

COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY SUB-COMMITTEE

Paper 02/04

“Invitation and Response” Documents: Template and Consultation Mechanism

Purpose

This paper seeks members’ advice on the “Invitation and Response” documents to be prepared by the Support Groups (SG) for the Sustainable Development (SD) Strategy, as well on aspects of the mechanism for consulting the community on the issues covered by these documents.

Background

2. The Council for SD has endorsed the proposal of the Strategy Sub-committee (SSC) that an “Invitation and Response” document for each selected pilot area be drawn up as a basis for public consultation on these areas.

“Invitation and Response” Documents – Template

3. The primary objective of an “Invitation and Response” document is to present background information and introduce possible options for more sustainable solutions in the selected pilot area, for the purpose of inviting views from stakeholders and from the Government through a managed consultation process. In order to provide a common platform for drawing up these documents, Members have suggested that a standard “template” be developed for the SGs.

4. With this in mind, we propose the following outline for the “Invitation and Response” documents for members’ consideration –

- (a) **Baseline information** – general data regarding the situation in Hong Kong with respect to the pilot area concerned, including ongoing proposals for action;

- (b) **Challenges in addressing the pilot area** – brief descriptions of the challenges to Hong Kong’s sustainability posed by aspects of the current situation in the pilot area;
- (c) **Potential sustainability goals to be achieved in the pilot area** – possible options drawing on overseas experience and practices and their effect on the sustainable development of Hong Kong, with specific reference to implications for social equity, quality of the natural environment and economic development; and
- (d) **Possible ways for achieving the key goals** – following from (c), possible ways with pros and cons in achieving the goals, with reference to the overall sustainability “picture” and potential constraints.

A further elaboration of the proposed template is at **Annex A**.

Consultation Mechanism

5. As noted above, the finalised “Invitation and Response” documents would be issued as a basis for wider public consultation, as well as an invitation to the Government to provide a response. The SGs may consider organising different types of event to gauge views of various sectors according to the levels of complexity of the proposals and the likely degree of interest in the issue under discussion. Facilitated discussion with stakeholders in the form of workshops, as well as seminars and “town-hall” assemblies could be part of this process. The SGs would participate in the consultation process and regularly review comments and views from the stakeholders on the documents.

6. Given that different issues and pilot areas might require different consultation approaches, we consider that individual Support Groups should be given the flexibility to design the detailed engagement programmes. At the conclusion of the consultation exercise, however, each group would be required to present to the Council, via the SSC, a report summarising points of consensus as well as highlighting areas where there are conflicting views on the way forward regarding the pilot area. Relevant

Government bureaux and departments would in parallel give their response to the reports.

Milestone Dates for the SGs

7. At its meeting held on 16 December 2003, the Council agreed that a 12-month period be allowed for the formation of SGs, the preparation of “Invitation and Response” documents, public consultation and presentation of findings back to the Council. We have drawn up the tentative timeline at **Annex B** setting out a few key milestone dates for the work of the SGs.

Way Forward

8. Subject to Members’ views, the SDU will assist SGs in preparing “Invitation and Response” documents and conducting the consultation exercise along the broad lines discussed above.

Council Secretariat
January 2004

Invitation and Response Document on the pilot area Proposed Template

Baseline information

The section would set out general data regarding the situation in Hong Kong with respect to the pilot area, including ongoing proposals for action. Such information could also help with setting benchmarks for measuring the effectiveness of proposed measures. Where appropriate, relevant information drawn from other administrations would be presented in this section.

Challenges in addressing the pilot area

The section would briefly describe key challenges to Hong Kong's long-term sustainable development posed by the situation in the pilot area. Appropriate reference would be made in particular to specific social, environmental and economic issues.

Potential sustainability goals to be achieved in addressing the pilot area

The section would NOT recommend absolute goals to be achieved. Rather it would suggest possible options drawing on overseas experience and practices and their effect on the sustainable development of Hong Kong. The section would also set out possible pros and cons of the suggested goals, and would make specific reference to potential implications for social equity, quality of the natural environment and economic development.

Possible ways for achieving the key goals

Following from above, again, rather than recommend specific measures to be adopted, the document would outline possible ways with pros and cons in achieving the goals, with reference to the overall sustainability "picture" and potential constraints. The section would evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of each possible way in the broader sustainability context, and would also evaluate likely constraints involved in implementing these goals locally.

Milestone Dates for the Support Groups

8 January 2004	Meeting of the Strategy Sub-committee (SSC) To consider recommendations on the formation of Support Groups and the “Invitation and Response” documents
January	Formation of Support Groups
February – March	Support Groups to work on “Invitation and Response” documents and the engagement programmes, and prepare for public consultation
22 March 2004	Meeting of Council for Sustainable Development (Council) SSC to report to Council on the work of the SGs
April – May	Public consultation exercise (including workshops, seminars and town-hall meetings)
14 June 2004	Meeting of Council SSC to report to Council on early consultation findings and seek Council’s advice on how to proceed with the drafting of the SD strategy
June – August	Preparation of draft SD strategy document
13 September 2004	Meeting of Council SSC to submit draft SD strategy document for Council’s advice
Sep – Nov	Revision and preparation of the draft SD strategy document
December 2004	Publication of SD strategy document subject to Council’s endorsement