

**For discussion on
26 June 2006**

Legislative Council Panel on Economic Services

Pilot Scheme to Promote Green Tourism in Northeast New Territories

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the pilot scheme to promote green tourism in Northeast New Territories.

Background

2. Promotion of green tourism will, apart from enhancing Hong Kong's diverse attractions, help raise public awareness of environmental conservation and benefit the local community economy. The Government seeks to make optimum use of existing resources for promotion of green tourism under the principles of nature conservation and sustainable development.

3. The northern part of the New Territories is rich in natural, cultural and heritage assets. The Tourism Commission (TC) earlier commissioned a consultancy study to identify opportunities for promoting tourism in the area. Upon completion of the study, TC consulted various stakeholders including the relevant District Councils, the local community, green groups, tourism trade, etc. on its findings. In view of the positive feedback, TC established an Inter-departmental Committee to take forward a pilot scheme in Plover Cove and Tolo Channel area and Tung Ping Chau to promote green tourism.

4. In early 2005, TC conducted a consultation forum to solicit views from various stakeholders on the pilot scheme. The green groups considered Tung Ping Chau too ecologically sensitive for any form of active development. The pilot project in Plover Cove and Tolo Channel area was generally supported.

The Pilot Scheme

5. Details of the pilot scheme were confirmed in late 2005 after further discussion with the locals, the tourism trade and Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB). It comprises three key components: enhancement of basic

facilities, an island-hopping sight-seeing itinerary, and complementary conservation and educational initiatives.

(A) Enhancement of Basic Facilities

6. We are carrying out a works programme in Plover Cove and Tolo Channel area to provide and enhance basic facilities, e.g. toilets, shelters, seating, pier facilities, signage, etc. to enable visitors to appreciate the green attractions in a more convenient and user-friendly environment. Major items of the enhancement works are set out below –

Location	Works
Lai Chi Wo	(a) Reconstruction of piazza <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repaving • provision of seating, pavilion and drainage (b) Mapboard at piazza showing points of tourism interests nearby (c) Signage at suitable locations
Ap Chau	(a) Mapboard showing points of tourism interests on the island (b) Signage at suitable locations (c) Viewing platform and associated footpath access (d) Information board at viewing platform showing points of interest in the vicinity of Ap Chau
Kat O	(a) Construction of piazza (b) Mapboard showing points of tourism interests on the island (c) Signage at suitable locations
Tap Mun	(a) Seating at pier (b) Mapboard showing points of tourism interests on the island (c) Signage at suitable locations (d) Shelters for existing seating along the walking trail in Kung Pui
Wu Kai Sha Pier	(a) Mapboard showing points of tourism interests, such as the locations of outlying islands in the area (b) Directional signage at suitable locations to facilitate public access to the pier (c) Footpath to the pier with lighting (d) Seating and shelter alongside the footpath (e) Planting in the vicinity of the footpath

Location	Works
Tai Mei Tuk	(a) Mapboard showing points of tourism interest (b) Signage at suitable locations (c) Seating and shelter near the pier (d) Upgrading of an existing toilet
Plover Cove - Bride's Pool Road	Upgrading of and provision of fresh water supply to three existing toilets
Ma Liu Shui Pier	(a) Mapboard showing points of tourism interests (b) Directional signage at suitable locations to facilitate public access to the pier (c) Seating at pier

7. In view of Tung Ping Chau's ecological sensitivity and status as an area for conservation, it would not be desirable to implement extensive infrastructure development in the area. The Government will therefore adopt a minimal approach to improve the basic facilities on the island under the sustainability development principles, as follows -

- (a) continuous upgrading of country and marine park facilities to complement the use of the Tung Ping Chau Country Trail for nature appreciation;
- (b) enhancement of the existing Tung Ping Chau pier;
- (c) upgrading of an existing toilet near the pier; and
- (d) erection of information boards outside Tin Hau Temple and Tam Tai Sin Temple on their history and heritage significance.

8. The enhancement works under the pilot scheme have commenced in March 2006 and most will be completed in 2007.

9. As no major works are involved, the enhancement works are coordinated by TC and implemented by the respective subject departments including the Architectural Services Department, Civil Engineering and Development Department and Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) with their own resources.

(B) Island-hopping Sight-seeing Itinerary

10. HKTB, in collaboration with the trade, will run a half-day island-hopping tour on a trial basis for six months from September 2006 with a view to test out the market. It intends to attract visitors to green attractions in

Yan Chau Tong Marine Park, Lai Chi Wo, Kat O and Tap Mun islands for sight-seeing and nature appreciation. The attractions include traditional villages, coastal trails, ecological habitats, etc. Highlights of the tour include –

- (a) scenic coastal areas of Yan Chau Tong Marine Park;
- (b) the native plants, hakka village and Hip Tin Temple in Lai Chi Wo;
- (c) the traditional fishing village and Tin Hau Temple in Kat O; and
- (d) the famous balanced rock in Tap Mun, etc.

11. Initial feedback from the trade is supportive. HKTB will launch a familiarization programme for the trade, and will step up the promotional efforts through its website and a special leaflet to feature the tour.

(C) Complementary Conservation and Educational Initiatives

12. The country parks are the focus of on-going promotion of green tourism. AFCD will continue to implement conservation and education measures within country and marine parks. These include the protection of the local flora and fauna; enhancement of the country park environment; and promotion of responsible nature appreciation through different channels including the internet, publications, on-site interpretation, themed activities, guided tours etc.

Way Forward

13. The Government will continue to explore further opportunities to promote green tourism under the principles of nature conservation and sustainable development, and involve the District Councils and other parties concerned in the process.

Economic Development and Labour Bureau
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