

**Consultation on the Northern New Territories
Green Tourism Development Programme
February – March 2005**

**I. PROPOSED ACTION PLAN FOR THE PLOVER COVE AND TOLO
CHANNEL AREA**

Location	Comments / Suggestions
(a) Enhancement works for basic facilities	
Plover Cove and Tai Mei Tuk (船灣及大尾篤)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Tai Mei Tuk needs more parking facilities and provision of more public transportation.- The piers in Plover Cove area should be maintained in good condition to facilitate access to NNT by sea.- Parking facilities should be provided at Sam Mun Tsai (三門仔) to facilitate tourists visiting Sam Mun Tsai and Ma Shi Chau (馬屎洲).

<p>Lai Chi Wo (荔枝窩)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water depth at existing pier is not sufficient for (dis)embarkation from/on ferries. - The current pier is totally inadequate to accommodate any type of ferry, let alone a passenger ferry designed to operate at 10-12 knots. Access to the pier might also need a channel to be dredged. As dredging may bring adverse impact on marine ecology, the new piers at Sha Tau Kok (沙頭角)/ Kat O (吉澳) should be used. Passengers can be transferred to smaller/ sampan style boats to go to Lai Chi Wo. - Ferries may face berthing problem. - Ferries may not be able to berth because of insufficient water depth. The pier is inconvenient to users if the berthing problem continues. - The need for enhancing Lai Chi Wo Pier should be reviewed. - Putting railing on the pier may cause inconvenience to users. - Access is very inconvenient, with not even a small trail from Kuk Po (谷埔) to Lai Chi Wo. - The Hip Tin Temple (協天宮) needs restoration. - Build a new pier with design similar to the Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco. - Local residents have renovated 20 tile-houses and kept their original essence and traditional style. Government should provide technical support or formulate policies to facilitate the residents' work. - The Antiquities and Monuments Office should help renovate the Feng Shui Wall (風水牆) with 200 years of history and the East and West Door Wall (東西門) to enhance the Hakka characteristics. - Government should consider how to improve sewage treatment, environmental hygiene and protection of precious ecological areas. - Renovate the abandoned school house into a Tourist Information Centre to be run by either Tourism Commission or Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department. Consideration may also be given to outsourcing its operation (including a snack shop) through public tender. - Using the Ancestral Hall as an exhibition hall is not feasible. Instead, Siu Ying School (小瀛學校) or other old houses may be used, with the Government supporting the conversion of the properties provided by locals.
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Ap Chau (鴨洲)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suggest to build two trails: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the incinerators to the “Duck’s Eye” (鴨眼) • From the school to the hilltop - Build a gazebo at the hilltop which is just about 15-20 minutes’ walk from the pier. - Build a gazebo at the top point of the island to serve as a spot for viewing over Mirs Bay (大鵬灣), Yantian (鹽田) and Double Haven (印洲塘). - Build a gazebo at the top of the hill on Ap Chau where tourists can have a full view of Double Haven, Yantian and extensive green areas.
General/Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adding seating facilities to high usage piers may cause inconvenience to the users. - A previous Government planning study "North East New Territories Development, Strategy Review, August 1995", had reviewed the potential of recreational development in the Tolo Harbour (吐露港) area. Suitable locations for yachting were named in the study including water areas near Ma See Chau, Wu Kai Sha (烏溪沙), Yim Tin Tsai (鹽田仔) near Shuen Wan (船灣) Golf Driving Range. - Other water sports such as windsurfing, canoeing, dinghy sailing should not be confined only to the Tai Mei Tuk area but should spread out to the entire water surface of Tolo Harbour to encourage greater participation in water recreation. - Initiatives to encourage private sector participation in operating water recreation should be provided. - Set up a floating marine centre near Yan Chau Tong Marine Park. The proposed project will be privately funded and will include operation of submarine tours, glass-bottom boats, education centre etc. Accommodation and catering services will also be provided. - Proposal for Tung Ping Chau, Lai Chi Wo & Tap Mun is welcomed.

Location	Comments / Suggestions
(b) Proposed island-hopping sightseeing itinerary	
Ma Liu Shui (馬料水)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ma Liu Shui pier is not convenient enough as the starting point. There should be further consideration about where to start the itinerary. - Suggest the provision of shuttle buses from Ma Liu Shui Pier to KCR University Station.
Ma Liu Shui / Tai Mei Tuk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Queries why Ma Liu Shui, but not Tai Mei Tuk, is chosen as the starting point of the proposed water tour. - Tai Mei Tuk may be used for both onshore and offshore tours to enrich the itinerary.
Voyage along Tolo Channel (赤 門海峽) to Lai Chi Wo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trails may be developed from Tolo Channel to Lai Chi Wo passing through Plover Cove and Double Haven to complement the sea tour. - Tours should enter Double Haven from Tolo Channel via Hung Shek Mun (紅石門) Fairway so as to enjoy the good view around the latter.

Lai Chi Wo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The rich marine ecology in Lai Chi Wo can make the subject of a theme tour. - Village houses in Lai Chi Wo can be used as tourists' homestay at weekends. - Introduce tours that include marine ecology. - Support the idea of developing Lai Chi Wo and promoting its Hakka culture. - There is potential to develop leisure fishing making use of existing rafts and accommodation facilities. - There is potential to develop sightseeing boating and simple accommodation in the Double Haven area. - Tour routes to Lai Chi Wo and Tap Mun (塔門) have existed for over 10 years and just lack the facilities to become popular. The following improvements may be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore the possibilities of regular ferry services • promote the ferry services on TV and operate on trial basis to ascertain demand - Recommended sight seeing points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old temples such as Hip Tin Temple and Hok Shan Temple (鶴山寺) • The “Hollow Tree” and “Five Fingers” camphor tree • Champion's Bauhinia and the “Looking-glass Tree” - Government may display indigenous herbal specimens along the existing trail from Lai Chi Wo to Sha Tau Kok.
Lai Chi Wo / Tap Mun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Locals and Government should cooperate to build lodging facilities at Lai Chi Wo and Tap Mun.
Voyage to Tap Mun via Ap Chau & Kat O	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tours should stop at Ap Chau before going to Tap Mun. Tourists should be taken to the proposed gazebo at the island's hilltop to enjoy the view there.

<p>Lo Fu Wat (老虎笏)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hong Kong Pearl Farm could be included in the sightseeing route. The schedule of the tour could be slightly adjusted by cutting back the time on Tap Mun (at present 1230 – 1515). It is proposed that an hour’s tour could be arranged to visit the inlets of Lo Fu Wat. - As Hong Kong Pearl Farm is located in the center of Plover Cove area, an additional stop would not only tie in well with the original itinerary proposed by HKTB but also enrich the itinerary. Alternatively, the boat trip may end at Lo Fu Wat after touring around Double Haven, Ap Chau and Kat O. Visitors could take the jogging route from Lo Fu Wat back to Plover Cove Reservoir. They could enjoy a panoramic view of the uniquely elongated inlet of Lo Fu Wat on the way.
<p>General/Related</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transportation connections from KCR University Station to Tap Mun and then on to Tung Ping Chau need to be enhanced, and more ferries should operate on holidays. Ferries should also run to Kat O. - Introduce leisure boating service in the area. - The water tour proposal is a frame without content and only focuses on the scene and the process. - Wong Chuk Kok, Tung Ping Chau, Hung Shek Mun or even the Port Island (赤洲) have special rocks which may be interesting to tourists. The indigenous villages are also well preserved. - There is no need to develop a comprehensive tour at the beginning, and the itinerary can change as different themes emerge later. - The sea tour should be creatively designed such as including elements of lifestyle and outdoor attractions. - Cultural elements and folklore should be featured in the tour. - Natural scenic beauty should be the focus, rather than cultural and heritage interests. - Establish a promotion taskforce to involve different stakeholders. - Conduct site assessment to come up with more practical and feasible ideas.

Subject	Comments / Suggestions
(c) Complementary conservation and education initiatives	
Education initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government should organize special tours for teenagers. - Tour guide training should focus on changing mindsets so that they are not all profit-driven. - Tour guides should also be trained to have good relations with the indigenous residents. - Provide in-depth knowledge and information through a popular website. - Promote the local culture together with other heritage attractions such as “Lung Yeuk Tau Heritage Trail” (龍躍頭文物徑).

<p>Conservation initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourism development should fully feature the area’s natural and heritage values to local and overseas visitors. It should not be a mere reinforcement of the existing tourist attractions. New elements should be introduced as far as practical. The government should offer incentives to the local community and relevant stakeholders, such that the developments will be self-sustainable in the long run. - Tourists will go where the locals go. - Consideration should be given to how to enable locals to benefit from tourism development. - There seems to be no outline zoning plan, nor a licensing plan for the development of the areas concerned. A business plan is also needed. - The full array of sustainable marine tourism should be considered for the programme. - Development of green tourism is safe if it is anchored on the principles of sustainable development. Strategic and management frameworks as well as guidelines and management regimes are needed. - Participation of the private sectors, both NGOs and developers is essential. Set up a coalition and forum of all interested parties and identify a suitable NGO to provide coordination, information sharing, training and accreditation. - A regulatory framework for registration and examination of green tour operators and guides with financial sponsorship provided is required. - Green tourism service providers are usually small and highly specialised. One or more specialised travel agencies should be encouraged to provide logistic services and support for these operators. - An overall plan linking up resources, the local community and the local residents is required. - “Green Tourism” should benefit local residents by promoting sustainable development.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The paper did not identify ecologically sensitive sites in the Tang Chau (燈洲) area, and did not explain what impact increased tourists could bring, and what enhanced conservation efforts would be required.- Any plan should include an active programme to monitor the potential damage tourism may bring to ecologically sensitive sites in the area.- On-going work on tern conservation at Mirs Bay (大鵬灣) has found that bird nesting colonies in the area could become exotic tourist attractions.- The effectiveness of the measures included in the conservation plan to control risks is doubtful, and additional measures are required.- Wake from passing passenger/ferry boats have potential to cause erosion to low lying mudflats in the marine parks.- Ferry operators should operate their vessels at slow speed in the marine parks and avoid any sensitive coastal areas.- The frequency, route and speed of ferries need to be examined from the perspective of conservation.- Ferries should avoid any route that potentially brings them near coral communities in case of accidental groundings.- Slow wave zones might need to be implemented in sensitive areas.- It is extremely important that all proponents of the marine tour examine the need for a 'risk' assessment, not only in terms of passenger safety but also ecological damage.- The Double Haven area does have shallow areas, rocky shorelines and narrow navigation channels.- All relevant parties are urged to formulate a rapid contingency response in case of scenarios including the spillage of diesel/marine fuel.- In view of the presence of shallow water habitats (mudflat, seagrass, coral and mangroves) and fishery spawning grounds inside the marine parks, a special duty team at Ma Liu Shui or nearby to deal with this potential hazard should be established.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Green Tourism” needs to be defined as it is subject to different interpretations. - Concerned about the launch of high-end ecological tours which need to be justified by studies or figures. High-end tourism in Government’s definition only means tourists having to pay more. - Government seems to have considered the “carrying capacity” of the scenic spots, but provides no supporting figures. - Government should set out acceptable safety levels. The intensity of tourism activities should be well distributed so as not to outstrip the capacity of the local environment. - If new tourism brings more money to a site because people enjoy the cultural heritage and the nature they see, they should also pay to maintain it. - Cannot see the relationship between the proposed enhancement of toilet facilities at Brides’ Pool Road (新娘潭道) and environmental conservation. - Set up a comprehensive licensing system that manages both the quantity and quality of sightseeing boats within the Marine Parks, so as to ensure that the coral reefs will not be damaged. - There should be a fine balance between sustainable development and the livelihood of local residents. - Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department has done a lot to look after precious plants. The key issue is how to sustain the effort made to ensure continual appreciation of the plants by visitors. - Regulating the existing water taxi services will allow the locals to properly engage in this business thereby helping local employment and fulfilling the aim of sustainable tourism. - Concerned about how visitors’ impacts on nature and culture will be assessed, monitored and controlled. - There is no clear eco-tourism policy, planning and management in Hong Kong at present. - No objection to improving access to the piers in the stated areas, but only footpaths should be allowed, and they should be properly controlled (by means of permits) so as not to exceed the carrying capacity of natural areas.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regarding Lai Chi Wo, the Government should strengthen communication with the stakeholders and increase manpower resources to conduct site patrols in order to protect the invaluable ecological resources and ensure that eco-tourism activities do not exceed their carrying capacities. - Provide more details about the design and operation of the proposed bio-toilet system, and the environmental impact of additional sewerage works, if any. - Small group visits should be promoted and adequate training on conservation should be given to the stakeholders like the trade sector and the local villagers. - Code of practice should be prepared. - In the long term green tourism should be monitored through some administrative and statutory means and a registration system. - Concerned that if vessels sail too close to the landing steps of Tang Chau, they would scare the birds there. - The proposed pilot programme fails to ensure that the environment is being effectively protected, especially in the ecologically sensitive areas. - A formal tourism master plan for this region should be developed before any large-scale tourism activities occur. - No detail was provided on how the proposals would be integrated with the comprehensive conservation plans from Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department. - Not only should the marine parks serve tourism activities, but more importantly the objective of restoration and enhancement of marine life and the environment should also be achieved. - Green tourism in the Northern New Territories should follow the principles below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It should be part of wider sustainable development and support conservation. 2. It should use natural resources in a sustainable way. 3. It should eliminate unsustainable consumption and minimise pollution and waste. 4. Tourism should respect local culture and provide benefits and opportunities to local communities. 5. It should be informative and educational.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- There should be a balance between maintaining the accessibility to visitors and sustainability of natural attractions.- Supported the green tourism proposal in general and agreed that it could enhance local economy.- The nature of this tourism development programme, whether it is green-based or ecology-based, should be clearly defined. The Tourism Commission should also set out the objectives of green tourism.- A balance between conservation and tourism development needs to be worked out.- Concerned about the carrying capacity of the tourist attractions in the area.
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II. OPTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT ON TUNG PING CHAU

Comments / Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The Government has put in enough resources to conserve Tung Ping Chau and it is therefore impossible to destroy the environment there since there are AFCD staff monitoring.- The feasibility of providing the utilities required is doubtful.- If the underground water in Tung Ping Chau is proved clean, government should allow its use through licensing.- It is questionable that a spa and resort hotel is suitable for Tung Ping Chau.- Tung Ping Chau has its special scientific value. Its wave cut platform is unique in Hong Kong and should be retained.- Organic farm development should not be supported as it will damage the soil and vegetation. Strengthen the regular ferry services between Ma Liu Shui Pier and Tung Ping Chau.- Conversion of aqua privies to flushing toilets should be implemented as soon as possible.- Suggest to build a new pier (like the new Sai Kung Pier and the new Wong Shek (黃石) Pier) which incorporates a “Marine Education Centre”.- Build a multi-functional trail and open area / piazza to accommodate different needs like logistics, transportation, sightseeing, rescue, cycling, as well as international events like round-the-island marathon.- Develop infrastructure for electricity or natural gas, or other means of energy production like solar or wind. Develop water supply infrastructure, e.g. water pipes, reservoir, etc.- Build a large-scale, open area/ grassland as a gathering arena for tourists; rain shelters and rest facilities; a bridge to link up Cham Keng Chau (斬頸洲) with the main island for tourists to enjoy the sunset.- Develop a spa and resort area with “Natural Underground Water” as the main interest.- Spa and resort development is not suitable but the feasibility of the outward bound type development is also questionable. The same applies to the idea of an organic farm.- The island cannot support the development of a spa/resort or organic farm. It is more suitable to develop hostel or outward bound type of accommodation on the island. A small-scale museum about the local geology and ecology will also be attractive.

- Eco-tourism is a good proposal. Government should buy out lands on Tung Ping Chau for development.
- The Government should protect the residents' benefits and rights.
- Avoid legislation as in the development of country and marine parks
- The plan is very good but not comprehensive enough.
- The consultation paper mentions that an extensive organic farm may be developed without specifying the exact location. Did not support the farm idea and it will destroy the ecology hence contravene conservation objectives.
- The potential benefits to residents have not yet been optimised. Government should promote a people-oriented approach. A balance should be struck between eco-tourism and the conservation of environment. Communication with local residents on the programme should be enhanced.
- A privately funded and operated marine centre on a large floating island may be established near Tung Ping Chau Marine Park.
- The status quo is already a good demonstration of ecotourism and may be maintained. However, if further development is planned, it is essential to install the necessary infrastructure first.
- Has reservations about the proposed use of the abandoned military barracks for developing spa and resort or visitor accommodation.
- A balance should be struck between protecting the interests of the locals and the need to conserve the environment.

III. OTHER COMMENTS

(Including comments on either relevant general issues or subjects outside the identified scope of the consultation)

Subject	Comments / Suggestions
General / Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The Green Tourism proposal is supported.- The Government's "low cost and high gain" goal behind this initiative is questionable.
Wu Kau Tang (烏蛟騰)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Set up a tourist centre and store at Wu Kau Tang for tourists to refill their packs.- Increase the free parking lots at Wu Kau Tang, e.g. along the Wu Kau Tang Road.- Extend the 275R bus service to Wu Kau Tang.- There should be development of a land-based green tourism hub at Wu Kau Tang including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A heritage village based on a restored old village serving as a shopping and hospitality services center, village inns, as well as house museums for the promotion of Hakka culture.• A low-density high-end health and wellness spa-hotel.• A traditional Chinese medicine exhibition center and garden as well as an experimental farm.• An organic produce farm and green living training center.• An extensive ecological conservation park with a conservation education center.• Some landscaped gardening as well as extensive wild floral botanical park.- The nearest shopping points for the hostel at Wu Kau Tang is Tai Mei Tuk. Access linkage between Tai Mei Tuk and Wu Kau Tang should be established. This will enable backpackers to appreciate and explore the Hakka Villages in the area and the country parks.

Sha Tau Kok	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open up the Sha Tau Kok closed area to facilitate tourists' access by sea to other Northern New Territories sites using Sha Tau Kok pier. - Operate land tours from Sha Tau Kok, like visiting the mangroves at Luk Keng (鹿頸) and experiencing the culture of "Wai Tsuen" (圍村). - The reconstruction of Sha Tau Kok Pier will facilitate the development of tourism. - The proposed programme should tie in with the plan to open up the restricted area. - The flooding problem in Sha Tau Kok from Luk Keng to Fung Hang (village) (鳳坑村) should be addressed. - Cleanliness of local toilet facilities should be improved. The toilet holes are also too wide for children's safe use. Signage should be improved.
Pak Tam Chung (北潭涌)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen the public transportation services from Pak Tam Chung to Hoi Ha and Wong Shek Pier, so that private car drivers can change at Pak Tam Chung.