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ACE Paper 13/2013

For advice by circulation

Report on the 125th Meeting of the Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee – EIA Report on “West Kowloon Cultural District”

PURPOSE

The Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee (EIASC) considered the EIA report on “West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD)” submitted by the project proponent (i.e. the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA)) under section 6(2) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO) at the meeting on 13 September 2013.

2. Members are requested to consider the recommendation of EIASC in para. 9 below and advise on the way forward for handling the EIA report.

BACKGROUND OF AND NEED FOR THE WKCD PROJECT

3. WKCDA proposes to develop an integrated arts, cultural and entertainment district with mixed commercial and residential developments at the southern tip of the West Kowloon reclamation area. WKCD will provide core arts and cultural facilities (CACF) including performing arts venues, museum and exhibition centre; other arts and cultural facilities including arts and craft studios; as well as infrastructure and supporting facilities. The WKCD project is required to meet the long-term infrastructural and development needs of arts and culture in Hong Kong. The establishment of the CACF and related facilities will form the heart of the arts and cultural community in Hong Kong and will provide and strengthen the platform for showcasing different forms of arts and culture as well

as promote the creation, communication and exchange of arts and cultural ideas.

4. The WKCD project will be developed in phases with Phase 1 to be developed from 2013 to 2020 and Phase 2 to be developed beyond 2020. The project comprises the development of WKCD on a reclaimed land of about 40 ha at the south of Austin Road West and the Western Harbour Crossing toll plaza, of which about 23 ha will be used as public open space. It also includes the construction and operation of a 200 m flyover across the Western Harbour Crossing toll plaza, and a 1.4 km underpass road at the basement level serving the planned WKCD.

5. The project details are in ACE-EIA paper 7/2013 which is at **Annex A**.

VIEWS OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

6. The Director of Environmental Protection (DEP), in conjunction with the relevant authorities, considers that the EIA report has met the respective requirements of the EIA Study Brief and the Technical Memorandum on EIA Process (TM). Comments from the public and ACE will be taken into account by DEP in deciding whether or not to approve the EIA report under the EIAO.

VIEWS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

7. Public inspection period of the EIA report was from 23 July to 21 August 2013. Public comments on the project received by the Environmental Protection Department during the inspection period were issued to EIASC Members on 9 September 2013 for reference before the meeting.

8. A summary of issues discussed by the EIASC at the meeting on the WKCD project is at **Annex B**.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

9. Having regard to the findings and recommendations of the EIA report and the information provided by WKCD, EIASC agreed to recommend to the Council that the report could be endorsed with the following conditions and recommendations –

Condition of endorsement

WKCD should submit tree and turf grass planting and landscape plans as well as a post-planting care plan, in consultation with the relevant authorities, including but not limited to the Planning Department, to the Director of Environmental Protection for approval before commencement of construction of the project. The tree planting plan should set out details of the composition of the native tree species to be planted in the project site. The turf grass planting plan should also set out details of the percentage of grass coverage with justifications and the grass species to be planted. Carpet Grass of the *Axonopus* genus including *Axonopus compressus* should be avoided. WKCD should engage a certified arborist to advise on, monitor and ensure proper implementation of the tree and turf grass planting and landscape plans.

Recommendations

- (a) WKCD should pursue the opportunity to enhance the connectivity amongst WKCD, Kowloon Park and the podium of the Central Kowloon Route so as to enhance the ecological habitats for urban flora and fauna species in the area;
- (b) WKCD should actively work to adopt the new Air Quality Objectives (AQOs) standards when proceeding with the WKCD project as far as practicable and to undertake more innovative and proactive initiatives to reduce emissions during the operational phase of the project, especially those generated from the underpass road; and
- (c) WKCD 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 measures for minimizing C&D materials being generated and maximizing the re-use of C&D materials in-situ or for other projects.

WAY FORWARD

10. EIASC agreed that there was no need to invite WKCD to attend the full Council meeting unless there were unanticipated developments of the project

which would call for their presentation/briefing at the meeting. ACE is invited to consider EIASC's recommendations in para. 9 above by circulation of paper. As the statutory deadline for the Council to give comments on this EIA report to the DEP is 28 October 2013, Members are requested to give their views on the report on or before 22 October 2013.

EIA Subcommittee Secretariat
October 2013