

Legislative Council
Panel on Development
Views from the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers – Geotechnical Division
on the Enhancing Land Supply Strategy: Reclamation outside Victoria Harbour and Rock
Cavern Development – Stage 2 Public Engagement

General

In response to the invitation from the captioned Panel, the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers – Geotechnical Division (HKIE-GD) is pleased to provide views below on the Enhancing Land Supply Strategy: Reclamation outside Victoria Harbour and Rock Cavern Development.

Long Term and Sustainable Development

2. The HKIE-GD welcomes the Administration's initiatives to enhance land supply for meeting housing, social and economic development needs and for supporting the long-term and sustainable growth of Hong Kong.

3. The six-pronged approach of increasing land supply proposed by the Administration allows flexibility in providing new land. The various supply options are complementary to each other due to their unique merits and limitations. Among the six options, reclamation is considered the most effective in meeting the needs to supply new land. Therefore, this option should not be ruled out nor be regarded as the last resort provided that due considerations have been given to the impact on the local community and the environment.

4. It is anticipated that these enhanced land supply initiatives would impose a great demand on geotechnical expertise. The HKIE-GD believes that the geotechnical engineering profession in Hong Kong has the expertise and capabilities to facilitate effective and successful execution of the site formation works associated with the enhanced land supply initiatives.

Selection of Potential Reclamation and Rock Cavern Development Sites

5. The HKIE-GD agrees on the initial site selection criteria which were established to identify potential reclamation and rock cavern development sites. The HKIE-GD also concurs that the 5 shortlisted near shore reclamation sites, the proposed artificial islands in the central waters, and the 3 facilities to be relocated to rock caverns have been selected according to the selection criteria.

Vision of Reclamation

6. The HKIE-GD fully supports the Administration's proposal to enhance land development process by introducing three kinds of land reserve by reclamation. By carefully prioritizing reclamation sites for use in short term, medium term and long term, a steady land supply with added flexibility is assured.

7. In response to the public's concern on the environmental impact generated from reclamation works, the HKIE-GD suggests the Administration to explore the state-of-the-art engineering technology with respect to reclamation with a view to achieving minimal impacts that might bring to the environment.

Vision of Rock Cavern Development

8. The selection of potential facilities to be relocated to rock caverns has given priority to unpleasant facilities near urban or developed areas. The HKIE-GD agrees on the view that private sector participation should be an important part of the initiative because many private facilities, such as storage facilities, can benefit from a stable and secure environment offered by rock caverns. In fact, there are ample examples in other countries where public and private facilities are deliberately designed to be developed in rock caverns. With these successful examples, the HKIE-GD suggests the Administration to further explore the development of underground spaces as a long-term land supply strategy.