



## Kung Hei Fat Choi

During the past three months HKIEIA has been very active both organizing and participating in many events. This will continue in 2003 and I look forward to seeing many more of you there.

*Editor*



## Let's make the Accredited Monitoring Professional (AMP) A Success

The Institute has spent considerable effort over the years to develop and promulgate the AMP. The AMP gives proof that an individual has extensive experience in undertaking environmental monitoring and audit works in connection with Environmental Permits for Designated Projects. An environmental specialist with an AMP could be accepted by EPD to replace the requirement for 7 years of experience for the Independent Environmental Checker or the Environmental Team Leader. To do so we need a significant number of members to obtain AMPs. Currently there are only 11 approved members with this accreditation.

The Executive has taken the following step to increase AMP. Those HKIEIA members who, in our view, appear to have the relevant experience to qualify for the AMP would be "pre-qualified" and notified of their acceptance as AMPs, subject to the provision of the necessary documentation and payment of fees.

The AMP is a fantastic opportunity for the Institute to improve our standing as the leading EIA Institute in Hong Kong and further develop your credentials. I therefore encourage all of you who are offered "pre-qualification" over the next months to assist yourself and us and complete the application for the AMP by providing the information requested.

*Chairman*

## HKIEIA Activities

### Cultural Heritage Assessment in Environmental Impact Assessment Studies

Ms Peggy Wong, Mr Steven Ng & Mr Dominique Chan from ERM-Hong Kong, Ltd gave an interesting talk on the various aspects of cultural heritage assessment under EIAO on 30 October 2002.

The speakers first explained the legislative framework and technical guidelines for cultural heritage assessment in Hong Kong. They then took the audience through the procedures for such assessments and how investigations were conducted in the field for historical buildings, monuments and archaeological sites. The ultimate goal of these efforts was to preserve cultural heritage resources as far as possible and the key to success in preservation of such resources would be the identification and avoidance of impacts early in the project life cycle.

As in other aspects of environmental assessment, cultural heritage assessment in Hong Kong has its own problems, one of which being how cultural heritage resources are defined under different legislation or guidelines. The speakers also shared their views on the importance of preserving sites of cultural heritage. To conclude the talk, the audience was shown the speakers' findings during their previous archaeological investigations, including a collection of pottery shards from times gone by.

*Henry Leung / Marcus Ip*

## Seminar on the Basic Principles of the EIA Process – Guiding Principles of "Avoid-Minimise-Mitigate"

This is the first in the series of seminars along the theme of the "Basic Principles of the EIA Process" that the Institute has planned to organise during the year 2002-3. The chosen theme for these seminars is in line with Environmental Protection Department (EPD)'s efforts to familiarise users of the EIAO with the basic elements of the statutory process. Mr Freeman Cheung, an experienced EIA practitioner and the Lead Trainer for EIA Training and Capacity Building Programme for Government Works Departments, was invited to speak.

Mr Cheung started by giving participants an overview of the EIA process in the context of a project life cycle and the various points at which environmental considerations should be fed into the cycle. Emphases were placed on how the EIA process could be used as a proactive planning and decision

tool in the implementation of a project and the importance of focussing on environmental issues at an early stage of a project. To illustrate how the guiding principles of “avoid-minimise-mitigate” would work in practice, Mr Cheung made use of a lot of examples from previous EIA studies, including Sham Tseng Bypass, Lamma Power Station Extension and West Rail. There was also a very useful exchange of views following Mr Cheung’s presentation.

The Institute would like to thank Mr Cheung for sharing his experience with the participants and Dr Richard Cheung of City University for providing the venue for this seminar.

*Marcus Ip*

### **HKIEIA/CIWEM Joint Event Discussion Session on EIA Review**

The first joint event of HKIEIA and CIWEM in the year of 2002-3 was held on 10 December 2002. For this discussion session, we invited one of the Keynote Speakers of the conference on “*Reshaping Environmental Assessment Tools for Sustainability*”, Mr Rob Verheem, to share his experience on the various aspects of EIA review. Mr Verheem is Adjunct Secretary at the EIA Commission in the Netherlands. The Commission is independent from the Dutch Government. In the Netherlands, it is required under the law to obtain the Commission’s advice on each EIA and SEA. So far, approximately 1000 advices have been issued, with a lot of them having Mr Verheem’s direct involvement.

The fact that it had been a long day at the SEA conference held on the same day at CUHK and the failure in getting the projector to work did not diminish any of the participants’ interest in the topics raised, which included the mechanism for EIA reviews, the process of organising EIA reviews, technical competence of reviewers, and public involvement in the Netherlands. Participants attending the session also shared their experience with the EIA process in Hong Kong. It was virtually impossible to close the session and the discussions had to continue during the dinner that followed.



The Institute would like to thank Professor Lam Kin-che for making the necessary arrangements with Mr Verheem at short notice.

*Marcus Ip*

### **“Holding Back the Clock” – Managing the Mai Po Reserve**

An area of about 1,500 ha in Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay was listed as a “Wetland of International Importance” under the *Convention on Wetlands of International Importance* (the Ramsar Convention) on 4 September 1995. This “Wetland of International Importance” (or Ramsar Site) is also the largest wetland in Hong Kong. The wetland acts as

a refuelling station and wintering site for thousands of migratory birds during their migrations between the Arctic Russia and Australia.

The Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site is managed by the Ramsar Management Authority, chaired by AFCD to ensure the wetlands are managed under the wise use principle. The World Wide Fund For Nature Hong Kong (WWFHK) assists in the management of the Mai Po Nature Reserve, which forms part of the Ramsar Site. Dr Lew Young, Manager of the Mai Po Nature Reserve since 1991, took the trouble of travelling a long way from his nice office at Mai Po to Taikoo Place on 27 November 2002 to tell us about WWFHK’s plan for managing the Reserve during the next five years to come.

As suggested by the title of his talk, Dr Young said the greatest challenge in the management of Mai Po was in maintaining the habitats as wetlands, ie holding back the clock of habitat succession. For instance, we were shown how the mangroves had intruded the inter-tidal mudflats of Inner Deep Bay over the last ten years and how much efforts that WWFHK had made in preventing excessive area of these valuable feeding grounds from being lost to the mangrove stands. The increase in pollutant loads, which would cause eutrophication of the Deep Bay ecosystem, also added difficulties to the task that the management team was facing.

This event was among a series of similar meetings that WWFHK would be holding with different organisations and the general public to discuss the future management plan for Mai Po. HKIEIA was one of the very first professional organisations that Dr Young had contacted. We were certainly very glad that we had been given an opportunity to make some contributions in the process. Members interested in knowing more about the management of Mai Po, especially the discussion forum held on the plan for the next five years, may visit WWFHK’s website at <http://www.wwf.org.hk>.

*Marcus Ip*

### **Technical Visit to Mai Po Reserve**



The importance of the Mai Po Marshes and Inner Deep Bay as ecological habitats needs no further introduction. As a ‘sequel’ to Dr Lew Young’s talk on the management of Mai Po in November 2002, a visit to the reserve was organised on 18 January 2003 for a group of HKIEIA members. The main purpose of the visit was to provide participants with an opportunity to see for themselves how the reserve was managed and a better understanding of these habitat management practices.

Some members may still recall that a similar visit was held in the previous year on a rather wet and grey day but this year we had much better luck with the weather. Dr Michael Leven, an experienced ecologist and a member of the Mai Po Management Committee, led the group again this year and explained in detail every aspect on the management of the reserve.

A visit to Mai Po could not be complete without watching the visiting migratory birds, including the globally endangered Black-faced Spoonbill. The group also had the opportunity of watching the Hong Kong Bird Ringing Group in action at one of the actively managed reedbeds. The findings of the work done by the Group would reveal more about the use of the reedbeds by different bird species and would provide useful data for the management of these habitats.



The Institute would like to thank Dr Leven for his time and Dr Lew Young of WWFHK for arranging the necessary permit for the group.

*Marcus Ip*

### **Conference on Reshaping Environmental Assessment Tools for Sustainability**

The Conference, held during the second week of December 2002, was jointly organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong and Nankai University in China. HKIEIA was a sponsoring co-organizer and provided financial support for members and associates, in particular to encourage young members to attend. The Conference was well attended by more than 250 participants from 12 countries with the majority from Mainland China and Hong Kong including a good representation from HKIEIA members. This Conference was officiated by senior government officials including the Secretary ETWB, Dr Sarah Liao (FHKIEIA), and Vice Chairman of the Environmental and Resource Protection Committee, National People's Congress, Mr Wang Tao. World-renowned experts, including Barry Sadler, Maria Partidario, Rob Verheem, Jean-Roger Mercier, Xu Zhengcheng, Yuan Zheng, Zhu Tan, Zhao Qiguo, Elvis Au (FHKIEIA) and Chang King Yiu were invited to deliver keynote speeches and workshop how environmental assessment tools and practices can be reshaped to attain sustainability goals. Technical visits to Mai Po, waste management facilities and strategic transport infrastructure planning were arranged to enable visitors to gain a better understanding of how Hong Kong faces its environmental challenges. The Conference achieved its objectives by drawing more than 100 high quality papers and presentations to spark off discussion on how to achieve sustainability by using various EIA tools. Jacquelyn Anderson presented a paper on behalf of the HKIEIA

Chairman Glenn Frommer entitled 'How Can We Continually Improve The Quality of Environmental Assessment Tools' which discussed issues facing EIA practitioners and the role of HKIEIA. SEA was one of the hot topics throughout the Conference, from keynote speeches to the round table discussion towards the end of the week. According to Prof. K C Lam (MHKIEIA), Chairman of the Organizing Committee, the Conference has definitely left long lasting impacts on the development of environmental assessment in this region. He also looks forward to continued support from HKIEIA on the road to sustainability.

*Freeman Cheung*

### **New PRC Law on EIA**

On October 28 2002 the PRC Ninth National People's Congress promulgated the new EIA law. The law, which will become effective on September 30 this year, requires relevant departments of the State Council and the people's government at city or above levels to conduct EIA on planning of land use and regional development. EIA should also be undertaken for specialized development planning for industry, agriculture, forestry, energy, water works, transport, urban construction, tourism and natural resources. Whilst the implementation of EIA in China started in the 1980s during the past two decades the focus has been on 'construction projects'. This law expands the scope to cover planning activities and strategic policies. The entities participating in the EIA are restricted and must hold a qualification certificate. In addition to the handling examination and approval of certain types of projects SEPA will also handle a number of aspects of implementation of the law including governing qualifications of the service providers.

*Jacquelyn Anderson*

### **Hong Kong – PRC Co-operation in EIA**

Mr Zhu Xingxiang, Director of the Department of Supervision and Management of the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA), upon invitation of the Hong Kong SAR Government, visited Hong Kong and the Environmental Protection Department in December 2002. Mr. Zhu also attended the Conference on Reshaping Environmental Assessment Tools for Sustainability and delivered a speech on the Development of EIA in China at the First Plenary focusing on the new EIA legislation. During his visit, Mr. Zhu has shown a lot of interest in Hong Kong's EIA system especially the internet-based cyber system. Mr. Zhu has indicated to effectively implement the new legislation tens of thousands of professionals will be required and as a result he has identified capacity building and enhancement as one of his priority tasks in the coming years. To explore how the Institute can assist in this important area and the other opportunities for local practitioners in the implementation of this new legislation, a special task force led by myself is currently planning a meeting with SEPA to identify key areas of cooperation. Members will be kept informed of this initiative.

*Simon Hui*

## HKIEIA Participation

### Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) View Sharing Workshop

In 2001, a further review of the Territory Development Strategy (TDS) was launched. This review was entitled "Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy" (or "HK 2030" in short) as the exercise was intended to provide a long-term framework to guide the development of Hong Kong over the next 30 years. As part of the HK 2030 Study, a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) has to be conducted. According to the SEA Inception Report, "the SEA will be integrated with the HK 2030 Study (i.e. Main Study) by providing strategic environmental information and suggestions to facilitate the formulation, development, and identification of scenarios and options which could meet the environmental targets of a world city in Asia." The SEA commenced in October 2001 and is currently being undertaken by Hyder-Mott Connell Joint Venture. A View Sharing Workshop for the SEA was held on 30 November 2002. Participants from a wide range of background and expertise were invited to share their views on the following topics:

- A. Transportation
- B. Essential but Unwelcome Facilities
- C. Better Living Environment

Participants were divided into groups according to the above topics and members of each group were provided with a set of questions and briefing notes to aid the discussion. The breakout sessions in which individual groups discussed their respective topics provide an excellent forum for participants to freely express their views. These views were summarised in the convergence session into the following key points:

- an appropriate institutional mechanism is required to facilitate environmental decision-making, including public access to relevant information;
- Government should take the lead to initiate actions;
- the HK 2030 Study could take on a "capital" approach, ie generating specific options that target at mitigating impacts on various capitals, including water, space, species, cultural diversity, etc; and
- the principles of "avoidance (of damage)", "need management" and "value-adding" should be adopted in the long-term strategic plan.

Further information can be obtained from the official website: <http://www.info.gov.hk/hk2030>.

*Marcus Ip*

### Fourth EIAO Practitioners Liaison Group Meeting

Together with representatives from almost all major consultancies HKIEIA was invited to attend the fourth EIAO Practitioners Liaison Meeting held by EPD on 15 January.

Amongst the many items on the long agenda were presentations by EPD on Capacity Building for EIAO Stakeholders, the establishment of the EIAO Support Section and EIAO education for government works departments. Once again this stimulated discussion about the current government tendering system. The need for increased public consultation was also raised by participants both in relation to the EIAO education programme and EPD's presentation on Continuous Public Involvement. Presentations were also made on each of the 7 new draft EIA guidance notes. EPD would welcome any comments on the guidance notes which can be obtained from the EIAO website [www.info.gov.hk/epd/eia](http://www.info.gov.hk/epd/eia).

*Jacquelyn Anderson*

### A Study of Toxic Substances Pollution in Hong Kong - View Sharing Workshop

This study aims to accomplish four tasks:

1. To identify toxic substances of potential concern
2. To characterize the existing toxic substances pollution
3. To perform ecological and incremental human health risk assessments, and
4. To recommend a toxic substances control strategy.

Tasks 1 to 3 have been completed. In order to gather feedback from the many stakeholders prior to finalising the study the CH2M.HILL consultancy team conducted a view sharing workshop. Dr Pong Lai, Project Director, opened the workshop with an overview of the project. Task 1, he explained, involved the study team sending off thousands of questionnaires to industries to obtain local information and the outcome was the establishment of the PPTSL containing 135 chemicals. Mr Don Holmes explained that in Task 2 marine water, sediment and biota were sampled at specified monitoring locations and in addition data was collected from sources such as sewage treatment plant effluents, stormwater discharge and landfill leachate. The toxic substances detected were used to refine the PPTSL into a PTSL of 75 chemicals. In Task 3 Professors Keith Soloman and Len Ritter from the University of Guelph, Canada addressed three areas of concern: risk to local marine life, risk to human health associated with consuming local seafood and risk to marine mammals. Their studies lead to the conclusion that the local marine environment is not widely polluted with toxic chemicals present at levels of toxicological concern. Although several toxic organic compounds appeared to be bio-accumulating, the calculated risk to animal and human health associated with most PTSL chemicals was found to be within acceptable levels.

During the afternoon session an analysis of international conventions on control of toxic substances was presented revealing a number of regulatory and administrative "gaps" in the existing local control framework. The team's recommendations comprise both short (phase 1) and long (phase 2) term actions. Phase 1 actions include amendment of existing, and development of new, legislation and formulation of a Toxic Substances Control Management Group. Phase 2 actions then establish a mechanism to

continuously study, update and respond to future change on the established database and legislation. The final forum evoked keen discussion amongst the representatives of various parties, however I was able to raise a question about the public availability of the toxic substances analysis

database. Dr Lai kindly agreed to raise my concern with EPD and propose making the database available to all EIA practitioners.

*Chu Chung Sing*

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