

## Chapter 1 Introduction and Overview

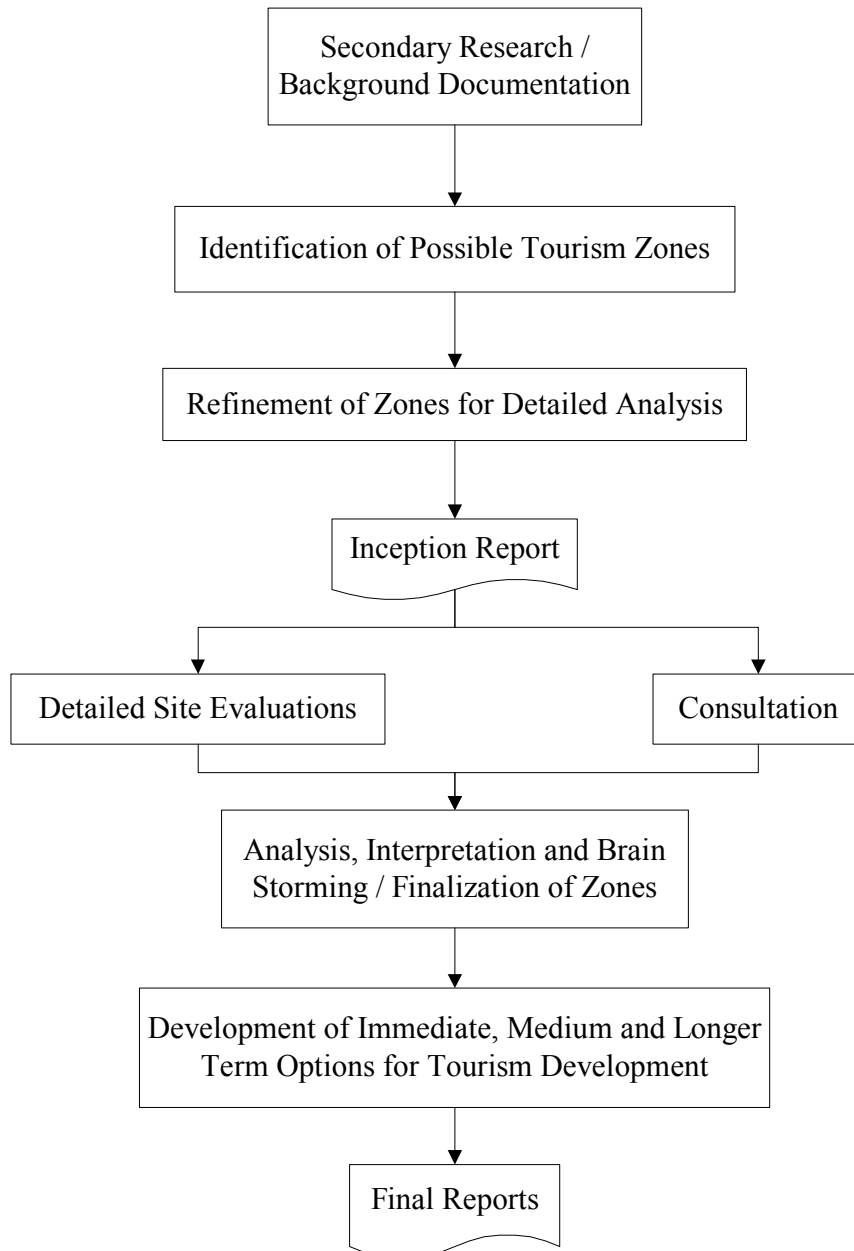


## 1.1 Introduction

- 1 The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is the most popular city tourism destination in Asia. Unfortunately, tourism activity is distributed unevenly throughout the SAR, with the northern New Territories largely excluded from the benefits of international tourism. This area is, however, popular with Hong Kong residents as a place for quality outdoor recreation. It contains a great variety of natural and cultural heritage assets including hill ranges, secluded valleys, Country Parks, wetlands, Marine Parks, coastlines and islands, as well as occupied and deserted villages. The School of Hotel and Tourism Management (HTM) at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University has been commissioned by the Tourism Commission to examine the tourism potential of the Northern New Territories. Specifically, this study seeks to identify locations that are most likely to succeed in attracting local and international visitors.
- 2 Successful nature-based and cultural tourism products possess a number of characteristics that set them apart from other natural and cultural assets. In particular, they must be both interesting and attractive enough to make a visit worthwhile. Sites must be easily accessible and provide experiences that can be consumed. They should be known beyond the local heritage or conservation community and must be sufficiently robust – or hardened where necessary - to absorb higher levels of visitation.
- 3 As per the project proposal, the study team’s structured work plan included:
  - A situation analysis of the tourism potential, opportunities and constraints of the study area
  - The identification of a number of zones or sub-regions with tourism potential
  - Detailed site inspections of each of these zones
  - Identification of a range of options and concept ideas for each zone, including immediate, medium term and longer term actions.

## 1.2 Method

- 4 The flowchart below describes the method adopted. Each of the steps is described briefly.



**Figure 1 Study Process of Consultancy Report**

### ***1.2.1 Secondary Research / Background Documentation***

- 5 Secondary data were gathered to document what is already known about the study area. These data included information relating to tourism flows, the legislative and policy context of the area, an inventory of existing assets and a preliminary assessment of tourism issues. This research was descriptive in nature and based on information available from existing sources. The purpose was to document what is already known about the study area.

### ***1.2.2 Identification of Possible Tourism Zones***

- 6 Preliminary identification of zones or sub-regions within the study area was undertaken based on the background research. Localities that appeared to share common attributes that could be logically bundled and developed as discrete and compatible tourism products were identified.

### ***1.2.3 Refinement of Zones for Detailed Analysis***

- 7 A refined group of zones to be studied in detail was identified in collaboration with the study proponents. The study team sought to ensure that zones represent logical product opportunities.

### ***1.2.4 Inception Report***

- 8 The Inception Report summarised the findings to date and outlined the further plan of action.

### ***1.2.5 Detailed Site Evaluations***

- 9 Detailed site evaluations were undertaken in accordance with the brief. The site assessment pro-forma, included in this report, enabled the consultants to:
  - Provide a detailed situation analysis of each site or zones
  - Identify issues affecting the potential tourism development of the sites and zones
  - Assess issues affecting the ecological and cultural sustainability
  - Assess the state of the existing tourism infrastructure
  - Analyse access issues
  - Identify opportunities and constraints affecting the further development of tourism
- 10 By combining the above assessment criteria, this study team was then able to identify the overall tourism potential of the zone for both the domestic and international marketplaces.

### ***1.2.6 Consultation***

- 11 Concurrent with the site assessment, extensive consultation occurred with identified stakeholders, including representatives of government agencies, conservation agencies, the tourism industry and local residents. The purpose of the consultation was to identify issues, opportunities and obstacles to tourism development, including local issues that may affect future tourism development. Submissions from various stakeholder groups were reviewed and where the consultants felt proposals were in line with the spirit of the project were included. A list of stakeholders consulted can be found in Appendix A.

### ***1.2.7 Analysis, Interpretation and Brain Storming / Finalization of Zones***

- 12 A brainstorming session analysed the data to define the opportunities and constraints to tourism development within the selected zones. This analysis identified the overall tourism potential of each zone from the perspective of domestic and international tourists. A range of immediate, medium and longer terms ideas, recommendations and actions were identified.

### ***1.2.8 Development of Immediate, Medium and Longer Term Options for Tourism Development***

- 13 These ideas were then vetted and the most appropriate options were identified. Formal recommendation regarding low-cost, quick and immediate actions to be undertaken, moderate cost and time actions and high-level cost and time actions were developed.

### ***1.2.9 Final Reports***

- 14 These recommendations were presented in the draft final report, with the final report to contain any modifications requested by the Tourism Commission.

### 1.3 Evaluation Criteria

15 The following spreadsheet was used to assess the tourism potential of the zones.

**Table 1 Assessment Checklist**

<b>Assessment Attribute</b>	<b>Considerations</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Setting	Socio-ecological setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continuity</li> <li>▪ Intactness</li> </ul>
	Physical setting within the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can the values still be appreciated by the visitor?</li> <li>▪ Compatibility with surrounding facilities, structures</li> </ul>
	Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Proximity to other natural / cultural assets</li> <li>▪ Location vis a vis tourism nodes</li> <li>▪ Ease of access</li> </ul>
Site	Robusticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ability to withstand visitation</li> <li>▪ Resources available to manage the asset</li> <li>▪ Ability to restrict or limit access if needed</li> </ul>
	Size and scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Critical mass of assets</li> <li>▪ Ability to bundle assets to create products</li> <li>▪ Spatial distribution of assets</li> </ul>
	Uniqueness / value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Importance/uniqueness of assets (local, national, international)</li> <li>▪ Number and type of visitor (day tripper, local, international)</li> </ul>
	Current Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level, type of infrastructure to cater for tourists</li> <li>▪ Visitation trends</li> <li>▪ Competing products, prices</li> </ul>
Asset quality	State of asset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Physical state of asset</li> <li>▪ How much of it is still intact – integrity</li> <li>▪ Values it evokes</li> </ul>

Tourism product potential and markets	Tourism potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uniqueness</li> <li>▪ Ability to shape, provide experience</li> <li>▪ “Product” potential and ability to actualise that potential</li> </ul>
	Markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Potential markets (local)</li> <li>▪ Potential markets (international)</li> </ul>
	Increasing use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Appropriateness of increasing use levels</li> <li>▪ Ability to increase use levels</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Issues	Ownership / Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Type of ownership</li> <li>▪ Presence / absence of management regime</li> </ul>
	Stakeholder Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meetings with key stakeholders</li> </ul>
People, Skills, Financial Resources	People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Skill and skill gap identification</li> <li>▪ Motives for involvement</li> </ul>
	Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Resource availability (financial, human, etc)</li> </ul>
Overall Assessment	Tourism potential	
	Obstacles to development	



Inner Tolo Harbour with Yim Tin Tsai

## 1.4 Definition of Study Area

16 The study area is defined as follows:

- The northern limit is the frontier with Mainland China including the full length and width of the Frontier Closed Area (FCA)
- In the west the study area terminates at the Mai Po Marshes and then follows approximately the KCR railway line, excluding Fanling and Sheung Shui
- The eastern most point of the area under investigation is the island of Tung Ping Chau
- The southern extremity of the study area runs to the north of Sheung Shui, along the western side of Tolo Harbour, into the Shing Mun River Channel and along the full length of the southern shores of Tolo Harbour and Tolo Channel including Three Fathoms Cove and Long Harbour

**Figure 2 Study Area Map**



The study area centred on Plover Cove Reservoir and Pat Sin Leng Country Park  
Map: The Lands Department



17 The study area encompasses two administrative districts fully (Tai Po District and North District) and also three districts partly (Yuen Long, Sha Tin and Sai Kung Districts).

The SAR administrative parties with special interest in the study area are:

- Home Affairs Department
- Planning Department
- Agricultural, Fisheries and Conservation Department
- Marine Department
- Water Supplies Department
- Transport Department
- Hong Kong Tourism Board
- Tourism Commission
- Security Bureau
- The Hong Kong Police Force



Ap Chau

## 1.5 Description of Study Area and Identification of 10 Clusters for Further Analysis

- 18 The study area offers visitors a diverse range of landscapes and land uses, including urban areas, areas for intense recreational use, freshwater reservoirs, country parks, beaches, marine parks, isolated islands and remnant or abandoned farmland. It also offers a diverse range of cultural and recreational landscapes, ranging from intact but largely abandoned villages through to wilderness and near wilderness areas.
- 19 Ten clusters within the study area were identified for a more detailed investigation. They can be further grouped into four geographical regions as outlined in Table 2.

**Table 2 Tourism Zones**

<b>Main Region</b>	<b>Cluster</b>
<b>Inner Tolo Harbour</b>	1 Tolo Harbour
<b>Intensive Use Region</b>	2 Plover Cove Reservoir and North Shore of Tolo Channel
	3 South Shore of Tolo Channel
	4 Ap Chau and Kat O villages
<b>Protected Areas</b>	5 Yan Chau Tong Marine Park and Plover Cove Country Park
	6 Tung Ping Chau
	7 Luk Keng and Country Parks
<b>Frontier</b>	8 Wetlands and surrounds
	9 Frontier Closed Area Corridor
	10 Sha Tau Kok

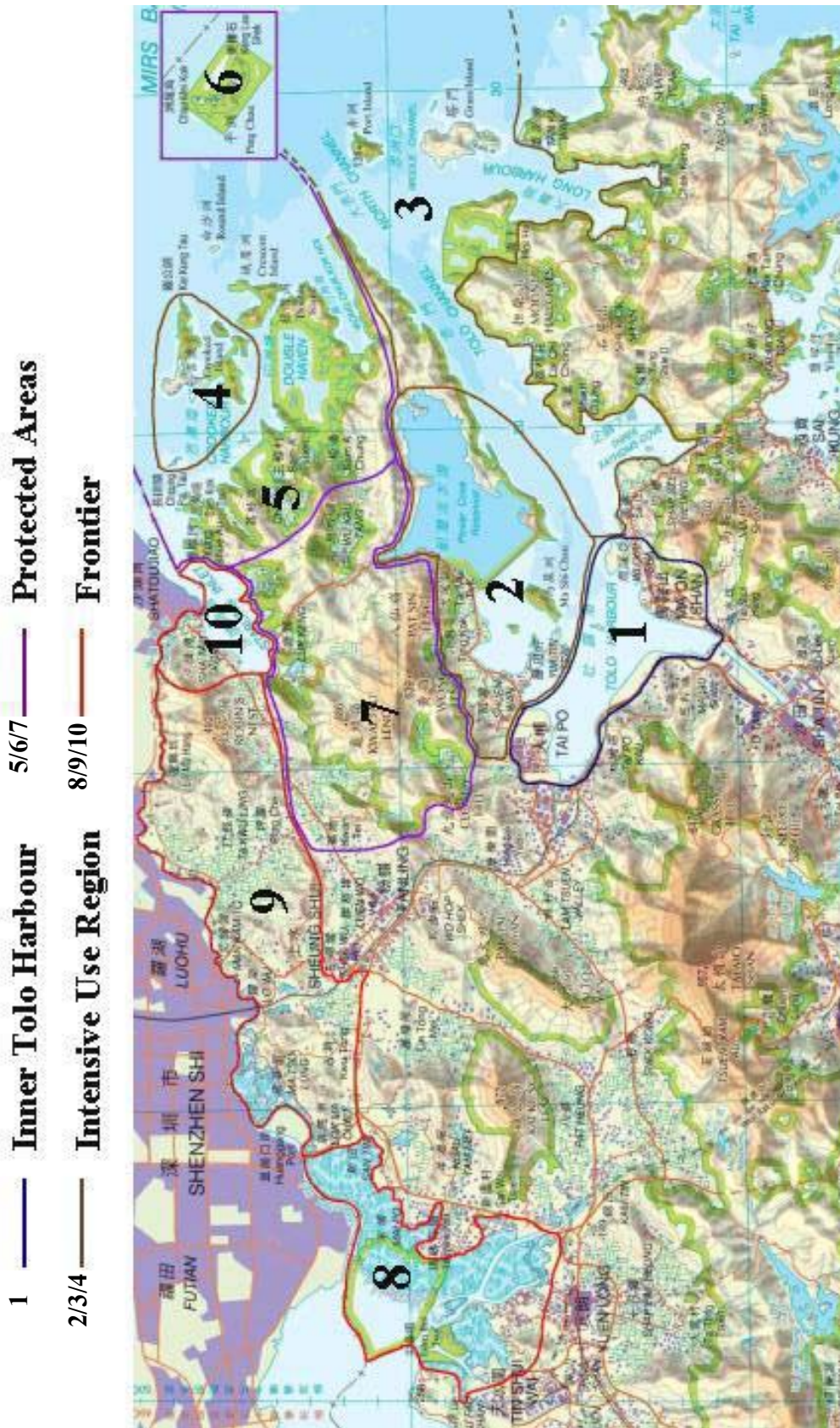


Figure 2 Potential Clusters for Tourism Development

- 20 The Inner Tolo Harbour includes the only urban centre in this study, as well as the highly modified inner Tolo Harbour area. This area is characterized by urban and industrial development.
- 21 The Intensive Use Region is an area where high intensity recreational activity occurs. Hong Kong residents constitute the dominant user group. It encompasses the north shore of Tolo Channel, including Tai Mei Tuk and the Plover Cove Reservoir; the south shore of Tolo Channel, including Long Harbour and its associated islands; and the village areas of Kat O and Ap Chau.
- 22 The Protected Area encompasses Country Parks and Marine Parks to the north of the intensive recreational use area. Three clusters have been identified offering different types of experiences: Tung Ping Chau and its associated marine and geological ecosystems; Marine and Country Parks in and around Lai Chi Wo; and Country Parks with a focal point of Luk Keng. The area is used for nature based recreational use and it has a number of intact or nearly intact villages.
- 23 The Frontier Closed Area adjacent to mainland China contains intact villages, remnant farmland and a variety of ecological assets, and because of its restricted entry status, has had no urban and industrial development. Three clusters have been identified: Wetland areas focussing on the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay RAMSAR Site; the Frontier Closed Area Corridor, excluding Sha Tau Kok; and Sha Tau Kok.