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(ACE Paper 42/96)
for advice

Report of the EIA Subcommittee

The Subcommittee considered three Environmental Impact Assessment reports this month. One EIA report was considered by circulation and the other two EIA reports were discussed at the Sub-committee's meeting held on 12 August 1996.

Proposed Housing Development at Yuen Chau Kok, Sha Tin Area 14B Environmental Impact Assessment (ACE-EIA Paper 14/96)

2. This paper presented the key findings and the recommendations of the EIA study for the public housing development and the ancillary facilities in a vacant site at Yuen Chau Kok, Sha Tin Area 14B.

3. The project site occupies an area of 8 ha and is zoned "Industrial" in the draft Sha Tin Outline Zoning Plan. The development is planned to provide 6900 flats for 16000 persons with ancillary facilities including a commercial centre, schools and a recreational centre.

4. On air quality impacts, a buffer distance of 100m will be provided between the residential flats and the nearest adjacent industrial buildings to mitigate possible industrial emissions. There are, however, no obvious discharges from the industrial area which comprises mostly modern industrial buildings.

5. As regards noise impacts from road traffic, the following mitigation measures were recommended:

- (a) single aspect blocks with noise tolerant uses or facades along the frontage of Sha Tin Wai Road and Road T5;
- (b) a 5m high barrier along the critical section of Ngau Pei Sha Street;

- (c) the provision of acoustic insulation for approximately 7% of the total number of residential flats with residual traffic noise impact still exceeding the noise criterion;
- (d) special design for the schools to mitigate the traffic noise impact from Ngan Shing Street and Chap Wai Kon Street, including non-noise sensitive facade towards Ngan Shing Street, noise barrier, sealed windows, louvers and acoustic insulation;
- (e) that buses leaving and entering the Kowloon Motor Bus (KMB) Co's bus depot at sensitive hours to be re-routed to avoid using Ngau Pei Sha Street.

6. The Housing Department has agreed to implement the recommendations of the EIA study. The Architectural Services Department has also agreed to adopt the recommended measures for schools. Transport Department and KMB have also agreed to implement the bus traffic arrangement scheme.

7. Members considered the report by circulation. They were satisfied with the report and agreed to recommend endorsement of the EIA report without conditions.

Focused EIA Study for Laying a Second 132 kV Submarine Cable Transmission Link from Lau Fau Shan to Shekou (*ACE-EIA Paper 15/96*)

8. The project was proposed by the China Light and Power Co. Ltd. (CLP) to provide additional electricity supply to Shekou and reinforce interconnection between Shekou and CLP.

9. The submarine cable would be installed within Déep Bay in land and submarine trenches at depths ranging from 1.2m to 7m. The majority of the submarine cable would be laid in 0.5m wide, 2m deep trench to be formed by a cable laying machine. The cable laying operation is expected to last for three months from April 1997. In addition to the laying of the cable, an underground junction box (of size 1.5m x 1.5m x 4m) would be constructed at both ends of the cable to provide connection with the land base transmission system.

10. As regards environmental impacts, the EIA concluded that the cable laying activities will only lead to localised increases in suspended solid concentration along the trench. The works would not lead to deterioration in water quality nor impacts upon sensitive receivers. The study also concluded that there will only be limited impacts on both terrestrial and marine ecology.

11. To mitigate the impacts identified, the following measures would be adopted:

- (a) jetting/ploughing in Deep Bay during spring tide would be avoided;
- (b) isolated small trees and mangrove plants which will have to be removed during the proposed works will be trans-planted;
- (c) there will be no shore and land trenching at Lau Fau Shan from October to March to avoid disturbance to wintering water birds;
- (d) oyster bed trenching at Lau Fau Shan would be undertaken at low tides by manpower using conventional tools and oyster farmers who suffered loss of oyster beds would be financially compensated;
- (e) underwater noise measurements will be taken and then precautionary measures designed in conjunction with local dolphin experts to avoid potential noise impacts on the Chinese White Dolphin;
- (f) an environmental monitoring and audit programme for the tree and mangrove transplanting will be implemented for 5 years.

12. One member was concerned that organic metals embedded in the sediment might be released during the dredging to lay the cable. Another member opined that the overall justification for the project cannot be separated from the environmental impact of the project itself. Another member sought assurance that the electro-magnetic fields from the submarine cable would have no effects on benthic organisms.

13. The Subcommittee, however, agreed to recommend endorsement of the EIA report with these conditions:

- (a) that there will be environmental monitoring and audit of the release of organic pollutants and nutrients during the dredging stage of the works;
- (b) that it was assured that the electro-magnetic fields from the submarine cable would have no adverse effects on benthic organisms.

Tai Po Development - Remaining Works Formation and Servicing of Area 12 (Part) and 39 Pak Shek Kok, Phase 1 : EIA Study (ACE-EIA Paper 13/96)

14. The whole Pak Shek Kok Area 39 of 25 ha in size has been formed at +2mPD. The project is separated into two phases. Phase I works will involve the construction of an access road, raising the level of the northern portion of 15 ha Area to +6mPD and provision of services such as drainage for Architectural Services Department to construct a sports centre proposed by the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) to meet its student intake programme in September 1997. The Phase II works which is mainly to develop the remaining part of Area 39 zoned Government/Institution/Community as well will start from mid-1998 to mid-2000.

15. The EIA report found that, on air quality, a buffer distance of 50m from the Tolo Highway is necessary to meet the Air Quality Objectives. The sports centre is now located at more than 55m away from Tolo Highway.

16. On noise, the study found that as the Phase I access road will not have through traffic, the vehicular traffic noise will be within the noise criterion. When Phase II is developed, the road will be enlarged for through traffic. A 4m high noise barrier will be constructed along Yau King Lane to protect the nearby Villa Castell. A 3m high earth bund will also be constructed at the Cheung Shue Tan light bus terminal to protect the adjacent Village Development Area.

17. A protected plant species will also be transplanted from woodlands affected to a location outside the site boundary before commencement of construction. By implementing these recommended mitigation measures, the potential environmental impacts can be reduced to within the established criteria. The Territory Development Department undertakes to implement all the mitigation measures recommended.

18. Members discussed and agreed to recommend endorsement of the EIA report subject to these conditions:

- (a) for Phase 2, in addition to the construction stage EIA study, there will also be studies on focused issues such as the visual impact of, and the need for, the lorry park; and nature conservation of Cheung Shue Tan;
- (b) that culverting for streams A & C will be minimised in order to keep the streams in their natural states as much as possible;
- (c) that the modified alignment for the access road will be implemented;

- (d) that there will be further review on the project's impact on two species not mentioned in the report, Suaeda (a type of marsh plant) and the Little Ringed Plover (a type of bird) and other uncommon wildlife as reported by nearby residents and the findings reported to the Sub-committee in 3 months' time;
- (e) that a detailed planning and management proposal for the woodlands within the site will also be reported to the Sub-committee in 3 months' time.

Advice Sought

19. Members are requested to consider the recommendation of the EIA Subcommittee:

- (a) endorsement of the Proposed Housing Development at Yuen Chau Kok, Sha Tin Area 14B Environmental Impact Assessment report without conditions (para. 7 refers);
- (b) endorsement of the Focused EIA Study for Laying a Second 132 kV Submarine Cable Transmission Link from Lau Fau Shan to Shekou environmental impact assessment report with conditions (para. 13 refers);
- (c) endorsement of the Tai Po Development - Remaining Works Formation and Servicing of Area 12 (Part) and 39 Pak Shek Kok, Phase 1 environmental impact assessment report with conditions (para. 18 refers).

Planning, Environment & Lands Branch (Environment Division)
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