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(ACE Paper 49/97)

for advice

Report of the EIA Subcommittee

At its meeting on 6 October 1997, the Subcommittee considered the EIA Report on the Outlying Islands Sewerage Scheme Stage 1 Phase 1 Works Packages B to E.

EIA on Outlying Islands Sewerage Scheme Stage 1 Phase 1 Works Packages B to E

2 The 1994 Sewerage Master Plan Study of the Outlying Islands recommended improvements and extensions to the existing sewerage infrastructure. Five packages of sewage treatment works have been identified as High Priority Programmes. The current EIA study covers four of these packages as follows:

- (a) Package B: Siu Ho Wan Sewage Treatment Works Upgrading
- (b) Package C: Yung Shue Wan Sewage Treatment Works and Outfall
- (c) Package D: Peng Chau Sewage Export Scheme
- (d) Package E: Cheung Chau Outfall Replacement

Package A which deals with the sewage treatment works at Ngong Ping would be submitted separately for consideration at a later stage.

3 The EIA has examined key environmental concerns arising from the four proposed sewerage packages, including construction noise impacts, dust and odour emissions, waste disposal, and water quality and associated ecological impacts. The report has concluded that the environmental impacts could be controlled within established standards and guidelines.

Noise and Air Quality Impacts

4 Members noted that noise screens and dust suppression measures would be implemented during the construction phase to minimise noise and dust emissions. Modelling results have also shown that odour impacts during the operational phase of the sewage treatment works can be effectively mitigated.

Disposal of Waste

5 Members expressed concern about the disposal of excavated spoils. At Members' request, the project proponent has agreed to specify the dumping areas in the contract and to monitor the waste disposal arrangements adopted by the contractors.

Water Quality and Associated Ecological Impacts

6 The Peng Chau Sewage Export Scheme (Package D) would improve the water quality in the Discovery Bay embayment. For the Yung Shue Wan Sewage Treatment Works (Package C) and the Cheung Chau Outfall (Package E), the EIA has concluded that the Water Quality Objectives would be met with the proposed level of treatment.

7 As to the Siu Ho Wan Sewage Treatment Works (Package B), the EIA has evaluated three alternative treatment scenarios: primary treatment, chemically enhanced primary treatment (CEPT) and CEPT with UV disinfection. These methods vary in the degree of sewage treatment with primary treatment being the most rudimentary and CEPT with UV disinfection the highest. Water Quality Modelling has indicated that all these treatment levels would meet the Water Quality Objectives. In consideration of potential impact on the dolphins and their habitats, cost, land requirement and public expectation, the EIA has recommended adoption of CEPT. Operational monitoring will be implemented to ascertain the effectiveness and adequacy of this treatment level and land will be set aside at the Siu Ho Wan Sewage Treatment Works to accommodate any subsequent need for treatment level upgrading.

8 Members were concerned about the cumulative impacts of all the sewage outfalls on water quality and the resultant risks to marine mammals, especially dolphins. In view of the lack of information on the relationship between the quality of treated sewage and the health of dolphins, and the possibility that dolphins with impaired immune system may be susceptible to pathogens from the outfall, Members preferred a higher level of treatment in line with the precautionary principle. Members also considered that the EIA's evaluation of CEPT combined with UV disinfection as the favoured option in terms of protection to white dolphins supports their position.

EIA Subcommittee's Views and Recommendations

9 Members endorsed the parts of the EIA in respect of Packages C to E. On Package B concerning the Siu Ho Wan Sewage Treatment Works, Members considered the proposed treatment level of CEPT inadequate, the key concern being possible impact of effluent pollution on dolphins. For Package B, the Subcommittee recommended implementation of a higher sewage treatment level of CEPT with UV disinfection as a condition of endorsement.

Advice Sought

10 Members are invited to advise whether the EIA report on the Outlying Islands Sewerage Scheme should be endorsed and, if so, the conditions of endorsement.