

**Confirmed Minutes of the Nature Conservation Subcommittee Meeting**  
**held on 30 April 2018 at 10:30 a.m.**  
**in Conference Room, 33/F, Revenue Tower, Wan Chai, Hong Kong**

**Present:**

Dr Michael LAU (Chairman)  
Ir Cary CHAN, JP  
Dr Billy HAU  
Dr HUNG Wing-tat, MH  
Ms Julia LAU  
Prof LAU Chi-pang, JP  
Mr Anthony LOCK  
Prof John NG  
Prof Nora TAM, BBS, JP  
Dr Eric TSANG  
Ms Becky LAM (Secretary)

**Absent with Apologies:**

Prof Kenneth LEUNG, JP  
Ir Michelle TANG  
Ir Conrad WONG, BBS, JP  
Prof Jonathan WONG, MH, JP

**In Attendance:**

*Environmental Protection Department*

Ms Daisy LO	Assistant Director (Conservation Policy Review)
Ms Vivian CHAN	Senior Administrative Officer (Nature Conservation)
Mr Eric LIU	Forestry Officer (Nature Conservation)
Miss Dora CHU	Executive Officer (CBD) 1
Miss Apple LEUNG	Executive Officer (CBD) 2

*Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department*

Mr Simon CHAN	Assistant Director (Conservation)
Dr Jackie YIP	Senior Conservation Officer (Biodiversity)
Dr Evelyne KUO	Conservation Officer (Biodiversity)1
Mr Alfred WONG	Senior Country Parks Officer (Ranger Services)

**In Attendance for Item 2(i):**

*Sai Kung District Community Centre*

Mr William CHAN	Business Director (Social Enterprise)
Mr Edward AU	Project Officer

**In Attendance for Item 2(ii):**

*Environmental Association Ltd.*

Dr YAU Wing-kwong	Chief Executive Officer
Ms Colleen CHIU	Project Manager, Nature Conservation
Mr Gary CHAN	Senior Project Officer, Nature Conservation

Action

The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting and informed that apologies of absence had been received from Prof Kenneth Leung, Ir Michelle Tang, Ir Conrad Wong and Prof Jonathan Wong.

**Item 1 : Matters Arising**

2. There was no matter arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

**Item 2 : Progress of Implementation of Nature Conservation Management Agreement Projects**  
***(ACE-NC Paper 1/2018)***

3. As invited by the Chairman, Dr Jackie Yip briefed Members on the background of the two Management Agreement (MA) projects at Sai Wan enclave and Fung Yuen Priority Site undertaken by the Sai Kung District Community Centre (SKDCC) and the Environmental Association (EA) Limited respectively.

**(i) Rehabilitation Project for Sai Wan Area**

4. There was no declaration of interests from Members.

*[Representatives of the SKDCC joined the meeting at this juncture.]*

5. By way of a powerpoint presentation, Mr William Chan briefed Members on the background, objective and the implementation progress of the Rehabilitation Project for Sai Wan area between February 2017 and February 2018.

***Feedback from education programmes***

6. In response to a Member's enquiry on the design of the questionnaires for the public education programmes, Mr William Chan said that questionnaire surveys were prepared for the members of public, primary school as well as secondary school students. The surveys were designed with more in-depth questions for the students in order to assess their knowledge of the project, such as the history of Sai Wan, and to understand their conceptual and behavioural changes towards biodiversity conservation after participating in the activities. He said that positive feedback was received from the participants in terms of enhancement of their knowledge and attitude towards biodiversity conservation.

7. A Member considered that questionnaires were important tools to assess the effectiveness of the activities in enhancing public's knowledge on biodiversity conservation and fostering their behavioural change. He asked Mr William Chan to provide a copy of the questionnaire for Members' reference after the meeting.

SKDCC

*[Post meeting notes: A copy of the questionnaire provided by SKDCC was circulated to Members on 6 July 2018.]*

***Engagement with stakeholders***

8. Noting that a Steering Committee was set up which included the indigenous inhabitant representative and village representatives from Sai Wan, a Member was concerned about the different views amongst the rural community on the project. Mr William Chan said that they had communicated with villagers well before the commencement of the project to clearly explain the objectives of the project. The rural community was in general supportive of the project.

9. In response to a Member's enquiry on how to engage the villagers in the project, Mr William Chan said local villagers were invited to participate in the project from the beginning and as it progressed. At the initial stage of the project, they had engaged two villagers including the resident representative to advise on the planning and conducting of rehabilitation works. In addition, a local villager was engaged as site manager of the visitor information centre to oversee its operation and management.

10. A Member suggested that quantitative information such as the opening hours of the visitor information centre and the number of participants in different

education activities should be included in future progress reports to demonstrate the effectiveness of the programme.

***Rehabilitation of agricultural land***

11. Mr William Chan shared the difficulties they encountered in rehabilitating the farmland and measures taken to address the lack of water source for irrigation, improve drainage of the fields and protect crops from damage by cattle. Fences and CCTV cameras were also installed for crop protection, security and for monitoring the condition of the agricultural land.

12. In response to a Member's question on the measures to deal with seawater inundation, Mr William Chan said that concrete barriers covered by waterproof materials were built along the periphery of the field to offer protection. Typhoon Hato in August 2017 had led to seawater seepage around the bottom and outer areas of the barriers, but the agricultural land had not been significantly affected.

13. Mr William Chan reported that about 20% of the abandoned agricultural land rented under the MA project had been rehabilitated. He explained that as some land along the stream banks were wetlands of high ecological value, SKDCC would preserve and manage such land for conservation and educational purposes instead of agriculture. The remaining agricultural land would be rehabilitated gradually.

***Management of key habitats***

14. In response to a Member's question on any long term efforts to address marine litter, Mr William Chan said that apart from clearing the litter, they would organize long term volunteering programme for the sustained management of marine litter. Furthermore, Mr Chan said that Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) would be consulted on the feasibility of putting up sign boards to remind visitors to take their litter away. They might explore whether protective floating nets in the estuary would be feasible to prevent larger pieces of litter from being washed in without adversely affecting marine organisms.

***Enhancing the habitat for butterflies***

15. In response to a Member's enquiry on efforts made to enhance the habitat for butterflies, Mr William Chan said that nectar plants for butterflies were planted at the initial stage of the project, however most of them were destroyed by the cattle. In addition, to attract the rare butterfly species of *Thoressa monastyrskyi*, they had transplanted its host plant (i.e. *Arundinaria cantorii*) last year around the outer area of the agricultural land.

16. To provide a source of food for some butterfly species, Mr William Chan said that they had participated in the tangerine trees recycling programme organised by the EA in collecting and recycling tangerine trees from housing estates after the Chinese New Year. They would also consider growing nectar plants such as *Ligustrum sinense* and *Lantana camara* in the coming wet season.

17. To tackle the difficulty in transporting heavy potted tangerine trees to the field, a Member suggested SKDCC consider getting seedlings from the nursery managed by AFCD or the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden which could be transported to Sai Wan more easily than potted tangerine trees.

***Water supply for irrigation***

18. A Member appreciated the efforts of SKDCC made in the rehabilitation project in Sai Wan. He considered that the development of an irrigation system was essential for the agricultural activities in Sai Wan to be effective in the long run. Mr William Chan said that without the prior consent of the landowners and villagers, they would not consider altering the structure of the historical well.

19. Against this background, Mr William Chan said they had identified a deserted water retaining structure in the upper part of a river course in the vicinity. A pump was installed to extract water from the water pool for irrigation temporarily. In addition, large sized containers for storing rainwater during the rainy season would be used at the lower catchment area. They would continue to identify water sources for irrigation in the long run.

20. A Member suggested SKDCC draw reference from the Lai Chi Wo project in tackling issues of irrigation and seawater inundation. Efforts could then be made to identify the water sources available and conduct restoration and rehabilitation work accordingly.

21. A Member recommended SKDCC to seek further support and assistance from the NCSC should the project encounter other challenges and constraints. Mr William Chan agreed to provide a written response to summarize the challenges encountered and constraints of the project that required further support and assistance for better implementation of the project.

*[Post meeting notes: The written response of SKDCC was circulated to Members on 6 July 2018.]*

*[Representatives of the SKDCC and Mr Alfred Wong left the meeting at this juncture.]*

**(ii) Management Agreement on the Private Land with High Conservation Value at Fung Yuen Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest in Tai Po, Hong Kong (2016-2019)**

22. A Member declared that he was an honorary advisor of the Fung Yuen Butterfly Reserve. Another Member also declared that she had provided consulting services to another project carried out by the EA which had no relevancy to the MA project to be discussed. The meeting agreed that both Members could stay on and participate in the discussion.

*[Representatives of the EA joined the meeting at this juncture.]*

23. By way of a powerpoint presentation, Ms Colleen Chiu briefed Members on the background, objective and the implementation progress of the MA on the Private Land with High Conservation Value at Fung Yuen Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest in Tai Po, Hong Kong (2016-2019).

***Interface with nearby residential development***

24. A Member expressed appreciation towards the EA for engaging the local community in the conservation of Fung Yuen Valley. He recalled that the property developer of the nearby residential development, namely Mont Vert, was committed to promote community farming at the adjacent area zoned for agricultural uses, and opined that a successful integration of conservation and development could demonstrate the possibility of co-existence of wildlife and human in an urbanized environment, which could serve as an example for other residential development projects.

25. Dr Yau Wing-kwong informed Members that the agricultural zone which was named Le Jardin by the developer had been abandoned and was now overgrown with weeds due to the lack of management. The EA had been liaising with the property developer to revitalize the area so as to improve the biodiversity and enhance habitat connectivity for the butterflies.

26. In response to a Member's suggestion that relevant Government departments should follow up with the property developer to ensure compliance with the planning conditions of the subject development, Mr Simon Chan suggested that the Secretariat could solicit assistance from relevant department.

Secretariat

### ***Ecological monitoring***

27. A Member appreciated the efforts made by the EA at Fung Yuen Valley in the past years. He sought information on the frequency of butterfly surveys conducted by EA under the ecological monitoring programme and suggested EA provide the species recorded by year or month, instead of the cumulative species diversity, in order to have a more accurate picture of the trends and changes in species composition.

28. Mr Gary Chan advised that monthly butterfly surveys were conducted at fixed transects in Koo Ka Yuen and Phases I and II of Fung Yuen Butterfly Reserve. The data provided during the meeting was the annual averages and Ms Colleen Chiu agreed to provide the monthly data and trend plots to Members after the meeting. EA

*[Post meeting notes: The supplementary information provided by EA was circulated to Members on 6 July 2018.]*

29. Dr Jackie Yip said that AFCD, being responsible for monitoring the implementation progress, had also sought for the same information from the EA. They would continue to work with the EA to present the relevant data so as to ascertain the effectiveness of the conservation measures conducted under the MA project.

### ***Expenditure Control***

30. Dr Yau Wing-kwong mentioned that the EA had made efforts to maintain a good relationship with the landowners by providing technical advice and taking part in many activities organized by the village including festive

feasts.

31. A Member suggested the EA collaborate with tertiary institutions to conduct analysis on the large butterfly survey dataset to tap on their expertise and maximize the use of resources.

32. A Member commended the EA for their persistence of running the project for more than 10 years. She asked the EA to explore the feasibility of streamlining work processes, review manpower needs, invite volunteers to take up some of the work and collaborate with other organizations with a view to reducing the operating costs, based on the rich experience accumulated over the years. She further suggested the EA review the frequencies and scope of the ecological surveys given that there was already a large database accumulated over the past years.

33. Dr Yau Wing-kwong said that the EA had a minimal structure and the existing personnel was already overloaded with work. While many duties were delegated to volunteers, they were not always available and the sustained operation of the project relied heavily on the existing manpower resources. The EA would continue to review its work processes to identify opportunities of cost reduction as far as possible.

34. A Member opined that the data obtained from butterfly surveys had high scientific value and was important for long-term monitoring. He suggested the EA might consider reviewing the frequency and scope of surveys on other taxa groups.

### ***Attainment of targets***

35. While expressing appreciation towards the EA for its attainment or even exceedance of targets in many of its proposed actions regarding education and publicity, a Member observed that various targets, in particular the production of leaflets and delivery of habitat management and species conservation workshops, had yet to reach the target and she enquired about the progress.

36. Ms Colleen Chiu advised that the statistics presented in the paper was up till the end of 2017, while the targets were set for the entire project duration. She assured Members that the annual target for workshop delivery had been exceeded in previous years. As regards the production of leaflets, she said that visitors were encouraged to download the electronic copies of the leaflets,



thereby reducing the need for printed leaflets. The EA was planning to produce leaflets to educate the public on different butterfly species.

37. A Member suggested the EA include remarks in the powerpoint presentation as appropriate when making progress reports in the future so as to avoid confusion.

### ***Education and promotion***

38. With a view to assessing the effectiveness of the workshops, a Member suggested EA consider how to connect the knowledge transferred to the participants from workshops with the subsequent change in their environmental awareness and behaviour. He considered that more emphasis should be placed on the quality of workshops and suggested that the workshops should be more focused with specific themes.

39. Dr Yau Wing-kwong agreed that the workshops should be able to influence the attitude and behaviour of participants. While it would take time to change attitudes and behaviours, survey results showed that the workshops could help increase the participants' knowledge on conservation and the importance they attached to conservation. More in-depth surveys would be required to study the changes in attitude and behaviour of participants and collaborations with academic institutions would be considered to design the surveys.

40. Ms Colleen Chiu supplemented that unlike other MA projects in which stakeholders were engaged in habitat management work, the Fung Yuen Valley Site was directly managed by staff members of the EA. The EA could further engage volunteers and workshop participants by providing them with more hands-on experience in conservation and farming activities.

41. A Member suggested the EA establish a dedicated volunteer team for serving the Fung Yuen Valley Site and provide service learning opportunities to students from higher education institutions.

42. Dr Yau Wing-kwong said that the EA had offered service learning opportunities to students from different faculties and agreed with a Member that it was vital to first instill a proper attitude in teachers and parents towards the nature as they both played an important role in the nurturing and growth of children.

43. A Member shared his experience of encountering parents who requested the management company to get rid of caterpillars with the use of insecticides. He suggested the EA spend extra efforts on educating participants on how to appreciate and respect the nature.

44. The Chairman thanked the project team for their presentation and clarifications.

*[Representatives of the EA left the meeting at this juncture.]*

**Item 3 : Overview of Nature Conservation Management Agreement Projects (ACE-NC Paper 2/2018)**

45. The Chairman informed that the paper provided background information on the MA projects under the New Nature Conservation Policy.

46. A Member declared that he was a Director of the Conservancy Association which was undertaking the project namely, “Nature and Human in Harmony – Nature Conservation Management for Long Valley 2017-2019” under the MA scheme. He also informed that he was a member of the Steering Committee of the Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme which was not a MA project. A Member declared that he was a member of the Architectural Advisory Committee under the Hong Kong Countryside Foundation (HKCF) and was not directly involved in the MA project “Lai Chi Wo Enclave 2017-2019”. A Member also declared that he was serving as a history and heritage consultant for the HKCF but was not involved in the Lai Chi Wo MA project. The meeting agreed that all three Members could stay on and participate in the discussion.

47. At the invitation of the Chairman, Dr Jackie Yip briefed Members on the background, existing projects and achievements of the MA scheme.

***Knowledge management and transfer***

48. A Member opined that more academic researches should be conducted under the MA scheme and the Government should undertake the coordination work to facilitate the sharing and exchange of knowledge between MA applicants. The researches should not be limited to topics of scientific interest but also include topics such as technical matters, management of knowledge and stakeholder relationships.

49. A Member informed Members that the Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme supported by the HSBC was planning to publish a guideline to summarize the experience of rural revitalization and eco-agriculture projects. Information on the ecological benefits and risks of planting different species as farming measures would be provided in the guideline, which could serve as a useful reference for relevant projects and developments in the future.

50. A Member expressed appreciation towards the work of the Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme. He remarked that it was important for MA projects to weave biodiversity conservations into the urban fabric so as to enhance the liveability of the city, and it was important to promote knowledge building and sharing in this aspect with a view to supporting harmonious and sustained co-existence of human and wildlife.

51. A Member also considered knowledge sharing could help save resources as repetitive mistakes could be avoided in other projects, and she considered that the Government could play the coordination role.

52. A Member suggested with the support of the Chairman and another Member that the Government could organize regular meetings/workshops to facilitate the exchange of views amongst different MA project teams, stakeholders and interested parties. In particular, organizations undertaking MA projects at the Fung Yuen Valley Site and the Long Valley over a long period of time should be invited to share their experience in the management of private land.

53. Ms Daisy Lo thanked Members for their suggestions and said that the future Countryside Conservation Office (CCO) would work with the AFCD to explore ways to establish a connection between the organizations responsible for the seven MA projects, such as by organizing sharing sessions or workshops.

54. The Chairman suggested inviting experts to give views on the survey designs to yield more meaningful results at the workshops, which could at the same time provide an opportunity for the organizations responsible for the MA projects to establish connections with the experts. While it would be difficult to conduct academic researches under the MA projects due to the limited resources and durations, the Chairman further suggested MA applicants consider proposing research priorities that would be beneficial to their projects in the applications. This could help facilitate their collaboration with academic institutions or other organizations when the opportunity to establish connections arose.

55. A Member agreed that structured workshops with themes should be organized with experts in the respective fields invited each time. He further suggested organizations responsible for the MA projects to provide publications issued over the years, including research papers, conference papers, journals and leaflets, etc. for Members' reference. EPD

*[Post meeting notes: The publications provided by MA organizations were circulated to Members on 10 July 2018.]*

***Reviewing the existing MA mechanism***

56. A Member opined that the prevailing duration and funding limits for each MA project should be reviewed by the future CCO.

57. Ms Daisy Lo said that preparatory work was currently underway for the setup of the CCO which would take over the coordinator role of the MA scheme. She explained that the duration and funding limits of the MA scheme were set with reference to past experiences and with the objective of ensuring the proper use of public money. With these limits, applicants would have a greater incentive to make progress so as to increase the chances of receiving continued funding support under the MA scheme. Ms Lo said that the future CCO would consider reviewing the existing MA mechanism, including ways to streamline the application process.

58. A Member pointed out that the requirement for MA applicants to possess past experience in organizing environmental activities/projects made it difficult for existing MA projects to be taken over by new organizations. She suggested the future CCO review the assessment criteria of MA applications with a view to encouraging the participation of new organizations in the management of both existing and new MA projects.

59. A Member was concerned about the sustainability of MA projects given the difficulty for existing MA projects to change hands. He opined that the engagement of different parties including the community was the key to the sustained operation of the projects.

60. A Member enquired and Ms Daisy Lo replied in the affirmative that the future CCO would also take over the coordination role of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Scheme and would review on its mechanism and operation if

necessary.

61. A Member opined that it was desirable for the future CCO to coordinate the work of the MA and PPP Schemes such that resources required for corresponding with multiple departments/units could be saved. He remarked that it was important to strike a balance between development and conservation, and suggested allocating part of the revenue from lands transactions by legislation to maintain the sustained operation of the CCO and the funding support to the MA and PPP projects.

### ***Education and promotion***

62. A Member opined that qualitative indicators should be set to assess the effectiveness of MA projects in knowledge dissemination and influencing attitude and behavioural changes. He suggested conducting focus group interviews with participants of education and promotion programmes to gather the information such as reasons for their participation. He also suggested the Government set performance indicators as part of the assessment criteria of the MA projects, and be transparent with the indicators so as to uphold fairness and convey expectations to the MA applicants.

63. A Member followed that MA applicants should also try to find out the amount of public money that participants were willing to spend on supporting the MA projects before and after taking part in the workshops or other activities. This could serve as one of the indicators for attitude and behavioural changes.

64. In view that the success of the MA scheme relied heavily on the support of the local villagers, a Member opined that better strategic considerations should be made to resolve the possible conflicts between the conservation value and the villagers' perception on the development potential of the land they own.

65. A Member remarked that the MA scheme provided a useful platform for training up and expanding the manpower for carrying out work relating to environmental management and education.

### **Item 4 : Any Other Business**

66. A Member suggested with the support of the Chairman for organizing a site visit to Sai Wan such that Members could gain a better idea on the progress of the Rehabilitation Project for Sai Wan Area.

Secretariat

67. There was no other business for discussion at the meeting.

**Item 5 : Date of next meeting**

68. The Chairman informed that Members would be advised on the date of the next meeting and the agenda in due course.

**Nature Conservation Subcommittee Secretariat  
July 2018**