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 July 2020

Impact Assessment and Sustainable Development – Updates from IAIA19

The theme of the 2019 IAIA annual conference was "Evolution or Revolution: Where Next for Impact Assessment?" Delegates were encouraged to submit papers addressing some of the critical issues facing the Impact Assessment (IA) community such as:

- Are IA regulations adequate in terms of scope and content, and can they be effective in the future?
- Is the mandated science-based analytical approach of IA at odds with the broader purposes sought by communities, such as promoting sustainable development, educating and empowering stakeholders, and challenging the normative values of growth?
- What role can practitioners play in this debate and the ultimate reform of IA processes?

On the second point, there was a good deal of discussion on the interface between EIA and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The SDG were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The SDGs provide quantitative objectives across the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve oceans and forests.

Internationally, IA is evolving and developing a broader remit, often now including social and economic elements, incorporating strategic assessments, assessing cumulative impacts and involving greater community participation. Given this direction, there were a number of presentations at IAIA reviewing whether IA should be more closely aligned with SDG. This issue was addressed most clearly by Bryan Jenkins of University of Adelaide, who summarized the key elements of 'Original' IA with focus purely on environment, 'Evolved' IA, and SDG:

Original Impact Assessment	Evolved Impact Assessment	Sustainable Development Goals
PURPOSE		
Process for considering environmental factors in development decisions	Define environmental objectives to be achieved by development	Set targets for proactive development to achieve sustainable outcomes
FOCUS		
Primary focus on adverse effects on the biophysical environment	Expansion to include social, health and other impacts of development	Sustainable development with social, economic and environmental outcomes
APPLICATION		
Application to proposed development projects	Strategic assessment of policies, plans and programs	Agenda for transformational change
TIMING		
Timelines set by proposed development schedule and assessment process	Timelines set by program or project schedule and assessment process	Targets and timelines set by sustainable development agenda
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION		
Formal process of submission on EIS, and, appeals on decision and conditions	Community consultation in impact assessment	Goal of inclusive society and participation in decision making
OUTCOME		
Avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse environmental effects of projects	Neutral or beneficial effect where cumulative effects exceed sustainability limits	Actions to achieve targets for social and economic goals, and, environmental improvement and restoration

Although we can see some convergence between IA and SDG, Dr. Jenkins pointed out that there is a critical conceptual difference between IA and SDG. Whereas IA is still fundamentally an effects-based process, SDG is outcome-based. He concluded that this difference precludes widespread adoption of SDG in IA, but also noted that IA can still play an important subsidiary role in SDG implementation, by providing strategic IA of polices and plans across different SDG sectors.

These conclusions are of interest locally in Hong Kong, where our adoption of SDG since 2015 has been patchy at best. We have very low public awareness of SDG, little explicit reference to SDG in existing sustainability programs, and limited coordination between different sustainability programs within government, and also between public and private sectors. While some recent EIA's have included socio-economic assessments (e.g. HKIA 3RS), Hong Kong has not seen the same evolution of IA across different sectors as is the case in some other jurisdictions. Even if these global trends were mirrored in Hong Kong, IA is probably not the right tool for us to address our SDG commitments.

So, how can our environmental sector better promote SDG? One possible solution would be to revisit Sustainability Assessments (SA). We have written before about how SA are currently poorly utilised in project planning and assessment in Hong Kong. Revising the sustainability parameters used in SA (which were formulated almost 20 years ago!) to be more closely aligned with SDG is an obvious step that would improve the effectiveness of SA, and also help to mainstream the adoption of SDG in Hong Kong.

David GALLACHER, Editor

ZERO GENERATOR SITES? An easy win for the environment and communities

The challenge

When I was a consultant doing environmental assessments, I remember recommending construction projects get connected to the power supply as soon as possible to reduce the use of diesel generators and their associated noise and air quality impacts. Now I am working for a contractor, Gammon, I better understand the reality!

Typically, there is insufficient power for contractors to connect to and the first thing we do when we mobilise, is start the generators! Even on a recent Government works project, it took us six months to get temporary power. More often it is longer. For some private developments, there is often not enough time for the application and cable laying for sufficient temporary power, or there is no planned space for a temporary transformer room (TTR) within the site. We then have to wait for permanent power, perhaps for 18 months or more. The result is a large generator is usually required for every tower crane. More generators are required for pumps, hoists, tools, site offices, lighting etc. Sometimes we can get a small power supply but that is normally used for overnight emergency pumps and lighting or the site office.

So, is there an easy solution?

Can we avoid using diesel generators entirely? We believe so, and having discussed with both HK Electric and CLP, it seems entirely feasible provided the application is submitted early enough.

At the planning and design phases, project engineers or architects can make allowance for the TTR and the proponent can submit early application to the power company for temporary power. With an enabling or advance works contract, sufficient temporary power can be made available, a TTR built, and power connected before the main contract (or even the foundations contract) is awarded.

This will rely on understanding the power demand for a construction site, but an experienced construction management professional should be able to provide a reasonable forecast during the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process or for a Town Planning Board application environmental assessment.

As an alternative, with early planning and design consideration, the proponent could do an advance work contract for early installation of permanent power to be used during both the construction and operation phase, but this is likely to impose constraints on the design and construction method.

As an interim solution, we are using a mass battery energy storage system for high peak demand equipment such as tower cranes. This is called the Enertainer, and Gammon advised inventors AMPD Energy during its research and development. These require only a small quantity of power to charge but can discharge large amounts of electricity throughout the day. They do not solve the challenges of more stable power demand, though.

Where does EIA or environmental assessment fit in?

What would help drive change and make zero generator sites a reality is firm requirements for early temporary power in the Environmental Mitigation Implementation

Schedule in the EM&A Manual of an EIAO project or the mitigation measures for a Town Planning Board application. The mitigation measure would be applicable during the construction phase for both air quality and noise nuisance with the objective of minimising impacts to nearby sensitive receivers and construction workers. The implementation agent should be the project proponent (client) and the implementation stage should be prior to the construction stage. While I'm not aware of any guidelines or practice notes requiring this procedure, perhaps this will change in the future.

Are there other benefits?

If early grid connection and electrification becomes the norm rather than the exception, this will also pave the way for more construction plant electrification in the future. There are already developments in electric plant such as excavators and while electrically-powered replacements for heavy diesel plant such as those used during foundations work are not yet available in the market place, this is likely to change in the future. Having sites ready to adopt these latest technologies will be another advantage of early electrification.

Finally, and arguably most importantly, a generator rarely runs with optimum efficiency, with much time spent idling (for a tower crane, we have found more than 80% idling time, for example). Switching to electricity will therefore greatly improve energy efficiency and, of course, reduce all-important carbon emissions.

Emma HARVEY

Chair's Remarks

Dear HKIEIA Members, Friends and Fans:

No doubt we have witnessed our vulnerabilities during the COVID-19 crisis. However, it is truly heartened to see how communities have rallied together and are looking out to help those in need. Also we salute the fantastic job done by the carers looking after patients who have COVID-19 and the cleaners regularly put themselves at risk to selflessly keep our city clean and safe.

We understand it will be a long battle before things get back to normal, not to mention our environment. According to UNEP's COVID-19 response in May 2020, COVID-19 is a reminder that human health is linked to the planet's health. Coronaviruses are zoonotic, meaning they can be transmitted from animals to people. They account for seventy-five percent of all emerging infectious diseases. To prevent future outbreaks, we environmental professionals must continue our effort to address threats to ecosystems and wildlife, including habitat loss, pollution and climate change.

There are still measures in place to limit the spread of infection such as social distancing and cancelation of meetings and workshops that are not absolutely necessary. Please be assured that HKIEIA will continue our effort and look for alternatives to promote the advancement of knowledge and exchange ideas on environmental impact assessment through webinars, chat rooms Zoom meetings etc. in the coming months.

We also care about our member's health and well-being. The Institute delivered the very first expert webinar on 14 May 2020 on Managing Mental Health in COVID-19 Outbreak to address various mental health challenges members may encounter in flexible working, and how we could take care of our own well-being when face-to-face interaction is limited. The webinar was well-received and it was a big step for the Institute to reach out and connect to members again.

Please watch out for the upcoming events and I look for your active participation. Let's work together and synergize in protecting our environment.

Clara U, Chairlady

HKIEIA Finances

The accounts remain healthy with accumulated fund over HK$1M at end of June 2020.

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

From the Secretary

The new ExCo committee was formed on the AGM of 25 June 2019. HKIEIA Limited aims to continue organizing capacity building seminars to enhance the knowledge of our members. We also aim to encourage young members to attend conferences / seminars to not only help them understand global trends in the environmental sector, but also how these trends can be applied in Hong Kong. Apart from seminars; site visits and other events are being arranged to support the development of the Institute and the profession. Last but not least, since the SEA Forum and co-chairing in the IAIA 2018, the institute is having closer ties with the mainland counterparts. The institute recently co-organised the 13th Asia EIA Forum on 22 – 23 August 2019 at Haikou.

Here is an overview of the Executive Committee 2018-19.

Chair:	Clara U
Honorary Treasurer:	David Yeung
Honorary Secretary:	M.H. Isa
ExCo Members:	Freeman Cheung
	Josh Lam
	David Gallacher
	David Stanton
	Karen Lee
	Simon Cheung
	Kathy Ip
	Emma Harvey
Co-opted ExCo Members	Glen Formmer
	Kin-che Lam
	Jackie Yip
	Raymond Wong

Mohamed Hasan ISA, Honorary Secretary

HKIEIA Memberships

As of June 2020, the institute currently had a total of 475 members, including 26 fellows (7 of which are honorary members), 326 corporate members, 113 associate members and 10 student members.

Simon CHEUNG

Professional Development / Training

The Capacity Building Series continues to be extremely well received with full houses since its launch in 2017 Summer with 20 seminars taken place.

Places for the field visits to Lai Chi Wo, Lung Fu Shan and Lok Ma Chau Wetland were in high demand, and our members enjoying getting out of their offices to go into the wilds of Hong Kong!

It was terrific to see so many of our practitioners involved in the IAIA19 conference in Brisbane this year, both attending and delivering seminars at this international conference, building up plenty of CPD and gaining an insight into latest industry findings from across the globe.

We are always on the lookout for new speakers or ideas of case studies/site visits and training requirements - please do contact us if you have an idea or would like to explore the possibility of delivering a presentation. Don't forget extra CPD units can be gained for preparation and presenting a talk!

David STANTON
Kathy IP

HKIEIA Event Highlights

39th IAIA Conference, 29 Apr-2 May 2019

Over ten HKIEIA members attended the 39th IAIA annual conference held in Brisbane 29 April – 2 May 2019. The Hong Kong delegates participated in a variety of ways. Under the leadership of Clara U, HKIEIA co-organized a special session on "Re-shaping China's EIA" with the Appraisal Centre of Environmental Engineering (ACEE), the administrative arm of the Chinese Ministry of Ecology and Environment. Tim Pierson-Smith co-organized a session on "Going Digital". KC Lam and Natalie Chung served in World Bank's "Pacific Day" as the rapporteur capturing the essence of the proceedings in form of a report for the World Bank on the environmental challenges of Pacific Island countries.

Part of the HK Delegation in the Hotel Lobby: David Gallacher, Dorathy Choi, Natalie Chung, Charles Wong, Chris Wong and Cho Nam Ng.

The Hong Kong delegates shared the Hong Kong experiences with delegates from 77 countries in different sessions, covering issues related to ecological shoreline design, EIA enforcement, compliance, review, follow-up and public consultation. For example, David Gallacher outlined the innovative designs in developments encroaching on shorelines. KC Lam summarized the trajectory of EIA developments in China using the punctuated equilibrium framework and suggested that past developments have only been "evolutionary". He contended that China, at the crossroads, has to take a "revolutionary" approach in EIA/SEA development. Moreover, several other Hong Kong delegates attended, and contributed to, training workshop on ecological off-set and ecologically friendly road infrastructure.

Prof. Li Wei, Being Normal U, Grace Kwok, KC Lam, Ling Jiang (ACEE), Bao Cunkuan (Fudan U)

Two other conference events merit special mentioning. The first was the Theme Forum on Climate Change in which KC Lam was a panelist; and Chris Wong and Natalie Chung were the note-takers. The other was the "Next generation Impact Assessment" interactive forum in which the young practitioners were asked to envision the future. The young and dynamic delegates from were very forthcoming to offer their views.

Before the Conference banquet in the Brisbane City Hall — with former IAIA President Nick Taylor (middle), Grace Kwok, David Yeung, Felice Wong, Charles Wong, Cho Nam Ng, Clara Yu, Chris Wong and Natalie Chung.

Kin-che LAM

13th Asian EIA Conference & 6th China SEA Forum, 21-23 Aug 2019

Jointly organized by HKIEIA, Nankai University, Beijing Normal University, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the 13th Asian EIA Conference *cum* 6th SEA Forum took place in Haikou, the capital city of Hainan. The conference themes were "Theory and Practice of Environmental Assessment in Asia" and "Role of Three-Lines-One-List (TLOL) in EIA Reform and Strengthening of SEA in China". A day tour to Wenchang was held on day three after the conference and forum.

Hong Kong delegates from HKIEIA, EPD and consultant companies participated to share the latest EIA, EM&A and SEA practice in HK, as well as to acquire the most up-to-date knowledge of procedural requirements, technical methods, case studies and examples of China and all around Asia.

Kathy IP

Lai Chi Wo Visit, 13 May 2019; Pre-visit Seminar, 15 Apr 2019

Jointly organized by HKIEIA and EMAHK, a journey from farming to conservation was led by our dearest teacher and friend Dr. Ng Cho Nam, who showcased how Lai Chi Wo became a successful example of rural revitalization in Hong Kong, through a successful collaboration between environmental NGOs, landowners and farmers.

With a heartfelt Hakka lunch made by the locals, it was a fruitful and delightful tour guided by Dr. Ng with his rich experience and knowledge in conservation. He will be missed forever by all of us.

Kathy IP

Lung Fu Shan Night Safari, 8 Jun 2019

A heavy downpour before the walk had made us wonder if the night safari could proceed as planned – fortunately the sky cleared up soon afterward. We gathered around the education centre to learn about the little creatures living in the neighbourhood. Bats and insects flew above us in the twilight. Brown tree frogs and geckos also left their traits (i.e. eggs). It was relatively quiet after the heavy rain, and we did not have much luck encountering wildlife on the trail. But shortly before we ended the walk, we were lucky enough to a clumsy porcupine (箭豬) hurry past the group, stop to look around, and dash off again. Certainly the most memorable moment of the Safari!

Jackie YIP

Lok Ma Chau Wetland Visit, 7 Dec 2019

We were delighted to be able to grab the last chance to visit the Lok Ma Chau Wetland before its maintenance closure. In this visit, we were honoured to have Mr. Simon Hui and Mr. Lawrence Ngo who were responsible for this project in EPD as well as the project proponent MTRC to share with us the project experience and guide us the tour.

Kathy IP

Capacity Building Series – Environment Hong Kong

2.3: The Smart Era, 28 Mar 2019

Speakers: **Ms. Clara U**, Environmental Protection Department and **Mr. Raymond Wong**, ODEN Systems

2.4: Greener Development, 23 May 2019

Speakers: **Ms. Emma Harvey**, Gammon Construction Limited and **Mr. Alan Macdonald**, Urbis Limited

2.5: Better Prediction or More Rigorous Monitoring, 25 Jul 2019

Speaker: **Prof. Kin-che Lam**, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

2.6: The Future Underwater, 19 Sep 2019

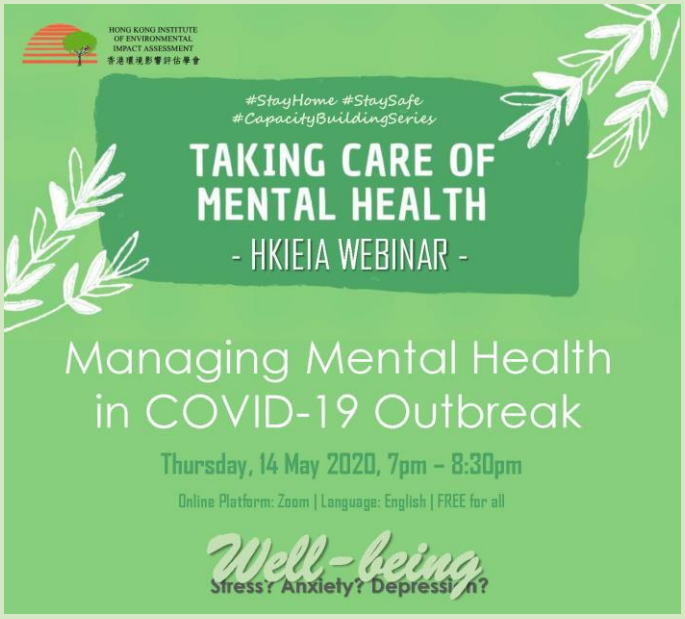
Speakers: **Prof. Kenneth Leung**, HKU and **Dr. David Baker**, HKU

2.7: West Kowloon, 14 Jan 2020

Speakers: **Ms. Karen Wong**, Home Affairs Bureau and **Mr. Freeman Cheung**, AECOM

Webinar on Mental Health, 14 May 2020

Speakers: **Dr. Hannah Sugarman,** Clinical Psychologist and **Mr. Henry Chan,** Mental Health Education and Information Officer



CNY Fireworks Dinner, 6 Feb 2019

This Chinese New Year Fireworks Dinner was held at Grill 28 with a 3-course dinner on Special Celebration Menu and a magnificent Victoria Harbour seaview. We were all amazed 180-degree view of fireworks at the reserved floor of Great Eagle Centre and had a great evening.

Kathy IP

Joint-Institute Bowling, 20 May 2019

Six environmental professional institutes (HKIEIA, HKIQEP, EMAHK, HKIOA, HKIEPO and CIWEM HK) proudly co-hosted our very first sports and social event – a bowling competition at Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club.

Apart from bowling games, food and beverages were served at an exclusive venue of the newly renovated Yacht Club. Members from the six institutes came together to show their talent and enjoy a special night with old and new friends of this field.

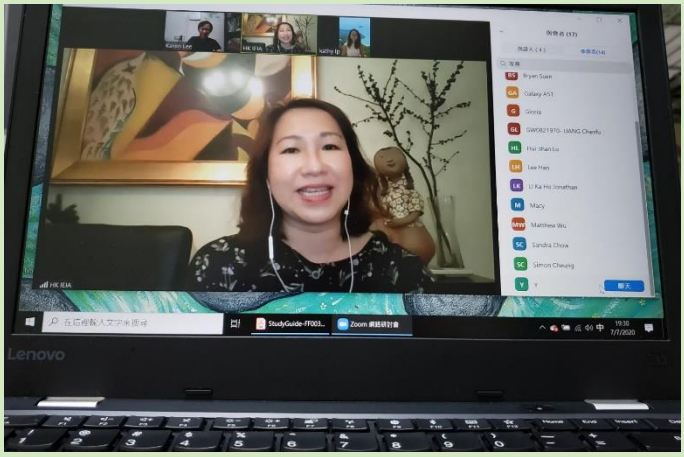
Kathy IP

Virtual Happy Hour, 18 Jun 2020

Due to the COVID-19, we have not met for a while. This virtual happy hour via Zoom was a great opportunity to raise a toast to better days ahead. Our ExCo and members had fun meeting virtually updating how we have been and sharing warm support for each other under the pandemic.

Webinar Tutorial on Qualifying Exam, 7 Jul 2020

The design of this 2.5-hour online tutorial included topics addressed under the EIA Chapter of the HKIQEP syllabus. Our Chairlady Ms. Clara U hosted this Zoom tutorial and given an overview and the fundamentals of EIA in Hong Kong so that students can be better prepared for the HKIQEP MC Exam.



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.

The Newsletter Editors

Published by HKIEIA

P.O. Box 28756, Gloucester Road Post Office, Hong Kong

E-mail: info@hkieia.org.hk

Website: www.hkieia.org.hk

hkieia

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