

COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Strategy Sub-Committee

Paper 07/04

Involving the Community in Building a Sustainable Development Strategy for Hong Kong

Introduction

This paper outlines a proposed broad programme for the Public Involvement stage of the Engagement Process for the Sustainable Development (SD) Strategy.

Overall Strategic Approach to Public Involvement – Some Examples

2. In order to ensure a high degree of public participation in the building of the SD Strategy, we aim to reach out to as many sectors of the community as possible over the four-month consultation period. Accordingly, we propose to adopt appropriate communication methods for different target groups. For instance, for people in the business and professional sectors, we would use e-newsletters and formal talks to build awareness of the Engagement Process, as well as directly engagement through forums and seminars jointly organised with partner organisations in these sectors. To reach out to people in the workplace, we would approach major employers (e.g., the Government, HSBC, MTRC, etc) to explore opportunities for direct dialogue with their staff at events such as in-house lunchtime seminars, regular briefings or site visits. As for the wider community, we would raise

awareness through media-based channels, including the SD strategy website, and conduct direct engagement through district-based forums and public hearings, again involving partner organisations.

Overview of the Public Involvement Programme

3. In order to plan the Public Involvement stage effectively, we propose to divide the programme elements into two types, namely, on-going **awareness raising activities** and **direct engagement events**. We envisage that these would be carried out in parallel. However, as the Public Involvement stage will run for about four months from July to November this year, we propose to build up the momentum of the whole exercise by focusing on awareness raising in the earlier stage and having more direct engagement events in the latter period. This also takes account of the fact that a lot of community energy and resources will be devoted to activities related to the 2004 Legislative Council elections during the early part of the campaign.

4. Members will be aware that the Education and Publicity Sub-committee (EPSC) is also drawing up a programme of events as part of its Education and Publicity Strategy for the remainder of 2004-05. To avoid duplication of resources and to exploit the synergy between aspects of the Public Involvement stage and the work of the EPSC in boosting community awareness of SD, we have identified (and highlighted at the Annex) certain activities and events that could be part of both the EPSC strategy and the Engagement Process. Such programmes would generally be of an awareness-raising nature, but could also derive content from the IR

document and information on the Pilot Areas.

Ongoing Awareness Raising Activities

5. These activities would focus on enhancing public awareness of the principles of SD - with particular reference to the three Pilot Areas - and arousing interest in responding to the Invitation and Response (IR) document and participating in direct engagement events. Key individual programmes and activities could include –

- **TV and radio announcements** – to cast a wide net by using creative and lively TV and radio announcements (“APIs” – currently in production) to highlight the importance of SD and to invite the public to participate in the Engagement Process
- **SD strategy website** – a website (currently in production) to launch on the same date as the IR document, providing information on SD, on the Pilot Areas and on the Engagement Process that will allow downloading or on-line browsing of the IR document and related articles. The site would also provide an interactive platform for public exchanges of views through a “real-time” chat room, as well as a means for people to respond directly to the questions raised in the IR document
- **Media coverage** – inviting the electronic and print media

to help reach out to all sectors in the community. Programmes such as “Common Sense (鏗鏘集)” and “Letter to Hong Kong (香港家書)” on RTHK, feature articles in local newspapers and site visits for the media will provide useful coverage

- **Roving Exhibition** – this would provide key messages supplementing the content of the IR document in an accessible format, with suitable use of graphic design and illustrations. Venues for the exhibition would include “high-traffic” shopping malls, concourses of major MTRC and KCRC stations and major government offices.
- **Wish-boxes** – these boxes would be placed at popular malls, concourses of major MTRC and KCRC stations and various government venues, where people could pick up summary leaflets on the IR document, complete short response sections in the leaflets and return these to the boxes.
- **Speaking engagements** – Council, SSC and Support Group (SG) Members and SDU staff would speak on the subject of the SD Strategy or individual Pilot Areas to various groups in the community, according to a programme to be agreed by the SSC

Direct Engagement Events

6. Through more direct engagement we would aim to canvass the views of people from all walks of life on the SD Strategy and the Pilot Areas. In particular, we would enlist the help of partner organisations to target “informed” stakeholders and sector-specific groups. Key target groups would include: business, academic and professional bodies; people in the workplace; social and environmental NGOs; district and community organisations (including the District Councils); policymakers (in the Government and the Legislative Council); and young people (including schools and tertiary institutions). The events would include -

- **Launching Ceremony** – to kick-off the Public Involvement with the formal issue of the IR document in a briefing to invited stakeholders and the media.
- **Forums and seminars** – forums and seminars for target groups would be co-organised with our partner organisations in the NGO and business and professional sectors. We would invite partner organisations to host some of these events, with SG Members attending and the SDU providing venue and professional facilitation support, where necessary.
- **Youth Summit** – a one-day summit, organised with the help of a major youth organisation, and involving students and other young people, could provide a high-profile

platform for the “next generation” to share their views on SD and issues relating to the three Pilot Areas.

- **Town Hall hearings** – town hall hearings would be organised with the help of District Offices to invite people in the community to voice their opinion. Council, SSC or SG Members or other invited guests with an interest in the Pilot Areas would attend the hearings to give views on the SD Strategy and the Pilot Areas and invite responses to key questions. Representatives from relevant government departments and NGO would also be invited to attend the hearings to provide technical advice.

- **Web-based bulletins and discussion forum** – regular direct bulletins on the Engagement Process would issue from the website aimed at encouraging responses from a wide range of specific stakeholders, and the chat room would provide a further channel for members of the community to interact and respond directly to the questions raised in the IR document.

- **Survey** – we would engage a local tertiary institution to design and conduct a survey to gauge the effectiveness of the Public Involvement exercise in raising people’s awareness of the importance of SD and in encouraging responses to the issues raised in the specific Pilot Areas.

7. Other publicity programmes and engagement events could be introduced as the process moves forward – in particular we would look to partner organisations to help provide some more creative and attractive ideas.

Partnership Arrangements

8. As reported at the Council meeting on 14 June, the SSC has invited the Business Environment Council, the Hong Kong Council of Social Services and the People's Council for Sustainable Development to be the initial partners in the Engagement Process. The SSC could further invite other groups to join as partner organisations in the coming months. We envisage that partners will help reinforce this process by, for example -

- Disseminating the IR document and other information on the Engagement Process to their Members and contacts through their existing networks;
- Actively engaging their members in responding to the IR document
- Taking part in the Public Involvement stage activities and events;
- Endorsing or co-organising exhibitions, forums and workshops and other activities and events; and
- Providing further ideas as to how we might improve the process and increase public involvement.

Further Action – The Next Stage of the Engagement Process

9. At the end of the formal Public Involvement stage, we will summarise feedback on the IR document and the SSC will report back to the Council for SD on the outcome of the public involvement programme and the way forward with the SD Strategy. We will endeavour to involve stakeholders, in particular through the SG, in the preparation of the SSC report. Having considered the report, the Council should be in a position to advise on how to take the SD strategy forward, and to make firm recommendations on the commitments that the Government should make to SD in the Pilot Areas.

Council Secretariat

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