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(ACE Paper 28/98)
for advice

Report of the 37th Meeting of the EIA Subcommittee

The EIA Subcommittee considered the Main Drainage Channel for Fanling, Sheung Shui and Hinterland Supplementary Paper on Ecological Mitigation Utilising Abandoned Meanders at its meeting held on 1 June 1998.

Main Drainage Channel for Fanling, Sheung Shui and Hinterland Supplementary Paper on Ecological Mitigation Utilising Abandoned Meanders

(ACE EIA Paper 14/98)

- 2 The project aims to train the River Sutlej, Indus Major, Indus Minor and River Beas so as to alleviate flooding potential in these areas. The Final Assessment Report (FAR) was endorsed by the full Council on 24 November 1997 with five conditions (at Annex).
- 3 Pursuant to Conditions 1 to 3, the project proponent submitted a supplementary paper covering a detailed description of the ecological mitigation measures that will be established within the abandoned meanders created by the realignment of the river, a management and maintenance plan and a monitoring programme. For Condition 4, Agriculture and Fisheries Department (AFD) had agreed to share the information regarding the results of their routine monitoring in the area. As regards Condition 5, District Lands Office was liaising with AFD to formulate draft lease conditions for the future leasing of the restored fishponds.
- 4 Under the project, there will be 21 abandoned meanders in total, 12 adjacent to the Upper Indus River and nine on the River Beas, varying in size and physical character. These meanders would be turned into permanent and seasonal wetlands with elements like marsh areas, grassland and bamboo/tree/shrub planting, creating habitats suitable for a wide variety of faunal species.

5 As regards management and maintenance responsibilities, the contractor will be responsible for landscape planting and its maintenance for the first year. The management and maintenance responsibilities thereafter would be shared among relevant government departments.

6 Two-year staged post-construction monitoring programmes on fauna, flora and water quality were designed. Reports covering water quality, fauna and flora monitoring will be submitted to the Council. A post-project monitoring report, which covers a brief project background information, methodology and equipment used, parameters monitored, details of analyses and conclusions, will also be submitted to the Council.

Subcommittee's Views and Recommendations

7 The Subcommittee was content with the design, management and monitoring programmes of the ecological mitigation measures set out in the supplementary paper. However, concern was expressed on the long term conservation strategy. Having noted the confirmation from the project proponent that regular reports on latest progress would be submitted to the Council, Members recommend endorsement of the supplementary paper without condition.

8 The Subcommittee was also of the view that the current design of mitigation measures are desirable from the conservation point of view and could be used as a design concept for future projects of similar nature.

Advice Sought

9 Members are invited to consider whether the Main Drainage Channel for Fanling, Sheung Shui and Hinterland Supplementary Paper on Ecological Mitigation Utilising Abandoned Meanders should be endorsed without condition.

EIA Subcommittee Secretariat
June 1998