HONG KONG INSTITUTE
OF ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT ASSESSMENT
香港環境影響評估學會

Newsletter

Updating Hong Kong on Environmental Impact Assessment

Issue August 2007

Editorial

Stop global warming - are we up to it?

This summer has hit another record high for heat waves. Climate change, global warming – these words are getting increasing attention lately. At least this was the goal of the Live Earth concerts, held on 7 July 2007 and headed by former US Vice President Al Gore to raise awareness on global warming.

Global warming has been a popular topic in various conferences recently as well. It was one of the focuses in the G8 Summit held on 6-8 June 2007 in Germany. Locally, Hong Kong hosted the International Conference on Climate Change on 29-31 May 2007.

While it is a positive sign that there is international momentum for embarking on this enormous challenge, but how far are we willing to go to provide a sustainable environment for generations to come? Can we increase the use of low carbon technologies for cleaner energy or the use of environmentally friendly designs and construction materials? How are technological developments affected by market conditions and government policies? How can we balance the risks and opportunities?

These are just a few of the many difficult questions that come to mind. Making contributions to the mitigation of climate change is a huge task and requires the cooperation of all areas of society. Stay tuned for more discussions on climate change being organized by the Institute later in the year.

Lisa POON

Chairman's Remarks

We can all take pleasure in seeing the Institute healthily sustained and moving into its second decade. The recent 11th AGM had a record high participation of 64, comprising over one-third of the HKIEIA members. It was exciting to welcome a fresh supply of new blood. 30 new members joined the Institute last year and our membership list is steadily growing.

A number of technical events have been planned for this year, with subjects ranging from global climate change, US power plant air pollution clean up, environmental assessment challenges in China, to local subjects such as assessment, pollution control and 3D technologies, planning, eco-city and marine life. We are also exploring social activities with other institutions. We look forward to your active participation, and any ideas and suggestions you may have. We will continue our discussion with Government on recognition of the Accredited Monitoring Professional (AMP) qualification, and are in dialogue with The Hong Kong Institute of Engineers (HKIE) to assist interested EIA practitioners with appropriate environmental/applied science experience and qualifications to join the HKIE Environmental Division. Following last year's success in the regional conferences and workshops on EIA, public participation and 3D visualization, we will continue the close collaboration and experience sharing with our Mainland counterparts, notably in the international SEA conference in Beijing scheduled for later this year.

Once again, I would like to thank you all for such a wonderful past year and look forward to seeing you in the coming year. Lastly, I would like to extend our very best wishes to Dr Pong Lai (FHKIEIA) who has retired from serving the committee and is starting a new career in the United Kingdom.

Josh LAM

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Report from the Secretary

With the Government's commencement of the Review of the Air Quality Objectives project, we look forward to future opportunities for our members and the public to express our opinions on these challenging air quality issues. As a responsible citizen and professional in EIA, we shall join hands together with the Government to provide our younger generations a sustainable planet with bluer sky and cleaner air.

In the near future, our web site will be revamped to provide members with up to date information on events/activities as well as to enhance the information exchange to be more transparent and easily accessible.

David YEUNG

Annual General Meeting 2007

Forty one Fellows and Members gathered at the Kowloon Club on 15 May for the Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2007. Josh LAM (Chairman, 2006-07) presented an Annual Report on the Institute's accomplishments in 2006-07, and Freeman CHEUNG (Hon. Treasurer, 2006-07) presented the Auditor's Report. Members agreed on the re-election of Louis Lai & Luk Certified Public Accountants as the Institute's Honorary Auditor for year 2006 – 2007. Ms. Anissa WONG, Permanent Secretary for the Environmental, Transport and Works, (Environment)/Director of Environmental Protection Department, gave a speech "Development and Outcomes of Hong Kong EIA System".

David YEUNG

27th Annual Conference of the International Association for Impact Assessment 2007

Josh Lam and Alan Kwok (FHKIEIA) represented the HKIEIA to attend the 27th Annual Conference of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) held in Seoul on 3-9 June 2007. There were over 750 attendants from 80 countries participating in this year's conference, on the theme **Growth, Conservation and Responsibility - Promoting Good Governance and Corporate Stewardship through Impact Assessment.**

The keynote speeches were interesting and informative, eg. Prof Rabel Burdge talked about the implications of global warming on social impacts, Dr Stephen Lintner discussed the issues, trends and challenges of responsible growth and impact assessment, and Dr Maria Neira presented the millennium development goals and the latest agendas of the World Health Organization, promoting health impact assessment as a pillar for development. Five Theme Forums were arranged, including Corporate Stewardship, Capacity Building, Governance, Biodiversity and Sustainability, and Sustainable Development. There were also a number of concurrent sessions that covered a broad spectrum of topics such as Public Participation, Social Impact Assessment, Environmental Management Systems, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Impact Assessment Law, Policies and Practices, and EIA Methodologies. It was interesting to meet up with IA practitioners from other parts of the world and exchange experiences in a diversity of subjects, promoting HKIEIA in the process.

Charlotte Bingham is now the new IAIA President, and Alan Kwok continues to be the Treasurer. The coming IAIA08 will be held in May 2008 in Perth, Australia and the conference theme is **The Art and Science of Impact Assessment.**

Josh LAM

HKIEIA Activities

Seminar on Risk-based Remediation: An Overview of the UK Contaminated Land Regime

In preparing for the implementation of the upcoming new land contamination assessment guideline to replace the Dutch B Levels with Risk-Based Remediation Goals (RBRGs) in the later half of this year, members were again invited to attend another technical seminar on the subject organized by HKWMA in March 2007. Members were benefited from the seminar and became equipped with a deeper understanding of the ongoing RBRG assessment being performed overseas. A specific case study on the Thames View Estate project in the United Kingdom was used to illustrate how RBRGs were implemented.

Various Railway Noise Seminars

To continue with the railway noise control series with the collaboration with HKIOA and PolyU, there were more seminars given by the local leading experts throughout April to June. Speakers shared with the members, the challenges faced not only during the EIAO process, but also at the planning, construction and operational stages of typical railway projects. Details on how noise mitigation measures such as the multi-plenum systems, noise barriers, enclosures, permanent way and rolling stocks maintenance could help to mitigate noise impact were deeply discussed. Those could be something that not every EIA practitioners could actively participate. Audiences have showed their great interest on these topics and there were many lively discussions after these seminars.

Environmental Assessment of Plans in China: Challenges

With the kind help from CUHK for the co-ordination with a visiting scholar, Dr. Olivia Bina, a seminar on “Environmental Assessment of Plans in China: Challenges” was successfully organized in June, while Olivia was in Hong Kong.

Olivia provided a brief overview on 'Strategic Environmental Assessment' (SEA) based on the international practice and academic writings on the topic. She also highlighted the more recent thinking on the subject of SEA which emphasized attention to the context of implementation, as well as the broad objectives of better environmental governance. She introduced the legal

requirements for SEA in China and explored the challenges faced by practitioners with particular reference to the experience of introducing SEA in the Ministry of Railways, China.

Henry LEUNG

Air Pollution and Electric Utilities in the U.S. – Power Plants in the U.S. Clean Up Their Act!

Atkins China Ltd and HKIEIA jointly organised a talk held on 25 May 2007 by Ms Cyndi Levesque, an experienced environmental specialist at an electric utility in San Antonio, Texas. She gave a presentation on how the federal environmental regulations affect power plants in the U.S., their pollution control and measurement techniques.

Pollutant emissions such as CO_2, NO_x, SO_2 and Hg causes concern for global warming, ozone smog, acid rain and depositions that have harmful impacts to the health of humans, crops and natural systems. Cyndi shared with us the U.S. environmental regulations, including the recent carbon dioxide legislation in the U.S. Congress, that have become more stringent over the years in order to reduce the air pollution levels generated by these facilities.

Pollution control techniques include the use of reverse gas baghouse or electrostatic precipitator to reduce particulate matter. Limestone scrubber is used to reduce sulphur dioxide emissions. Techniques for nitrogen oxide reduction include burner controls, tangential firing and selective catalytic reduction. In addition, Continuous Emission Monitors are required for compliance monitoring and are used to measure stack pollutants and opacity.

After the presentation, it was shown that there was great interest from the participants as indicated by the extensive questions and discussions from the floor, especially from Hong Kong's very own utility companies.

Lisa POON

Forthcoming Events and Activities

There will be more activities coming up tailored to meet our training theme this year: How technologies contain pollution and make improvement of our living quality. These include dissemination of predicted environmental impact in a 3D visualisation environment through the Internet for 3D EIA and Planning Projects; technology driven solutions for the quantification of road noise; nature programme at Ngong Ping Village; global climate change; technical visit to wind farm & power plant in Lamma Island, KCRC's LMC wetland / KSL TBM site and more… So, please watch out for the update from the Institute to find out more……..

Route to Corporate Membership for Environmental Discipline of The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers

Whilst many Members have been working in the field of engineering for a long time, it has been difficult for them to be elected as Corporate Members of HKIE, despite the many routes available for admission. One of the first hurdles would be meeting HKIE's requirements on academic qualifications. This has generated quite a bit of enquiries and discussions within HKIEIA.

At our AGM back in May this year, one of our Fellows Daniel Chan (who is also Chairman of HKIE's

Environmental Discipline Advisory Panel) talked about a potential route for experienced HKIEIA Members to attain HKIE Corporate Membership. This prompted some of our Members to attend an HKIE technical seminar on 31 July, at which Daniel gave a more detailed talk on the subject.

The route that should be most relevant to HKIEIA Members is the one intended for "applicants with non-accredited degrees" for the "emerging" HKIE Disciplines, of which the Environmental Discipline is one. The route was approved by HKIE's Qualification and Membership (Q&M) Board for three years of implementation commencing 15 March 2007. An applicant taking this route must possess a degree of applied science nature relevant to the Environmental Discipline and a minimum of eight years of post-degree experience in the Discipline. In other words, the degree must not be one that involves only pure scientific research. It is also acknowledged that applicants taking this route are very often not entirely responsible for engineering designs but they still need to demonstrate that they have contributed in a substantial way to engineering solutions.

Those interested in finding out more on the application procedures and assessment criteria for attaining HKIE Corporate Membership should refer to the Information Booklet entitled *M3 – Routes to Membership* and the Information Sheet on *Criteria and Procedures in Considering Applicants with Non-Accredited Degrees for Professional Assessment of the Three "Emerging" Disciplines (Environmental, Information and Materials)* available for download at the HKIE's official website (www.hkie.org.hk -> Qualification and Membership -> Downloads).

Marcus IP

HKIEIA Membership

The Institute has currently a total of 198 members, including 21 Fellows, 155 Corporate Members, 20 Associate/Student Members and 2 Honorary Members.

HKIEIA Finances

The Treasurer is pleased to report that as of August 2007 the cash at bank is HK$735,536.89.

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