

Submission to Legislative Council  
By  
Hong Kong People's Council for Sustainable Development

**Introduction**

Inspired by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, a number of individuals initiated the set-up of Hong Kong People's Council for Sustainable Development ("People's Council") which is the civil society's response to the pursuit of sustainable development in Hong Kong.

The People's Council for Sustainable Development is a non-governmental organisation dedicated to the pursuit of sustainable development in Hong Kong. On the basis of the United Nation's Rio Declaration in 1992 and the Johannesburg Declaration in 2002, our mission is to integrate Hong Kong people's aspiration for economic prosperity with the ethical utilisation of natural resources and the emphasis on social equity for the present and future generations. We are a forum to encourage critical rethink of the status quo, nurture new ideas, foster partnership and harness resources from among diverse stakeholders in the civil society and the private sector. We achieve our mission by taking a pioneering role in agenda setting for public policies and in experimenting with demonstration projects.

A Preparatory Committee was set up to prepare for the inauguration of the People's Council scheduled for September 2003. The preparation is an open and inclusive process which welcomes all committed individuals. Among other pursuits, the People's Council is in the process of compiling a sustainability report for Hong Kong and of launching an election by the public of the most sustainable and unsustainable practices in Hong Kong.

**What we expect of the Council for Sustainable Development?**

Members of the Preparatory Committee of the People's Council believe that the Council for Sustainable Development ('CSD') should formulate, as a matter of priority, a sustainable development strategy and an implementation plan based on the principles laid down by the UN Rio Declaration in 1992 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in 2002. The formulation of a sustainable development strategy must be recognized as a dynamic, participatory, action-oriented and "learning-by-doing" process. (See Annex 1)

On the basis of the above internationally accepted guidelines and international experience over the past decade, a successful sustainable development strategy and implementation plan must be

developed along the following principles:

1. Clear Vision and Mission

A clear vision and mission to explicitly spell out the aspirations of the society is an essential pre-requisite of a sustainable development strategy. The vision should include, for instance, “no depletion of natural resources, no pollution and no health hazards”, “to be a model for sustainable development in the region” or “to comply with all international charters and conventions related to sustainable development issues”.

2. People-centered approach

A strategic approach to sustainable development implies new way of thinking and working so as to move from centralised and controlled decision-making towards sharing expertise, results and opportunities, transparent negotiation, cooperation and concerted action. Conventional methods of centralised policy development and public consultation will neither be adequate nor effective.

3. Effective and broad participation

Broad participation helps to open up debate to new ideas and sources of information; expose issues that needs to be addressed; enable problems, needs and preferences to be expressed; identify the capabilities required to address the problems; and develop consensus on the need for action. Central government must be involved but multi-stakeholder processes are essential involving district councils, private sector, civil society as well as marginalised groups.

4. Comprehensive and integrated

Strategies should seek to integrate, where possible, economic, social and environmental objectives. But where integration cannot be achieved, trade-offs need to be negotiated through a transparent process. The entitlements and possible needs of future generations must be factored into this process.

5. Targeted with clear budgetary priorities

The strategy must be backed up by an implementation and action plan with clear targets, timelines and resource commitments. It needs to be fully integrated into the budget mechanism to ensure that plans have the financial resources to achieve their objectives, and do not represent ‘wish lists’ or ‘empty promises’.

6. Genuine partnership

As an integral part of the strategy development process, there must be a mechanism to foster genuine partnership between government, the private sector and the civil society since the problems are too complex to be solved by any group acting alone.

**How we can contribute?**

Members of the People's Council are a group of committed individuals who come from diverse sectors including academia, business, politics, professional bodies, social service, community development and environmental groups, etc. Many of them have exposure to either relevant United Nations summits or practical experience in strategy research, development or implementation. Due to the limited knowledge base for sustainable development in Hong Kong, the expertise represented by this group is a valuable resource in the strategy development exercise in the local context.

The People's Council is committed to a partnership approach and offers to work with the CSD in the following ways:

1. Expert Focus Groups

Members of the People's Council will be ready to lead or participate in expert focus groups to assist with the strategy development process. For instance, an expert focus group on strategy development process and methodology can be a useful start for CSD.

2. Multi-stakeholder participation

When broad participation during the strategy development process is required, members of the People's Council, through each of own affiliations, can help mobilise or organise community participation from relevant sectors, especially where organised representation is not apparent.

3. Demonstration Projects

Members of the People's Council may from time to time organise demonstration or experimental projects on the basis of innovative ideas and along the principles of sustainable development. CSD can work together with the People's Council either as a funding partner or strategic partner in these demonstration projects so that more tangible results can be shown to the public early in the process. Such demonstration projects will be valuable in boosting public confidence in the strategy development process.

We would also welcome any suggestion by Legislative Council members and CSD members with regard to other means of partnership and cooperation.

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14 May 2003

Preparatory Committee

Hong Kong People's Council for Sustainable Development

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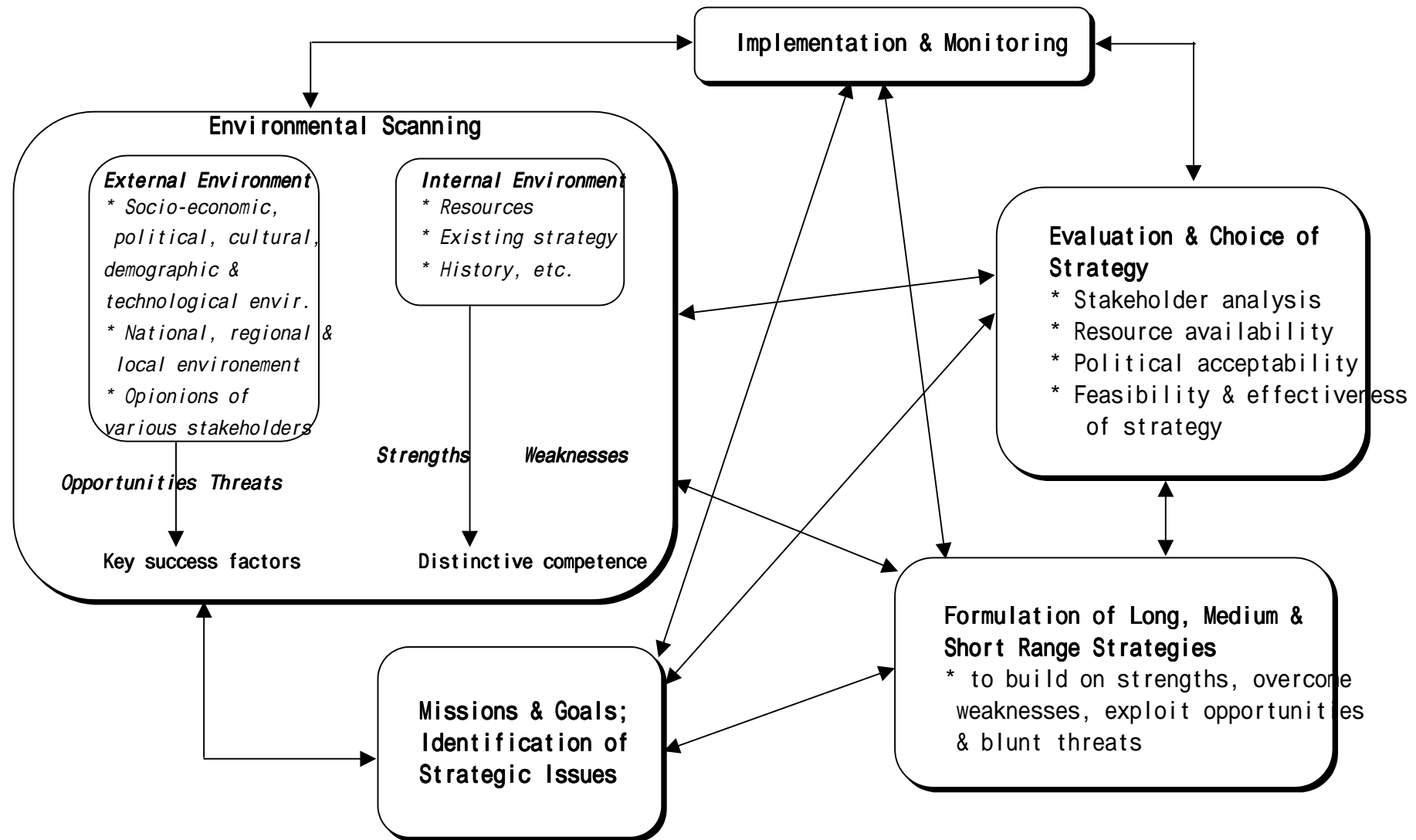
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## Annex 1: A Strategic Planning Process



Source: M.K. Ng (1997), "Strategic Planning and the TDSR in Hong Kong," *Hong Kong Public Administration*, 6:1, pp.31-59.