
Environmentally Responsible Development

Preamble

Environmentally responsible development is about the delivery of a better quality of life for every one of our citizens, for now and for generations to come. We must tackle immediate problems —air pollution from power plants and vehicle emission, and water pollution in the harbour —with renewed vigour and determination. We owe it to future generations to act now and preserve the environment through the promulgation of sound policies on nature conservation, waste reduction and recycling, total water management and greening as well as the implementation of effective programmes. The community, the business sector and the Government are stakeholders as much as they are partners in the protection and improvement of our environment. It is incumbent upon all parties to take up this responsibility to collaborate fully, working together with commitment to Hong Kong —a place where we and our children build our sustainable home.

New Initiatives

We will:

- Encourage the power companies to undertake pilot production-scale wind energy projects for public demonstration and evaluation purposes and continue to promote the wider application of renewable energy.
- Consult the public on the viable technology(ies) to be adopted with a view to developing state-of-the-art, cost-effective and environmentally friendly large-scale waste treatment facility(ies) in Hong Kong.
- Ensure that our planning and land use objectives are geared towards our mission to protect the Victoria Harbour and enhance it for the enjoyment of our residents and visitors alike. Apart from Central, Wan Chai North and South East Kowloon, the Government will not undertake any further reclamation in the Harbour. Our policy will be reflected in relevant town plans.
- Review the development intensity in public housing projects to enhance the living environment and cost-effectiveness within permitted plot ratio.
- Introduce a Bill to amend the Building Management Ordinance to improve certain provisions in the legislation for the benefit of owners' corporations and property owners.
- Studying various options and promoting discussion on how to speed up the urban renewal process.

Ongoing Initiatives

We are:

- Working towards the implementation of the Regional Air Quality Management Plan with the Guangdong Provincial Government including the introduction of a pilot emissions trading scheme among power plants in Hong Kong and Guangdong to optimise the use of resources in the reduction of emissions in the same air shed to improve air quality in the Pearl River Delta region.
- Continuing to implement the polluter pays principle and plan for the introduction of a disposal charging scheme for construction and demolition waste in 2004. This is expected to provide economic incentives for waste producers to reduce such waste and carry out sorting to facilitate reuse/recycling.
- Implementing the pilot scheme to test out the economics and logistics of wet-and-dry garbage sorting. Upon completion of the pilot scheme in the first quarter of 2004, we will review the viability and cost-effectiveness of this form of waste recovery, and will decide on the way forward.
- Drawing up a more comprehensive nature conservation policy and a proposed implementation programme by taking into account the comments received during the three-month public consultation exercise which ended in mid-October 2003 with the goal of better achieving the nature conservation objective, in particular enhancing conservation of ecologically important habitats on private land.
- Implementing incentive schemes to encourage replacement of diesel light buses with LPG or electric light buses.

- Implementing the programme to retrofit pre-Euro heavy diesel vehicles with catalysts through provision of financial assistance and introducing legislation to make the installation mandatory upon completion of the retrofit programme.
- Promoting the use of environmentally friendly buses by adding a provision in new bus franchises on the adoption of the latest commercially available environmentally friendly technology for acquiring new buses, encouraging bus companies to deploy cleaner vehicles along busy corridors and including the provision of environmentally friendly measures as appropriate as a criterion in selecting operator for new bus route packages.
- Exploring opportunities to reuse inert construction and demolition materials outside Hong Kong. We will continue our collaboration with the construction industry and relevant authorities on the identification of land formation projects in the Mainland to reuse our inert materials.
- Striving to reduce by 2010 the emission of four major air pollutants in the region by such levels as will enable Hong Kong to achieve the current air quality objectives.
- Consulting the public on the way forward for the remaining stages of the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme in the light of the findings of the trials and studies on the options recommended by the International Review Panel.
- Implementing the Total Water Management programme in which water conservation and water resource protection are enhanced through education and promotion, while examining technologies for recycling and desalination through pilot schemes.
- Encouraging the use of recycled construction and demolition materials in public works projects.
- Promoting the integration of sustainability in the Government and the community.

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- Implementing a comprehensive greening policy for Hong Kong through the collaboration of different departments and with the input of experts and specialists in the field, and aiming to develop a sustainable greening programme for the urban areas. We have set up a high level Steering Committee on Greening and will complete the planting of 15 million trees, shrubs and annuals in 2003/04. We aim to plant another 10 million in 2004/05. We are also rolling out a community garden programme to enlist community participation in greening activities at neighbourhood level and organising various greening and horticulture activities in the 18 districts to promote public support of a green environment.
 - Implementing the flood prevention programme. We have completed 23 major flood prevention projects since 1997 and another 14 are on-going. Furthermore, another 24 projects are under various stages of planning and design. We will have substantially minimised the risk of regional flooding in the northern New Territories by 2006 upon completion of Regulation of Shenzhen River Stage III and Drainage Rehabilitation Works at Ping Yuen River.
 - Continuing with the Landslip Prevention Programme which has greatly improved slope safety. We will upgrade 250 substandard government slopes and conduct safety-screening for 300 private slopes in the coming year.
 - Developing a land use, transport and environment strategy under the Hong Kong 2030 study to guide the long-term development of Hong Kong.
 - Enhancing building management and maintenance of private housing through education, publicity, and greater participation of professional bodies and the private sector, and initiating discussions on ways to provide one-stop service to owners of private buildings.
 - Improving the legislative framework for building control and building safety.

- Streamlining the town planning process under the Town Planning Ordinance and enhancing openness of the planning system.
- Consulting various stakeholders with a view to making preliminary proposals on small house policy for more in-depth discussion.