NEWSLETTER

Hong Kong Institute of Environmental Impact Assessment
香港環境影響評估學會

Updating Hong Kong on Environmental Impact Assessment Issue January 2018

Editorial: Can Hong Kong Become a Smarter SMART City?

The Hong Kong Government published its Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong late last year, outlining a vision to build Hong Kong into a world-class smart city. The Blueprint maps out development plans for the next five years to enhance the effectiveness of city management and improve people's quality of living and Hong Kong's attractiveness and sustainability by making use of innovation and technology. These development plans cover six major areas - smart mobility, smart living, smart environment, smart people, smart government and smart economy.

The Blueprint has received a luke-warm reception from many commentators, who have criticized various aspects of the plan. Amongst other things these include; the lack of deployment of mobile payment systems, the need to overhaul e-commerce Business to Government and Government to Government trade-related systems, the requirement for further studies electronic road pricing (an idea which has been floating around for over 20 years), and a slow overall implementation schedule. Several articles (such as this piece from the SCMP) have also reflected on Hong Kong's poor performance in a recent Global Smart City Index, where we came in 68th; way behind Singapore (2nd), and also trailing other east Asian cities such as Taipei, Tokyo and Seoul.

Some of this criticism should be taken with a large pinch of salt. The Global Smart City Index that was widely referenced is compiled by a company called Smart EasyPark (which as you would imagine, sells smart parking solutions). Dig a little deeper into the index methodology, and we find that factors relating to transportation make up a disproportionate amount of the overall score. Within this transportation category, items such as 'Access to Smart Parking' and 'Car Sharing Services' are given equal weighting to 'Public Transport', meaning our excellent transit systems that account for 90% of daily journeys in Hong Kong (the highest rate in the world) are largely ignored. Herein lies a major problem with a lot of current smart city thinking: with the huge and growing market for ICT services in this sector, it is unclear how much of the agenda is being driven to benefit service providers rather than developed to meet actual needs and interests of urban citizens.

Expanding on this topic, Johan Colding and Stephan Barthel of Stockholm University note that current research and planning of smart cities often lacks any detailed understanding and appreciation of important relationships between humans and the environment. Although Smart City solutions are being promoted to monitor various environmental parameters, such as air pollution, temperature, vibrations, noise; and make humans consume less energy and water; little consideration is given to other critically important aspects of social-environmental interactions such as food security, biodiversity protection, and the quality of public open spaces. This issue is certainly a concern for the Hong Kong Smart City Blueprint. The Smart Environment chapter is a distinctly underwhelming rehash of existing programmes (primarily the Climate Action Plan 2030+), plans to deploy remote sensing devices to measure air quality and waste management, and a rather vague commitment to adopt new green technologies when they become commercially available. The current Blueprint does not fully leverage excellent research and projects undertaken at Hong Kong Universities (such as the HKUST-led street-level air quality forecasting and exposure programme, PRAISE) and Government Departments (such as WSD's Water Intelligent Network). Moreover, it does not address other fundamental social-environmental issues critical to the sustainability of our city and health and well-being of Hong Kong residents. Wouldn't it be fantastic to see Hong Kong taking a lead in adopting ICT for environmental protection, say monitoring populations of endangered species, preventing hill-fires or promoting biodiversity education? We would sincerely hope that the Steering Committee on Innovation and Technology can use some of the $500 million earmarked for funding smart city projects to improving environmental management of Hong Kong.

David GALLACHER, Editor

Chair's Remarks

It is very fulfilling when surfing our HKIEIA Facebook Page to find out what a fruitful year we have for the year 2017. The focus of the Institute this year is on capacity building, with some highlights including the 5th China Strategic Environmental Assessment Forum 2017 and Environmental Risk Assessment training workshop.

Since the launching of our capacity training series in June 2017, we have held 4 seminars and invited more than 8 celebrated speakers to talk on stream design, landscape and visual impacts, archaeology, place ecology and birds, sustainable green economy and public engagement etc. The responses were overwhelmed. All the short talks were delightful and had attracted more than 200 audiences so far.

The Institute will continue to select new topics for the capacity building series to facilitate the exchange of ideas, knowledge and information on environmental protection and impact assessment in the coming year. I look forward to your support and participation too.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a happy New Year!

Clara U, Chairlady

From the Secretary

The new Committee was formed on the AGM of 20 June 2017. This AGM also served as the first AGM for the newly formed HKIEIA Limited. The formation of the new company would enhance our capacity in organising training and all sorts of events to support the development of the Institute and the profession.

Here is an overview of the Executive Committee 2017-18:

Chair:	Clara U
Honorary Treasurer:	David Yeung
Honorary Secretary:	Jackie Yip
Members:	Freeman Cheung
	Mohamed Hasan Isa
	David Gallacher
	Lam Kin Che
	Josh Lam
	Henry Leung
	David Stanton
	Raymond Wong
Ad-hoc member:	Simon Cheung
	Glenn Frommer
	Kathy Ip
	Karen Lee

Jackie YIP, Honorary Secretary

HKIEIA Finances

The accounts remain healthy with accumulated fund over HK$1.0M at end of December 2017.

You are reminded to remit your membership dues to the Honorary Treasurer in accordance with Clause 26 of the Institute's Memorandum, all members shall pay an annual subscription as decided by the Committee payable in advance on the first day of May each year. Please send your cheque, without delay, to the following address for my attention if you have not paid the membership subscription.

Hong Kong Institute of Environmental Impact Assessment Limited
c/o Mr. David Yeung (Honorary Treasurer)
21/F, BEA Harbour View Centre
56 Gloucester Road
Wan Chai
Hong Kong

It is the advice from our auditor that we need to look at the unpaid membership fees seriously as the accumulated account receivable is affecting our financial situation.

David YEUNG, Honorary Treasurer

HKIEIA Memberships

As of December 2017, the Institute currently had a total of 462 members, including 30 Fellows (8 of which are Honorary Members), 301 Corporate Members, 125 Associate Members and 6 Student Members.

Mohamed Hasan ISA

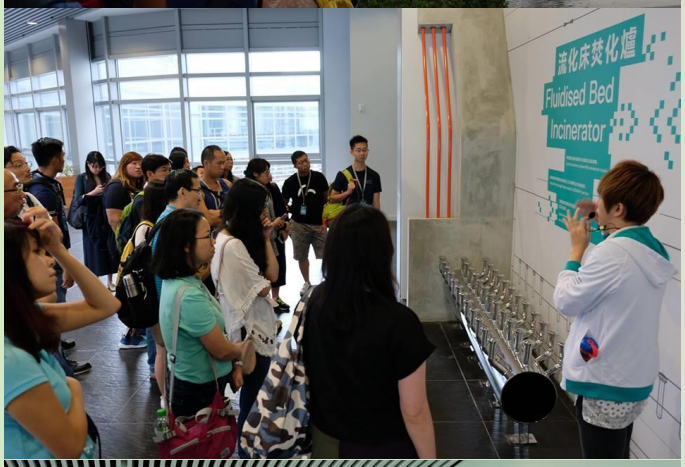
Capacity Building Series – Environment Hong Kong 1.1: Archaeology and Place Ecology, 20 Jul 2017

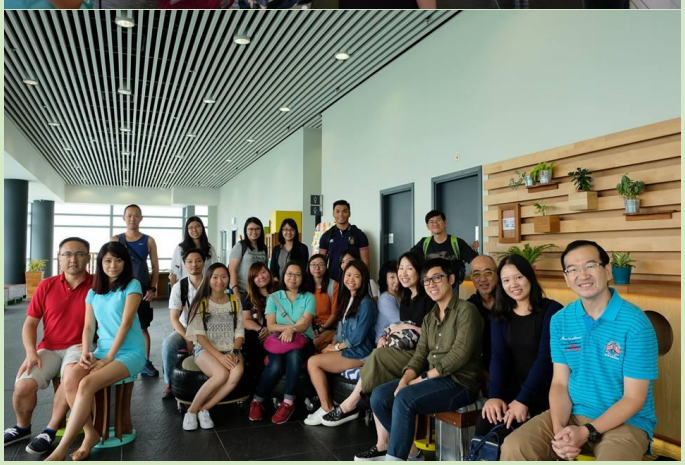
Further to the overwhelming support for our first capacity building seminar in June, we organized the second seminar in the series on 20 July 2017. We were glad to have invited Julie Van Den Bergh to give us an overview of Archaeological Impact Assessment and Deborah Kuh to introduce us a new concept Place Ecology.

Kathy IP

HKIEIA Visit – T • PARK & T • SPA, 23 Jul 2017

In summer 2017, we arranged a guided tour on 23 July at the unique self-sustained facility which combines a variety of advanced technologies with recreational, educational and ecological features in a single complex. We also reserved an enjoyable T • SPA session with hot, ambient and cool temperatures as well as a seamless sea view of Deep Bay for all participants to relax and refresh from the busy daily life. We all had a pleasant journey at T • PARK!





Simon CHEUNG

Capacity Building Series – Environment Hong Kong 1.2: How to Balance and Sustain?, 24 Aug 2017

We held the third seminar in the capacity building series on 24 August 2017. Our speakers, Mike Kilburn shared with us the balance between conservation and development in Hong Kong, and Dr. Karen Lee inspored us with her experience on social innovations for sustainable development.

Kathy IP

Capacity Building Series – Environment Hong Kong 1.3: Dynamics of Green and Birds, 21 Sep 2017

For the fourth seminar in the capacity building series on 21 September 2017, we were honoured to invite Suzanne Cheung to talk about the ecology of environmental NGOs and Paul Leader to give us a glimpse of various techniques for bird surveys.

Simon CHEUNG

HKIEIA Visit – Decoding the Geological History of Tung Ping Chau, 14 Oct 2017

A delightful Boat Trip x Geotour at Tung Ping Chau was held on 14 October 2017. We were honoured to have Professor KC Lam to be our superstar geotour guide. Tung Ping Chau is not only renowned for its laminated sedimentary rocks, but also for rare minerals and unique geological features. The latter are the clues to the island's geological past.

In this geotour, Professor KC Lam, an experienced geologist, has played Sherlock Holmes, guiding participants to decode what can be found and to reconstruct the geological history. The geotour in the morning took about 3 hours. All participants were given photos of geological features (rock, minerals, fossils, geological structures) to hunt for. Special prizes were presented to those who have found the greatest number of such features in the shortest possible time.

We had a nice seafood lunch at the Ping Chau Store run by the locals. In the afternoon, we separated into two groups with one taking a Coral Watch & Snorkelling Tour at the eastern waters of Tung Ping Chau marine park while the other group joined the geotour at Northern Tung Ping Chau. We enjoyed a wavy boat trip and exciting tour!

Simon CHEUNG & Kathy IP

Capacity Building Series – Environment Hong Kong 1.4: Public Engagement and EM&A, 19 Oct 2017

For the fifth seminar in the capacity building series on 19 October 2017, we are pleased to have Timothy J. Peirson-Smith to share his experience on public engagement, as well as two young members Man Kit Cheung and Austin Chan to present their perception on EM&A.

Simon CHEUNG

Technical Seminar – Ecotourism & Biodiversity Conservation, 15 Nov 2017

We jointly organised technical seminar with HKIE Mechanical, Marine, Naval Architecture and Chemical Division on 15 November 2017. We were honoured to have Dr. Billy Hau, Principal Lecturer of the School of Biological Sciences of HKU, to share his insights on Ecotourism and Biodiversity Conservation in Hong Kong and his gorgeous photos taken during his ecotours around the world.

Kathy IP

HKIEIA x HKIOA Christmas Party, 14 Dec 2017

We had a festive Christmas celebration jointly organized with HKIOA on 14 December 2017. It was a cozy night at L16 Café and Bar for over 100 members with a warm dinner buffet with garden night view.

We enjoyed the lucky draw with 30 prizes sponsored by our generous guests and presented by our Santa Claus. One of the exciting games of the night was Beer Challenge - our champion David Gallacher only took 6 seconds to finish the whole pint!

Special thanks to the amazing live band performance by the talented young members. It was a wonderful night for catching up with old companions and meeting up new friends of the two Institutes.

Kathy IP & Simon CHEUNG

Upcoming Events

IAIA18: Environmental Justice in Societies in Transition, Durban, South Africa, 16-19 May 2018

This is the first time that we have a joint session with Appraisal Center for Environment and Engineering, Ministry of Environmental Protection, China. Our Conference Session is "China's EIA Process: Adapting for a Sustainable Future" which aims to showcase China's experience in restructuring environmental impact assessment (EIA) framework and strategy to integrate capacity building in the EIA framework, in order to address the environmental impacts of mega infrastructure and development projects.

We have invited five renowned speakers who are experienced in China's EIA development. Case studies from the Mainland China and Hong Kong will also be demonstrated. The session will be conducted in a plenary discussion format. Speakers and audience will be invited to discuss that the latest development in the EIA framework addressing the environmental issue

Karen LEE

Capacity Building Series – Environment Hong Kong 1.5: Marine Mammals and Sustainable Drainage, 18 Jan 2018

CPD Seminar – Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance 20 years on: achievements and possible enhancements, 8 Feb 2018

EM&A Workshop for Practitioners and Stakeholders, Early 2018

HKIEIA Visit – Macau Wetland and Great Bay Area, Early 2018

The Event Coordinators

Contributors Wanted!

We're always on the lookout for new and interesting material to add to the HKIEIA Newsletter. Do you have any articles you'd like to contribute? Upcoming events you'd like to publicize? Photos from recent events you'd like to share? We'd love to hear from you! Please feel free to contact us on: info@hkieia.org.hk or www.facebook.com/hkieia.

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