

Enclosure**LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs****Summary of views of the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers
on the technical aspects of Harbour Area Treatment Scheme (HATS) Stage 2A****General**

1. The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) refers to the implementation of Stage 2 of the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme (HATS) and is pleased to offer our views on the technical aspects of Stage 2A in respect of the two main issues raised in WWF's submission, ie (i) concern about ecological impact due to chlorination and (ii) why Stage 2B cannot be implemented in one go with Stage 2A and the response from Government.

2. The Institution is in support of HATS and firmly believes that the project should not be subject to any further delay as there has already been enough debates about the Scheme. Moreover, we are of the view that Government has the responsibility to protect the water quality of Victoria Harbour and that it must carry out necessary measures in the most cost effective manner.

Ecological impact due to chlorination

3. We understand that Government is going ahead with chlorination under Stage 2A. From the public health perspective, we urge Government to minimise the impact of the discharge of pathogens on both the community and the environment. In this respect, the Institution feels that Government should strike a balance between the protection of public health and long-term environmental impact of chlorination. While we had expressed some reservations about chlorination under the Scheme previously (our submission dated 10 November 2004 refers), we understand that should chlorination be adopted, a dechlorination step would be used. Subject to the result of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process, we suggest that the use of chlorination with dechlorination should be taken as an interim measure or when necessary. We also believe that purchasing Sodium Hypochlorite (NaOCl) as the disinfecting agent, rather than generating them on site, is advantageous because it provides Government with more flexibility for the future.

Implementation of Stage 2A and 2B

4. We are of the view that the centralisation of treatment at Stonecutters Island (SCI) has shown to be the most cost-effective. We also note that the proposed underground facility for biological treatment near SCI is a welcome solution allowing multiple uses of land and demonstrates the willingness of Government to apply innovative approaches. We understand that it would take considerable time to resolve the multiple user interface issues, and therefore are in support of the phased implementation of Stage 2.

5. Whilst the HKIE agrees that Stage 2 should be implemented in two separate engineering phases, we remain of the view that Stage 2B is necessary for the proper protection of the harbour and urge Government to make a commitment to building the biological treatment plant in a timely manner by undertaking necessary planning and assessment works for Stage 2B. This is to ensure a smooth progression from Stage 2A to Stage 2B.

6. We understand that at the moment population growth is a bit lower than that predicted in the past. Therefore, we urge Government to follow good engineering practice by reviewing population projections and capacity requirements regularly, and certainly at the detailed design stage.