

**Progress Update on Harbour Area Treatment Scheme Stage 2A**

**Progress To-date**

In October 2005, the Chief Executive announced in his Policy Agenda the decision to proceed with HATS Stage 2 in two phases by adopting a centralized sewage treatment at the Stonecutters Island Sewage Treatment Works (SCISTW), with Stage 2A targeted for completion in 2014. Stage 2A will collect the remaining untreated sewage from Hong Kong Island, which accounts for about 25% of the total sewage generated on both sides of the harbour, and transfer it to an expanded SCISTW for highly effective chemical treatment prior to discharge. While the Government will bear the construction costs, the public must meet the operating cost of sewage treatment in line with the polluter-pays principle. Stage 2B will further upgrade the chemical treatment by the addition of biological (secondary) treatment. A two-phase approach is preferred as this allows the step-by-step upgrading of the existing sewage treatment facilities so as to properly manage the uncertainties regarding future population growth and sewage flow build-up and the time required to finalize land and planning issues related to Stage 2B. The Government has made a public commitment that the timing for the implementation of Stage 2B, i.e. the addition of biological treatment, will be reviewed in 2010/11 and this is an integral part of the HATS Stage 2 implementation programme.

2. Following a full discussion at the meeting of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Environmental Affairs (EA Panel) held on 5 July 2005, the Panel members agreed that the Government could proceed to submit a funding proposal to the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) for moving forward with HATS Stage 2A. Subsequently, Finance Committee at its meeting on 16 December 2005 approved the upgrading of a HATS item (PWP Item 4238DS) to Category A in the Public Works Programme at an estimated cost of \$166.5 million in money-of-the-day-prices. The scope of the project comprises -

- (a) The environmental impact assessment (EIA) study for HATS Stage 2A;

(b) Site investigations for HATS Stage 2A; and

(c) Planning and design of the tunnel conveyance system.

3. The EIA study for HATS Stage 2A commenced in February 2006 and is targeted for completion in the latter half of 2007. The objective of the study is to identify potential environmental and ecological impacts during the construction and operation of the whole HATS Stage 2A project including the modifications and improvements required to the contributing preliminary treatment works (PTWs) in the HATS catchment on Hong Kong Island; the tunnel conveyance system which transfers the sewage from these PTWs to SCISTW; the enhancement of the capacity of SCISTW and so on. The study will also select preferred options and propose appropriate mitigation measures. It is currently progressing to schedule.

4. The main site investigations under PWP Item 4238DS commenced in November 2006 and are well underway, with completion of investigations for the sewage conveyance system programmed for the latter half of 2008.

5. The planning and design of the sewage conveyance system commenced in January 2006 and is targeted to complete in late 2008. The total length of the system, with a depth of up to 100 m or more, will be over 20 km and will collect the sewage discharged from the upgraded PTWs at North Point, Wan Chai, Central, Sandy Bay, Cyberport, Aberdeen, Wah Fu and Ap Lei Chau. Current progress is satisfactory.

6. In addition, the EIA study for the provision of disinfection facilities at SCISTW commenced in July 2005 and is expected to complete in the second quarter of 2007. The final report will then be made available for public inspection and comment under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance.

7. At the request of the EA Panel, the technical aspect of HATS Stage 2 was discussed at the Panel meeting held on 22 January 2007. The Government provided the Panel with the latest update on the project as well as responses to issues raised by the Panel Members and deputations.

## **Future Programme**

8. Upon LegCo's approval of the proposed sewage charge adjustment with a view to implementing the polluter-pays principle, the Government aims to complete the advance disinfection facilities by the last quarter of 2009 and the entire Stage 2A by the last quarter of 2014. To achieve these targets, funding approval by LegCo Finance Committee will be sought for the following -

- (a) The planning and design of the upgrading works of SCISTW and associated facilities in June 2007 at an estimated cost of about \$118M at September 2006 prices;
- (b) The construction of the advance disinfection facilities at an estimated cost of about \$61M at September 2006 prices in November 2007, subject to the approval of the EIA for the ADF; and
- (c) The construction of the sewage conveyance system and upgrading of SCISTW and associated facilities at an estimated cost of about \$7,580M at September 2006 prices in the first half of 2009.

9. The Government will continue to conduct the necessary monitoring of the planning parameters for gathering of the information needed for reviewing the timing for the implementation of Stage 2B in 2010/11. The Government will report to the Council regularly on its findings.