Table7.4a
Total Area Loss of Ecological Habitat Types Due to the Recommended Strategic Highways

Ecological Habitat	Total Area Loss (ha)	Percentage Loss (%)
Abandoned Cultivation	23.6	0.74
Cultivation	19.9	1.41
Grassland	30.8	0.17
Low Shrub	11.6	0.17
Low Shrub with Grass	45.3	0.35
Plantation Woodland	12.7	0.27
Tall Shrub	41.4	0.37
Tall Shrub with Grass	30.5	0.34
Natural Woodland	86.4	0.85
Inland Water	3.5	0.07
Marine	145.4	0.09
TOTAL	**451.1**	**0.2** [1]

Note: 1 – Percent loss from sum of all ecological habitat areas shown in the table.

7.4.3 It is estimated that there would be approximately 450 ha of cumulative terrestrial and marine habitat loss as a result of the development of the recommended strategic highway projects, about 0.2 % of the total areas of such habitats in Hong Kong SAR. Overall most of the habitats types (eg. grassland, shrubland) affected by these strategic highways are mainly secondary in nature with low ecological significance, and therefore the potential ecological impact is considered to be generally low. However three alignments would encroach into more important habitats such as natural woodland, including Eastern Highway, New Territories East-West Link, and Route 81, and the potential ecological impact is considered moderate to high. Refinement of the alignments should be undertaken to avoid or minimise the potential impacts to acceptable levels. Potential construction impact on the Chinese White Dolphins utilising the North Lantau waters will require appropriate mitigation measures to ensure no adverse impacts.

7.4.4 All these strategic highway schemes should be assessed in detail in the EIA stage, in accordance with the EIA Ordinance requirements, to investigate the ecological conditions of the affected areas, avoid ecological important habitats or species, and ensure no unacceptable ecological impacts in relation to the implementation of the schemes.

7.4.5 Based on the broad new rail corridors, the overall potential ecological impact is expected to be low given that most of the alignment will pass through either urbanised areas or habitat types which are secondary in nature (eg. grassland, shrubland), and assuming that tunnel option will be adopted to avoid the recognised conservation areas. More detailed rail alignment assessments will be undertaken in the on-going RDS-2 study. It is recommended that the RDS-2 study should take on