

For discussion on
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LANTAU DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Lantau Conservation Fund

PURPOSE

This paper aims to brief the Lantau Development Advisory Committee on the proposal for setting up a \$1,000 million Lantau Conservation Fund (LCF) to take forward conservation and related projects as well as minor local improvement works in rural Lantau.

BACKGROUND

2. Lantau is rich in natural and cultural assets. While pressing ahead with development projects, the Government is committed to conserving Lantau. The Sustainable Lantau Blueprint promulgated in June 2017 has already mapped out the overarching principle of “Development in the North, Conservation for the South” as well as set out various conservation initiatives. To further harness Lantau’s advantages in its connections to the world, the Government promulgated in the 2018 Policy Address the “Lantau Tomorrow Vision”, for which “Conservation to precede Development” is one of the policy directives with a view to enhancing the environmental capacity of Lantau to achieve sustainability.

Establishment of the LCF

3. At present, Lantau’s conservation resources, particularly in South Lantau, are largely privately owned. The fragmented private land ownership has rendered great difficulties in implementing conservation initiatives. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local communities, landowners, etc., could be motivated through financial incentive and support to take part in conservation and related projects.

(Translated Version)

4. A dedicated funding scheme for conserving Lantau is recommended for handling the conservation of rural resources in Lantau in a coordinated and integral manner, with a view to enhancing the resources and effectiveness of conservation efforts. The LCF will be used to support projects that would contribute to the overall conservation of rural Lantau, raise community awareness on the conservation of rural Lantau, and mobilise the community to put conservation into practice, with a view to fostering a quality living environment for the current generation and beyond.

5. The proposed \$1,000 million LCF will consist of two parts, including:

- conservation and related projects; and
- minor local improvement works.

(A) Conservation and Related Projects

6. Half of the LCF, i.e. \$500 million, will be dedicated to providing financial support to NGOs, local communities, landowners, etc., to carry out conservation and related projects involving private land¹, and promote community involvement, education or research projects in Lantau. This part of the LCF will comprise two streams. The first stream will cover (i) conservation projects involving management and conservation of privately-owned land of high ecological significance and/or buildings with cultural values; and (ii) conservation-related scientific research and local history collection. The other stream will cover initiatives or activities for community involvement, public education and promotion purposes.

7. The conservation efforts to be covered by this part of the LCF include natural environment, ecology, culture, history, rural character, landscape, geomorphology and other relevant elements.

(B) Minor Local Improvement Works

8. The other half of the LCF, i.e. \$500 million, will be spent on minor local improvement works to be carried out by the Government on government land in Lantau, with a ceiling of \$30 million for each project.

¹ While this part of the LCF is mainly for projects to be carried out on private land, project proponents must seek prior approval of relevant government departments in accordance with the established procedures before implementation if government land is involved.

(Translated Version)

9. These projects aim to enhance the accessibility of remote villages in Lantau or improve the livelihood of the local residents whilst conserving/enhancing the rural environment in Lantau, and are generally small in scale. The projects may include (i) improvement works in remote villages to enhance the accessibility, environment and livelihood of villagers; (ii) improvement works to recreation facilities; (iii) improvement works to promote eco-recreation as well as public education on environmental protection; (iv) reinstatement works on government land affected by environmentally damaging activities, such as planting works and removal of illegal structures as may be requested by other departments, etc.; and (v) enhancement, rehabilitation and other projects for the natural environment/habitat and buildings on government land.

10. Details of the operation of the LCF will be worked out after fund is secured.

Implementation Priority

11. It was announced in the 2017 Policy Address that, to underpin the sustainable development and conservation of Lantau, the Government would implement rural conservation projects in selected pilot areas such as Tai O, Shui Hau and Pui O. To follow this policy directive, we recommend starting with the LCF by giving priority to those conservation and related projects concerning such pilot areas. Quality projects in other areas of high conservation value will also be welcomed.

CONCLUSION

12. Members are invited to offer their views on the proposal for setting up the \$1,000 million LCF as set out in the paragraphs above.

**Civil Engineering and Development Department
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