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## **ACE Paper 1/2018**

*For discussion on 5 February 2018*

# **Progress of Implementation of Hong Kong Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2021**

## **PURPOSE**

This paper updates Members on the latest progress of implementation of the Hong Kong Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) 2016-2021.

## **PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTATION**

2. Since the launch of the BSAP on 21 December 2016, all relevant Government bureaux and departments (B/Ds) and other external stakeholders have been taking forward the implementation of initiatives under their respective purviews. Highlights of major achievements made so far under the four key action areas are set out in the ensuing paragraphs. Detailed descriptions of the actions, expected deliverables and progress to date are provided at **Annex**.

## **MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS**

### *Area 1 – Enhancing conservation measures*

3. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has commenced a series of studies and enhancement projects with a view to maintaining and enhancing the management of existing protected areas, including country parks, marine parks, Hong Kong Wetland Park, Mai Po Nature Reserve, and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

4. In addition to the designation of The Brothers Marine Park in December 2016, the Government has been taking forward the designation of the Southwest Lantau Marine Park, Soko Islands Marine Park and Robin's Nest Country Park, as well as the incorporation of the country park enclaves at Fan Kei Tok, Sai Lau Kong and the site near Nam Shan into country parks, to extend protection and management to these areas.

5. To enhance the conservation and sustainable development of other countryside areas with high conservation value outside the existing protected areas, the Government has been supporting various revitalisation projects and minor improvement works at Lai Chi Wo, in collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the local community. As announced by the Chief Executive in the Policy Address of October 2017, a Countryside Conservation Office will be set up to coordinate conservation projects that promote sustainable development of remote countryside.

6. To step up control against wildlife crime for the protection of threatened species, the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants (Amendment) Bill 2017 was tabled in the Legislative Council in June 2017, to phase out the local trade in elephant ivory and impose heavier penalties for smuggling and illegal trading of endangered species by 2021. A Bills Committee has been formed by the Legislative Council to scrutinise the Bill. The Bills Committee completed the scrutiny of the Bill in December 2017 and the second reading debate is scheduled to resume on 31 January 2018.

#### *Area 2 – Mainstreaming biodiversity*

7. The Planning Department (PlanD) is analysing the public comments received during the public engagement exercise of the Hong Kong 2030+ study, which ended in April 2017, and is working on the technical assessments. Biodiversity considerations will be strengthened where appropriate in the finalised territorial development strategy to support the sustainable long-term growth of Hong Kong.

8. Through the implementation of the BSAP, biodiversity conservation is being incorporated by B/Ds into relevant policies, plans and projects. For example, the Drainage Services Department (DSD) and the Water Supplies Department (WSD) have been undertaking various enhancement measures in works projects in water bodies for biodiversity conservation, and adopting ecologically friendly designs in the development of blue-green infrastructure. Meanwhile, the Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section of the Development Bureau is taking forward initiatives to

enrich and promote appreciation for biodiversity in the urban environment, and to improve the liveability of urban space. Knowledge sharing and capacity building events on relevant concepts, designs and technologies have been organised to foster collaborations among B/Ds, as well as to extend the mainstreaming efforts to relevant professional bodies and sectors.

#### *Area 3 – Improving our knowledge*

9. AFCD has commissioned various studies on priority topics to fill important gaps in our knowledge of the local biodiversity. In addition, AFCD has formulated the approach for coordinating funding to support biodiversity research, through mobilising relevant existing funding sources, such as the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF), the Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund and the Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund. This approach, as well as the proposed priority research topics to be supported, was endorsed by the Nature Conservation Subcommittee under the ACE (ACE-NCSC) in September 2017. The priority research topics were shared with the research community in November 2017 to encourage submissions.

#### *Area 4 – Promoting community involvement*

10. AFCD has continued to raise awareness and promote community involvement in biodiversity conservation, through enhancing existing education programmes and facilities, and partnering with B/Ds, NGOs, tertiary institutes and other stakeholders in organising the annual Hong Kong Biodiversity Festival. In addition, funding support has been provided to NGOs for organising activities related to biodiversity education and sustainable consumption of biological resources, through ECF's Environmental Education and Community Action schemes, and AFCD's Subventions for Biodiversity Education.

11. To inform future planning of education programmes and to track the effectiveness of the BSAP in raising awareness on biodiversity, AFCD has commissioned a study to document the baseline level of the knowledge and attitude of the general public and relevant stakeholder groups towards biodiversity in Hong Kong. Telephone and online surveys, as well as focus group discussions, have commenced.

12. The Council for Sustainable Development (SDC) completed a public engagement exercise on the promotion of sustainable consumption of biological resources, and submitted 20 recommendations to the Government in June 2017. The Government has responded to the SDC's recommendation and formulated a strategy to

promote sustainable consumption of biological resources through “Community Engagement” and “Facilitating Access to Knowledge”.

### **INTER-DEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP ON BSAP**

13. An Inter-departmental Working Group on BSAP (IWGB) comprising relevant Government B/Ds (including Environment Bureau, Development Bureau, Education Bureau, Food and Health Bureau, AFCD, Civil Engineering and Development Department, DSD, Environmental Protection Department, Leisure and Cultural Services Department, PlanD and WSD), and chaired by the Secretary for the Environment, has been established to oversee the overall implementation of the BSAP, monitor progress, coordinate implementation efforts and facilitate biodiversity mainstreaming among Government B/Ds. The IWGB met in April and December 2017, and will continue to meet regularly to facilitate timely monitoring of the implementation programme. The views and feedback received from the ACE and ACE-NCSC related to BSAP implementation have also been conveyed to the IWGB.

### **ADVICE SOUGHT**

14. Members are invited to note and comment on the progress of implementation of the BSAP.

**Environment Bureau**

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department**

**January 2018**