



The Swire Institute of Marine Science

太古海洋科學研究所

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
10/F, Citybank Tower
3 Garden Road, Central
Hong Kong

18/11/2004

Dear Sir/ Madam

RE: Views/Comments on HATS stage 2

On behalf of the Swire Institute of Marine Science (SWIMS), The Department of Ecology & Biodiversity, The University of Hong Kong, we appreciate the efforts of the HKSAR Government with respect to the implementation of HATS Stage 1 and their initiative in promoting Stage 2 of HATS. In terms of improving the water quality in Victoria Harbour, and the marine environment in general, the HATS project is vital and long overdue.

After careful review of the consultation document and evaluating the feasibility, economical and environmental constraints of the proposals, we agree that Option A is the most viable and seems the most straightforward of the options to be executed. Compared with some of the other siting options, we also believe that the centralized system offered in Option A will result in the minimum adverse impacts on marine sensitive receivers and is therefore the most acceptable. We therefore endorse Option A, **provided that the Government adopts the approach to upgrade the current CEPT in HATS Stage 1 to biological, secondary, treatment in the future, as recommended in the consultation document.** Due to the current economic climate, we agree in principle that HATS Stage 2 should be implemented in two phases as proposed. However, we would anticipate that the timing between the two Phases **will not be more than 2 years.**

We realize that the momentum of the implementation is fundamental for gaining the public's support throughout the process, it is therefore important to be able to demonstrate clearly that there is a **further** improvement in water quality through the connection of the remaining 25-30% of sewage from the harbour area for CEPT within 1-2 years of HATS Stage 2 being in operation. With such evidence, the public may be better persuaded to support an upgrade of facilities from CEPT to the more expensive biological treatment. In addition, we feel that the Government should increase public awareness as to the ecological, and indeed community, benefits of this and therefore demonstrate that HATS Stage 2 is essential. To this end, SWIMS will be pleased to offer assistance in both technical and educational endeavours in relation to HATS Stage 2.

The idea of a "Public Private Partnership" for the design, construction and operation of all the new and existing treatment facilities under HATS by a single contractor is a feasible one, however, it is very important to find the right partner. It is therefore crucial to have a search committee, which will select the best candidate and will provide the detailed guidelines and regulations to make sure that the partner will achieve excellence in terms of performance.



As marine ecologists, we feel that it is worth paying the higher sewerage charges to preserve and conserve our rich marine heritage. We agree with the "Polluter Pays Principle", provided that the Government should also consider the additional amount of money which the public will find acceptable to achieve these goals. Convincing the public through education channels and also through clear evidence of improvements in water quality and marine life in Victoria Harbour will go a long way to achieving this.

Lastly, we understand that the Government (DSD) has been looking into using Chlorination as a means to disinfect the treated effluent from HATS. As there are well-documented potential toxic effects of residual chlorine to marine life, we believe that alternative methods of disinfection should also be considered, such as ozone and UV treatments, since these have been proven to have less detrimental effects on marine organisms compared with chlorination.

Finally, we strongly hope that the public will support HATS Stage 2 and the upgrade of facilities from CEPT to biological treatment. It is a vital step in transforming Victoria Harbour back into an attraction, renowned for its clean water and abundant marine life, that the people of Hong Kong can be proud of. Should you have further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

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Dr. Kenneth Leung
Dr. Andrew Cornish