

**Report on the 80<sup>th</sup>  
Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee Meeting**

**Introduction**

At its meeting held on 23 July 2003, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Subcommittee received briefings on the following projects-

- (a) Public Transport Interchange (PTI) at Lok Ma Chau Terminus of the Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line; and
- (b) Tung Chung to Ngong Ping Cable Car – Ngong Ping Stream Diversion.

**Advice Sought**

- 2. Members are requested to note the points raised by Members at the meeting.

**Views of the EIA Subcommittee**

**Public Transport Interchange at Lok Ma Chau Terminus of the Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line**

*(ACE-EIA Paper 6/2003)*

- 3. In considering Government's funding request for the Essential Public Infrastructure Works, the LegCo Panel on Transport Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways strongly requested that there should be suitable provision of transport facilities at the Lok Ma Chau Terminus for the operation of other road-based public transport modes in order to give commuters a choice and provide business opportunities for the transport trades concerned. After careful consideration of the land, traffic, environmental and security implications, it is decided that a PTI would be provided adjacent to the Lok Ma Chau Terminal Building, using an area reserved for

the future expansion of the Terminus. To cope with the additional traffic generated by the PTI, the access road to the Lok Ma Chau Terminus has to be upgraded from 6.75 m wide to 7.3 m wide. The major part of the proposed PTI will fall within the footprint of the Lok Ma Chau Terminus. Only 0.35 hectare of the adjoining 5 ha reedbed area which provides wastewater-polishing function will be required.

#### Members' views

4. Members' discussion at the meeting focused on the use of road-based transport mode which was a less environmentally friendly transport mode to take commuters to Lok Ma Chau Terminus; the impact of fragmentation and the effectiveness and adequacy of the proposed ecological mitigation measures such as underpass and fishpond enhancement area; the loss of 0.35 ha of reedbed; whether the future expansion of the Lok Ma Chau Terminus would be affected if the space concerned was to be used for the PTI; the air quality of the PTI; the impact of the traffic volume on air quality; whether the access road to the PTI would be connected to the Shenzhen side; the footprint of the PTI; and whether the wastewater treatment facility of the Lok Ma Chau Terminal Building would be able to meet the demand of the increasing number of commuters.

#### *Less environmentally friendly transport mode*

5. A Member expressed concern about the proposed PTI, as the use of road-based transport to take commuters to the Lok Ma Chau Terminus was not environmentally friendly. The concept of the Spur Line in using viaduct at Lok Ma Chau area was to elevate human activities from ground level so as to minimize the impact of the railway on ecologically sensitive areas. The PTI at ground level would defeat the purpose of that design concept. In response, the project proponent explained that the Spur Line would remain the key carrier of commuters to Lok Ma Chau Terminus, and road-based transport would play a supplementary role only. In giving commuters a choice, the project proponent would try its best to maintain a balance between the concerns of the commuters, the railway, and road-based transport modes.

#### *Fragmentation*

6. On the impact of fragmentation created by the widening of the access road, and the adequacy of ecological mitigation, the project proponent advised that fragmentation would be unavoidable if the access road was to be upgraded. The proposed low guide barriers and underpass beneath the access road, however, would be

sufficient having regard to the size of the area and the length of the access road.

### *Fishponds*

7. On Members' concern about the ecological value of the proposed fishpond enhancement area, the project proponent team clarified that the 3 ha of fishpond were commercial fishponds, and they would be integrated into the Lok Ma Chau wetland compensation area. Thus, the ecological value of the 3 ha fishpond enhancement area should be assessed in conjunction with the Lok Ma Chau wetland compensation area rather than individually on its own. The project proponent noted Members' comments that the management of the fishpond enhancement area should be integrated with that of the Lok Ma Chau wetland compensation area.

### *The loss of 0.35 ha of reedbed*

8. On Members' concern about the loss of 0.35 ha of reedbed, the project proponent explained that according to previous calculations, 2.8 ha of reedbed would be required to provide polishing capability for the treated effluent. As there were altogether 5 ha of reedbed in the area, the area was larger than required. The project team agreed to provide more information on wastewater treatment facility and the eventual loading of the reedbed once the information was available.

### *Future expansion of Lok Ma Chau Terminus*

9. On Members' concern about the PTI using the space reserved for the future expansion of the Lok Ma Chau Terminus, the project proponent team clarified that the PTI would be built on ground level whereas the future expansion of Lok Ma Chau Terminus would occupy the space above it.

### *Air quality of the PTI*

10. On Members' concern about the air quality impact of phase 2 of the Lok Ma Chau Terminus which would partly deck over the PTI, the project proponent explained that although the PTI would by then be partly covered, it would not become an enclosed compartment, as it would be opened on two sides with a headroom of about 10 metres.

### *Traffic volume and air quality*

11. On the impact of the increased traffic volume on the air quality, the project proponent team explained that three types of vehicles would likely use the PTI, namely franchised bus, public light bus and taxi. The traffic volume would be controlled, as the road would still be a restricted road, and due to the small size of the PTI, the traffic volume would not be large. While assumptions on traffic volume were adopted in assessing the environmental impacts of the project, it was considered that the traffic volume would not reach the estimated level. In addition, it was possible that vehicles using the PTI would be required to use liquefied petroleum gas which would have less impact on the air quality. Furthermore, although the Government had yet to decide on the types of vehicles that would use the PTI, KCRC had assessed the air quality impacts based on a worst-case scenario. The finding was that the Air Quality Objectives could still be complied with.

### *Cross boundary vehicles and the footprint of the PTI*

12. On Members' enquiry as to whether the vehicles using the PTI would be able to cross the boundary, the project proponent confirmed that the road leading to the PTI would not be connected to the Shenzhen side. Hence, vehicles using the PTI could not cross the boundary. The project proponent had reservation on the proposal of integrating the PTI into the Lok Ma Chau Terminus, as it would delay the opening of the Spur Line, and the construction of an underground PTI had its own environmental impacts. For instance, an underground PTI would need a very sophisticated ventilation system.

### *Wastewater treatment*

13. On the wastewater treatment facility of the Lok Ma Chau Terminus, the project proponent explained that the additional effluent arising from the increased number of passengers, and the vehicles runoff would be taken into account if the project was to go ahead. Petrol interceptors would be installed to prevent vehicle runoff from discharging into the reedbed and nearby waters directly. The project proponent further pointed out that the number of commuters would be limited by the maximum capacity of the Lok Ma Chau Terminus and the wastewater treatment facility would be designed up to that level.

## *Conclusion*

14. Since unlike EIA reports, the ACE has no statutory role over the processing of applications for variations of the Environmental Permits, the EIA Subcommittee did not make any conclusion or recommendations on the proposal at the meeting. The project proponent was, however, requested to consider Members' views when taking forward the proposed project.

### **Tung Chung to Ngong Ping Cable Car – Ngong Ping Stream Diversion**

15. At the EIA Subcommittee meeting held on 2 July 2003, it was noted that in connection with the Tung Chung to Ngong Ping Cable Car project, MTRC would submit a direct application for Environmental Permit for the diversion of a stream at Ngong Ping. In view of Members' concerns, the EIA Subcommittee invited the project proponent to the meeting to give an informal briefing on the proposal.

16. The proposal involves the diversion of a 390-metre section of a stream of moderate ecological value with no noted species of conservation interest to avoid the theme village and the terminal building of the Cable Car System at Ngong Ping.

17. MTRC had formally submitted a project profile on the proposal to apply directly for an Environmental Permit a day before the meeting and provided Members with a copy of the project profile after the meeting had ended.

### **Members' views**

18. Members' discussion at the meeting focused on the need for stream diversion; the design of the diverted stream; the plantation and the landscaping of the proposed stream; the construction impacts of the project; the ecological impacts of the project; the need for the theme village; the concerns of green groups and whether their views had been taken into account; and the impacts of the adjacent PTI on the layout and the design of the theme village.

### *The need to divert the stream*

19. On the need to divert the stream, and whether efforts had been made to minimize the extent of the stream diversion, the project proponent explained that the original concept was to retain the stream. However, it was found out during design development that if the stream was to be retained, it had to be widened and its

ecological value would be lost. Furthermore, the widened stream would take up a large area of the site leaving limited space for the terminal building of the Cable Car System and the theme village.

#### *Design of the diverted stream*

20. On the design of the diverted stream, the project proponent said that the stream would be constructed with gabion walls and base so that soil could be put thereon for plantation purpose, and the stream would look natural.

21. On the observation that the diverted stream was wider than the original stream, the project proponent explained that the stream was subject to frequent flooding and the villagers were very much concerned. According to the requirements of the Drainage Services Department (DSD), the stream should be widened to withstand the 1-in-50 year rainfall event. DSD had accepted the routing of the diversion as well as the proposal of using gabion walls for the stream. The project proponent also pointed out that the cost of diverting the stream would be higher than keeping it in its original location.

#### *Plantation and landscaping*

22. On the plantation of the diverted stream, the project proponent team explained that vegetation would be planted at the margin of the watercourse rather than in the watercourse. DSD had agreed in principle that small plantations could be planted at the margin of the watercourse and boulders could be placed in the watercourse if simulation results indicated that the stream could still handle a 1-in-50 year rainfall event.

#### *Construction impact*

23. On the construction impact of the proposal, the project proponent team pointed out that since they would work upward from downstream, the old stream would not be affected before the construction of the new stream was completed. The stream diversion would take place during dry season and other major construction works would not commence until stream diversion was completed.

#### *Ecological impacts*

24. On Members' concerns about rare species such as Romer's tree frogs, the

project proponent team said that Romer's tree frogs had not been spotted in the affected area but some of them might be found further down stream, which was rather far away from the affected area. According to surveys and investigations that had been conducted, only common brown tree frogs were found in the area, and there was no spotting of other rare plants or trees. The project proponent had made reference to ecological surveys conducted in connection with the Ngong Ping Sewage Treatment Works EIA, and the baseline survey conducted for the Ngong Ping to Tung Chung Cable Car project. There were in fact many seasons of baseline information on the area.

#### *Need for the theme village*

25. On Members' query on the need for the theme village, the project proponent explained that the number of visitors going to Ngong Ping area had been decreasing and it was necessary to add some tourist attractions to make the Cable Car System financially viable. They would, nevertheless, preserve the tranquility of the area, and the buildings would harmonize with the environment. They had obtained advice and assistance from the Po Lin Monastery in designing the Monastic Centre of the theme village.

#### *Concerns of green groups*

26. On Members' enquiry as to whether the project proponent was aware of the concerns of green groups and whether those concerns had been addressed, the project proponent informed the meeting that they fully understood the concerns of the green, and their views had been taken on board as far as possible. The concerns of green groups included-

- (a) the reasons for changes;
- (b) whether it was possible to retain the stream as originally planned;
- (c) whether sufficient ecological surveys had been conducted; and
- (d) the detailed design of the stream such as the use of gabion walls and boulders in the stream.

#### *Public transport interchange*

27. A Member commented that the only solution to avoid the stream

diversion was to shift the theme village to one side of the stream. In his view, the area occupied by the PTI was an ideal site for the theme village. He also considered that the demand for other modes of transport would decrease upon the commencement of the Cable Car System and there was no need for a large PTI. There were also concerns about the visual impact of the PTI. The project proponent informed Members that they had discussed with the Government on the possibility of using part of the site of the PTI for building the theme village but without success. As regards the visual impact of the PTI, it was agreed that the PTI project would be entrusted to the project proponent so that there could be harmonious design of the theme village and the PTI. The meeting noted the proposal of constructing an underground PTI but at the same time it was aware that the proposal would involve a lot of engineering works which would have impacts of its own.

### Conclusion

28. Since unlike EIA reports, the ACE has no statutory role over the processing of applications for permission to apply direct for Environmental Permits, the Subcommittee did not make any conclusion or recommendations on the project at the meeting. The project proponent was, however, requested to consider Members' views when taking forward the proposed project. In addition, Members had been reminded to provide their comments, if any, on the project profile to Director of Environmental Protection within 14 days from 22 July 2003, i.e. the date of the submission of the project profile.

**EIA Subcommittee Secretariat**  
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