

# BEC's Submission on the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Hong Kong

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### Public Consultation on the BSAP

The HKSAR Government launched a three-month public consultation on the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan ("BSAP") for Hong Kong in January 2016. The consultation ended on 7 April 2016. BEC has made a [submission](#) to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department to express views on the proposed BSAP.

### Summary of BEC's Submission

BEC welcomes the HKSAR Government's plans to put in place a BSAP, and support the overall mission and vision and the four action areas, namely Conservation, Mainstreaming, Knowledge and Community Involvement, which BEC recognises seek to improve on the achievements of Hong Kong to date in protecting its natural environment.

BEC's views and suggestions for the improvements to the BSAP are summarised as below:

#### 1. Biodiversity

- BEC regards biodiversity as essential for healthy local ecosystems that support a natural environment which provides a range of benefits including:
  - capacity to produce food;
  - the benefits of trees that store carbon;
  - reduce the heat island impact;
  - slow rainfall run-off;
  - clean the air; and
  - healthy green spaces.
- Protecting and enhancing our biodiversity to secure healthy functioning ecosystems is essential to secure our "natural capital", protecting ecosystem services for future generations.

#### 2. Balance the needs of people with the needs of the ecosystem

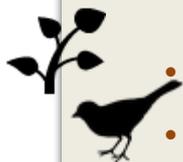
- To balance the needs between construction-related development and biodiversity, we suggest the Government:
  - commit to clear criteria for the designation of sites that fully take on board biodiversity;
  - research into species that require greater levels of protection;
  - ensure the policies of all Bureaux take on board biodiversity; and
  - put continued and transparent efforts to identify brownfield land for development engaging business in the process.



### 3. Action Area 1 (Conservation)

BEC's recommendations:

- Communicate a clear timeline for designation of areas already identified for protection in the BSAP to secure areas of high ecological value;
- For the purposes of any additional areas to be designated, for example new marine protected areas, make the current designation criteria clear and transparent, and be supplemented to fully take on board biodiversity and opportunities such as eco-tourism value;
- Explore the feasibility of establishing a framework to reduce the impact of building homes and other development;
- The proposed development and review of management plan should systematically address threats and opportunities such as those arising from climate change, and are supported with adequate funding;
- As for urban greening, beyond current approaches, consider further policy and projects to support urban biodiversity;
- Explore the impact of consumption on biodiversity, consider measures to reduce these impacts, and address the risks of inadvertently participating in the illegal wildlife trade.



### 4. Action Area 2 (Mainstreaming)

- BEC supports incorporation of biodiversity considerations into policies and strategies of Government bureaux/departments, particularly the Development Bureau, Housing and Transport Bureau, and Leisure and Cultural Services Department; and encourage enhancement with a strategic environmental assessment process.
- BEC welcomes the encouragement of incorporation of biodiversity considerations into plans and policy development in business sectors, such as property development, construction, utilities, transport and logistics, fisheries and agriculture, and those supply chains with implications for sustainable consumption.
- To encourage the adoption of biodiversity considerations by business sectors, the creation of financial incentives, voluntary guidelines and resources on best-practices may also be relevant.

### 5. Action Area 3 (knowledge)

BEC's suggestions:

- Prioritise research into the threats and risks from climate change, which the research should explore and identify opportunities, such as eco-tourism and biotech;
- Consider a stakeholder platform to help identify research priorities and funding allocation;
- Put in place a systematic approach to archive, share and disseminate research data and outcomes.

### 6. Action Area 4 (Community Involvement)

- BEC supports greater engagement with business and the community on protecting and enhancing biodiversity and conservation.
- BEC is supportive of educational initiatives of a "citizen science" or experiential learning approach, both educational and empowering, in particular for students.
- For the wider community including business, BEC recommends consideration of projects along the lines of the Singapore's Gardens by the Bay as well as promoting the existing botanical and zoological gardens, to stimulate an interest in and understanding of biodiversity whilst also providing local tourist attractions.
- For other sections of society, for example the older age group television programmes featuring local biodiversity may be a better way of communicating.
- For the business community, case studies based on real world examples that illustrate and make the business case for biodiversity protection and enhancement are encouraged.
- BEC supports engagement around the broader concept of sustainable consumption and production, which has the advantage of more clearly communicating the role of business and consumer in protecting and enhancing our natural environment.



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Business Environment Council Limited 商界環保協會有限公司 (“BEC”) is an independent, charitable membership organisation, established by the business sector in Hong Kong. Since its establishment in 1992, BEC has been at the forefront of promoting environmental excellence by advocating the uptake of clean technologies and practices which reduce waste, conserve resources, prevent pollution and improve corporate environmental and social responsibility. BEC offers sustainable solutions and professional services covering advisory, research, assessment, training and award programmes for government, business and the community, thus enabling environmental protection and contributing to the transition to a low carbon economy.

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