for the project design include railway alignment, location of stabling siding, stations/platforms, ventilation buildings/ventilation shafts, entrances/exits and train system.

B. Mong Kok East to Hung Hom Section (SCL(MKK-HUH))

Need for the project

10. The EIA report points out that SCL is a strategic rail corridor for forming an expanded railway network in Hong Kong that will bring various benefits to the community. SCL(MKK-HUH) is to re-align the existing East Rail Line from the tunnel portal near Oi Man Estate to the Hung Hom Station, connecting the extension from the Hung Hom Station to the Admiralty Station across Victoria Harbour.

Description of the project

11. The project (see **Annex B**) is to re-align approximately 1.2km of the East Rail Line from the tunnel portal near Oi Man Estate (Portal 1A) to the new North Ventilation Building in Hung Hom. The existing Cheong Wan Road viaduct will be demolished, the existing rail tracks re-aligned and the crossings at Homantin Siding re-located. This section of the SCL alignment will be running both underground and at grade. Other associated above-ground structures include the noise mitigation measures at Portal 1A, re-aligned Cheong Wan Road, ventilation shafts and cooling tower.

12. The project covers the following DP elements under Part I, Schedule 2 of the EIAO –

(i) Item A.2 – a railway and its associated stations;
(ii) Item A.7 – a railway tunnel more than 800m in length between portals; and
(iii) Item A.1 – a road which is an expressway, trunk road, primary distributor road or district distributor road including new roads, and major extensions or improvements to existing road.

Consideration of alternative options

13. The EIA report presents considerations given on options/alternatives with respect to railway alignment, location of stations/platforms, location of ventilation shafts, train system, locomotive sidings and construction methods. The preferred options have taken into account environmental factors as well as other considerations such as engineering feasibility, site constraints, programme and

disruption to the community.

C. Hung Hom to Admiralty Section (SCL(HUH-ADM))

Need for the project

14. The EIA report points out that SCL is a strategic rail corridor for forming an expanded railway network in Hong Kong that will bring various benefits to the community. SCL(HUH-ADM) provides Hong Kong with the fourth Rail Harbour Crossing to relieve the existing congestion on the MTR Tsuen Wan Line through re-distributing railway passengers, and to connect the new development areas in Kowloon with Hong Kong Island.

Description of the project

15. The project (see **Annex C**) is an approximately 6km extension of the East Rail Line starting from the existing Hung Hom Station across Victoria Harbour to the new Exhibition Station in Wanchai near the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre and terminating at the existing Admiralty Station. There will be an integrated Admiralty Station for the existing MTR Island Line and Tsuen Wan Line, the future SCL and the South Island Line (East). This section of the SCL alignment will be entirely underground while the associated ventilation building, ventilation shafts, plant rooms and station entrances are above-ground structures.

16. The project covers the following DP elements under Part I, Schedule 2 of the EIAO –

(i) Item A.2 – a railway and its associated Exhibition and Admiralty Stations;
(ii) Item A.7 – a railway tunnel more than 800m in length between portals;
(iii) Item C.2(b) – temporary reclamation works in Victoria Harbour of more than 1 ha. in size and a boundary of which is less than 100m from a seawater intake point;
(iv) Item C.3(a) – construction of an immersed tube railway tunnel resulting in 5% decrease in cross sectional area calculated on the basis of 0.0mPD in a sea channel; and
(v) Item C.12 – a dredging operation in Victoria Harbour exceeding 500 000m^3 or a dredging operation which is less than 100m from a seawater intake point.

Consideration of alternative options

17. The EIA report presents various options and alternatives of project design and construction methods that have been reviewed and considered in the course of the development and selection of the preferred scheme of the SCL, taking into account the engineering feasibility, site constraints, programme, environmental aspects, etc.. The various alternatives/options considered for project design include railway alignment, location of stations/platforms, location of ventilation buildings/ventilation shafts, location of entrances/exits and train system.

D. Stabling sidings at Hung Hom Freight Yard (SCL(HHS))

18. The EIA report points out that SCL is a strategic rail corridor for forming an expanded railway network in Hong Kong that will bring various benefits to the community. A stabling siding is an essential element for the operation of the SCL for deployment of trains to meet the demand during morning peak hours, and for train stabling during non-operational hours. The proposed siding at the former Hung Hom Freight Yard will be underneath the existing podium structure of the Hung Hom Station, with the launching/retrieval and emergency tracks and the shunt neck extending outside the podium. MTRC has confirmed that if this site is accepted, the proposed alternative siding at Diamond Hill CDA site described in the SCL(TAW-HUH) EIA report will not be pursued. The design of SCL(TAW-HUH) and SCL(MKK-HUH) at the Hung Hom Station, Kai Tak Station and Diamond Hill Station will also require corresponding changes. (see **Annex D1-D3**)

19. The project covers the following DP elements under Part I, Schedule 2 of the EIAO –

(i) Item A.2 – a railway and its associated stations; and
(ii) Item A.4 – a railway siding.

Consideration of alternative options

20. The EIA report presents the various options and alternatives of stabling sidings locations considered and selection of the preferred scheme for the SCL, taking into account the operational requirements and environmental implications. Investigation had been conducted for using existing train depots, including Tai Wai Depot and Pat Heung Depot, Ho Tung Lau Depot and Kowloon Bay Depot, for the

proposed SCL(TAW-HUH). Feasibility of a new stabling siding at various locations including Shatin Pass Quarry, Hin Keng, Tai Shui Hang, Wu Kai Sha CDA sites, Kai Tak, Diamond Hill CDA site and the former Hung Hom Freight Yard has also been investigated.

VIEWS OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

21. DEP, in conjunction with the relevant authorities, considers that the four EIA reports have met the requirements of the EIA Study Brief and the Technical Memorandum on EIA Process (TM). Comments from the public and the ACE will be taken into account by DEP in deciding whether or not to approve the EIA reports under the EIAO.

VIEWS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

22. The four EIA reports are inter-related and the project proponent is the same party, i.e. MTRC. To facilitate consideration of the projects, Subcommittee Members agreed to have one combined Presentation Session and one combined Question-and-Answer Session to discuss the EIA reports with MTRC.

23. A summary of issues discussed at the meeting is at **Annex E**.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

24. Having regard to the findings and recommendations of the four EIA reports on the SCL project and the information provided by MTRC, the Subcommittee agreed to recommend to the full Council that the EIA reports could be endorsed with the following proposed conditions –

(a) The project proponent (PP) should submit to the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) for approval, before commencement of the construction of the project, an updated plan on the construction noise mitigation measures and other initiatives proposed by the PP such as Indirect Technical Remedies (ITR), if applicable, for the noise sensitive receiver (NSR) locations with EIA predicted exceedance in air-borne construction noise impact, having

regard to the powered mechanical equipment, construction schedule and the latest planned construction methods;

(b) PP should carry out continuous noise monitoring during construction at locations to be agreed with DEP, make available the monitoring results to the public through the PP's website for the entire construction period, and take active remedial measures in the event that the measured noise levels exceed the worst-case scenario predicted in the EIA reports or the levels as revised by the construction noise mitigation measures plan;

(c) PP should set up community liaison groups comprising representatives of concerned and affected parties, including local committees, residents and schools in the affected areas along the railway alignment, to facilitate communications, enquiries and complaint handlings on environmental issues related to the project. A designated complaint hotline should also be set up for the project to address such concerns and complaints in an efficient manner. The PP should follow up with the community liaison groups on the implementation of mitigation measures and other initiatives proposed by the PP such as ITR in the form of upgraded glazing and air-conditioning for eligible NSRs affected by air-borne construction noise impacts along the Tai Wai – Hung Hom section, arrangement of continuous construction noise monitoring as well as tree management and transplantation plan, etc.;

(d) PP should submit a quality tree planting and landscape plan as well as a post-planting care plan, in consultation with the relevant authorities, including, but not limited to, the Lands Department and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, to DEP for approval. The plan should set out details of the measures for protecting trees affected by the project as well as trees to be transplanted. PP should appoint a certified arborist for the project to advise on, monitor and ensure proper implementation of the measures.

(e) PP should submit an updated construction and demolition (C&D) material management plan to DEP for approval before commencement of the construction works. The plan should include,

but not limited to, measures for maximizing the re-use of C&D materials in other infrastructure projects and prohibiting illegal dumping of C&D materials generated by the project;

(f) PP should submit an updated sediment management plan to DEP for approval before commencement of the construction works. The plan should include, but not limited to, the proper treatment and handling of sediments so generated by the project before disposal; and

(g) PP should ensure that all diesel fueled construction plant, including marine vessels if possible, used by the contractors within the work sites are powered by ultra low sulphur diesel fuel.

25. The Subcommittee also recommended that the project proponent should require contractors to, as far as practicable, engage barges powered by the cleanest fuel, e.g. ultra low sulphur diesel, for transporting the C&D materials and sediments generated by the project to the user sites and/or disposal sites.

26. The Subcommittee Members also agreed that the project proponent the MTRC would not be required to attend the full Council meeting scheduled for 7 February 2012.

EIA Subcommittee Secretariat
January 2012