

Latest progress of long-term conservation of Sha Lo Tung through non-in-situ land exchange

The Government has reached an agreement with the Sha Lo Tung Development Company Limited (SLTDC) on the terms for the non-in-situ land exchange of Sha Lo Tung (SLT), a government spokesman said today (April 22). It is expected that the land exchange documents will be executed within a few months to formally complete the land exchange.

After completion of the land exchange procedures, it is expected that the private land in SLT surrendered by the SLTDC and the adjacent government land will amount to over 50 hectares for the Government to carry out long-term conservation programmes.

The spokesman said, "SLT has a very high ecological value and ranks second among the 12 priority sites requiring enhanced conservation under the New Nature Conservation Policy, behind only the internationally important wetlands in Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay. The site has diverse habitats such as fung shui wood, freshwater marsh and 'ecologically important stream' as well as a reputation for being a sanctuary for dragonflies. Now with the near completion of the SLT land exchange, it demonstrates that the Government attaches great importance to nature conservation. It also marks an important milestone in Hong Kong's nature conservation policy."

Currently, part of the land at SLT with high ecological value (the core area) is being managed for ongoing conservation by the Nature Conservation Management Agreement (MA) project under the Countryside Conservation Funding Scheme through public-private collaboration with the private land owner. Following the surrender of land by the SLTDC to the Government, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) is formulating an appropriate nature conservation and management plan and will engage a non-governmental organisation as conservation agent for the management and conservation of the habitats at SLT, with a view to conserving SLT effectively in the long run. During the transitional period, the MA project will continue to carry out conservation work including habitat management at the core area, while the AFCD will be responsible for managing the remaining areas.

The spokesman said, "When the Government plans the long-term management of SLT for nature conservation, restoration of abandoned agricultural land, enhancement of the ecological value of secondary woodlands, maintaining the habitat's diversity and enhancement of public education will be set as the primary objectives. We will also strike a proper balance between the conservation of sensitive habitats and enrichment of visitor experience to support the sustainable development of the precious ecological environment there."

For the long-term conservation of SLT, the Chief Executive in Council gave in-principle agreement in June 2017 and approval in February 2021 to the proposed non-in-situ land exchange in SLT. The Government will grant an area of land at the Shuen Wan Restored Landfill in Tai Po to the SLTDC for developing a private golf course in exchange for its surrender of the ecologically important private land in SLT to the Government.

The SLTDC has accepted the basic terms offered for the non-in-situ land exchange. The relevant land exchange documents will be registered in the Land Registry after execution and made available for public inspection, including the amount of the premium paid. Relevant land transaction records of the land exchange will also be uploaded to the Lands Department's website (www.landsd.gov.hk).