

24 December 2014

Mr. Nicholas Brooke, SBS, JP, FRICS, FHKIS
Chairman
Harbourfront Commission
17/F, West Wing, Central Government Offices
2 Tim Mei Avenue
Tamar, Hong Kong

E-mail: hape@hfc.org.hk

Dear Chairman of Harbourfront Commission,

Phase 2 Public Engagement on the Proposed Establishment of a Harbourfront Authority

Views from Business Environment Council Limited 商界環保協會有限公司

In response to the Phase 2 Public Engagement on the Proposed Establishment of a Harbourfront Authority, Business Environment Council Limited 商界環保協會有限公司 (“BEC”) is pleased to see the progress made regarding the proposed establishment of a Harbourfront Authority (“HFA”) to oversee future harbourfront planning and development in a holistic and innovative manner and flexible management approach. BEC looks forward to the speedy establishment of the HFA. BEC also considers that prior to the formation of HFA, the Harbourfront Commission should be resourced to develop a comprehensive, multi-sector strategic plan for long term harbour development so that the proposed HFA would be in a position to deliver on public expectations soon after its establishment.

Over the last two decades, BEC has taken a leading role in advocating the business case for environmental excellence in Hong Kong. Our members are committed to actively engaging with the Hong Kong SAR Government and other relevant stakeholders on a range of issues relating to the environment and sustainability, including sustainable development of harbour and waterfront. BEC is a membership organisation, currently with about 190 member companies that span across major holding companies to small and medium-sized enterprises in Hong Kong. In recognising the importance of Hong Kong’s harbour, BEC set up the Harbour Business Forum (“HBF”) in 2005.

Views expressed in this submission are those of BEC and are based on consultation with HBF members, but may not necessarily correlate with the positions of individual members. BEC’s recommendations include:

- Prior to the formation of the HFA, the Harbourfront Commission should be resourced to develop a comprehensive, multi-sector strategic plan to guide the long term development of our harbour, as well as any necessary changes to the existing planning and delivery systems, so that HFA is in a position to deliver on public expectations as soon as possible after its establishment.
- HFA should be adequately resourced such that it can guide, direct and manage all interventions at the harbourfront.
- HFA resources and processes should apply a test of proportionality¹ in relation to the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance to enable key public interest improvements.
- HFA should be financially autonomous with meaningful urban design, implementation and management powers and a remit covering the entire harbourfront and harbourfront areas.

¹ The test of proportionality in the context of the harbour refers to the consideration of whether a project has enough advantages to be public to justify the loss resulting from any associated reclamation.

- HFA should be a champion for our harbour but also streamline existing systems rather than increasing bureaucracy.

BEC looks forward to working constructively with the Harbourfront Commission and the Government in taking our recommendations forward in establishing the proposed HFA. If there are any questions or concerns in regards to the content of this submission, please contact our Chief Executive Officer, Ms Agnes Li, at agnesn@bec.org.hk or 2784 3950.

Yours sincerely,



Prof John Chai
Chairman
Business Environment Council Limited

c.c. Mr Paul Chan, MH, JP, Secretary for Development
Mr Vincent Ng, Chairman of the Harbourfront Commission's Core Group for Public Engagement
Miss Christine Au, Principal Assistant Secretary (Harbour), Development Bureau
Ms Agnes Li, Chief Executive Officer, Business Environment Council Limited