

Report of Strategic Feasibility Study on the Development of Wetland Conservation Parks System released

The report of the Strategic Feasibility Study on the Development of the Wetland Conservation Parks (WCPs) System was released today (October 24).

The development of a WCPs System was promulgated in the Northern Metropolis Development Strategy in 2021, with a view to conserving the Deep Bay wetlands with ecological value, and creating environmental capacity for the Northern Metropolis to achieve co-existence of conservation and development. The Strategic Feasibility Study on the Development of the WCPs System, commissioned by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) in August 2022, had reviewed the ecological conditions, land use and planning matters, aquaculture activities, eco-education and recreation facilities, etc, in the proposed areas of the proposed WCPs System. The Feasibility Study also formulated recommendations on the overall implementation strategy for the development of the WCPs System, including the proposed boundaries, positioning and functions, conceptual plans and management options of the proposed Parks under the System. The consultant also collected views from the public and stakeholders on the initiative through two stages of public engagement exercises, and suitably incorporated such views.

The Feasibility Study considered that the development of the WCPs System was feasible and worthwhile, which could effectively conserve the wetlands in the Deep Bay area and enhance their ecological value, promote the modernisation of the aquaculture industry, and provide eco-education and recreation facilities for public enjoyment. At the same time, the development of the WCPs System could also create environmental capacity for the development of the Northern Metropolis, and achieve co-existence of conservation and development.

The Feasibility Study recommended developing the WCPs System in phases by developing the Sam Po Shue WCP first. Subsequently, by making reference to the experience of planning and establishing the Sam Po Shue WCP, further studies on the remaining proposed Parks, i.e. Hong Kong Wetland Park Expansion Area, Nam Sang Wai WCP, and Hoo Hok Wai WCP (including Sha Ling/Nam Hang area), would be reviewed in due course.

Specific positioning and functions for each Park were recommended by the consultant based on their respective conditions, and broad zonings, including Biodiversity Zone, Eco-friendly Aquaculture Zone, Fisheries Enhancement Zone and Visitor Zone, were delineated under the conceptual plan of each Park. It was recommended that the Government oversee the overall management of the whole WCPs System, and manage the different zones within the Parks in co-operation with different parties, including non-governmental organisations, agriculture and fisheries associations, local communities, private landowners

and private sector, depending on the relevant functions and operational needs.

A spokesman for the AFCD said that the department considered the recommendations of the report of the Feasibility Study generally acceptable, and these recommendations would be taken into consideration in the next stage when carrying out detailed studies on the investigation, design and construction of the Parks.

The report of the Feasibility Study is available on the AFCD website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/conservation/con_wet/wcps_system/wcps_system.html).