

Task Force on Water-land Interface

For discussion
on 12 November 2012

TFWL/06/2012

Marine and Port Operations – Cargo Handling and Fish Landing in Victoria Harbour

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to give Members an overview of cargo handling and fish landing activities within Victoria Harbour.

BACKGROUND

2. The Marine Department (MD), Civil Engineering and Development Department and Transport Department gave an overview of public landing facilities within Victoria Harbour at the third meeting of the Task Force on Water-Land Interface on 3 August 2012. Further to the meeting, some Members raised concern with respect to (i) whether public landing facilities should cater for cargo handling and fish landing activities; and (ii) if ancillary facilities and road access of the landing facilities should be enhanced to support such operations. This paper aims to brief Members on cargo handling and fish landing operations and the relevant statutory requirements.

CARGO HANDLING IN VICTORIA HARBOUR

3. At present, cargo handling operations in Hong Kong are conducted at private wharves, terminals and piers, and short term tenancy (STT) sites administered by the Lands Department, as well as the Public Cargo Working Areas (PCWAs) managed by MD. PCWAs are waterfront public facilities designed to load or unload water-bound cargoes from local barges and mainland coasters. In general, PCWAs are engaged in trades that are dependent upon the availability of low-cost berths and cargo handling space.

4. The use of PCWAs is governed by the Port Control (Cargo Working Areas) Ordinance (Cap 81). Since 1998, the berths in the PCWAs have been allocated through tendering arrangements. The terms and conditions of using the berths are governed by the Berth License Agreements (BLAs), which are essentially short term tenancies between the Government and the operators. During the validity of BLAs, the licensees can moor vessels within their allocated berths for cargo

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handling.

Current Usage of PCWAs

5. Following the decommissioning of the PCWAs in Kwun Tong and Cha Kwo Ling in early 2012, there are currently six PCWAs in Hong Kong with about 130 berths, providing a combined total quay length of around 5,000 metres. A plan showing the locations of the PCWAs is at **Annex A**. The PCWAs in the Western District, New Yau Ma Tei, Stonecutters Island and Rambler Channel fall within the Harbour Limit. In 2011, PCWAs handled a total of eight million tonnes of cargo, including general cargo, bulk cargo, container cargo and recyclable materials etc., and the average utilization rate was about 95% in terms of the number of berths. Cargo operators also make use of PCWAs to provide daily services to the outlying islands.

6. The main types of vessels using the PCWAs for cargo handling are cargo vessels and lighters in different sizes up to 50 metres in length. Generally, there is no restriction on the types of vessels using the PCWAs except those carrying dangerous goods of categories 1 (Explosives and Blasting Agents), 2 (Compressed Gases) or 5 (Substances giving off inflammable vapours) on board.

Facilities and Costs

7. To facilitate cargo handling operation, the Government provides mooring facilities at the berths, as well as safe sea and road access to and from PCWAs. According to their own needs, PCWA operators arrange the necessary equipment to load and discharge cargoes at PCWAs.

8. By way of tendering, the monthly license fees for a berthing length per metre range from \$400 to around \$5,000, varying across PCWAs.

Essential Criteria for PCWAs

9. PCWAs occupy fenced waterfront sites varying in width from 30 to 50 metres with an alongside water depth of about five metres to accommodate vessels of various sizes to moor at the berths. For easy dispatch of cargoes, PCWAs should also be located in proximity to traffic nodes and industrial areas with good road access and connection. Furthermore, in view of the public concern about the possible traffic and environmental issues arising from the operation, impact on marine / road traffic and the nearby environment is a critical factor to be assessed when considering the site location of PCWAs.

FISH LANDING IN VICTORIA HARBOUR

10. Under the Marine Fish (Marketing) Ordinance (Cap 291), all fresh marine fish¹ is required to be landed and sold wholesale through the designated wholesale fish markets operated by the Fish Marketing Organization (FMO). FMO is a statutory body established under Cap 291 to provide wholesale marketing services of marine fish, and is administered by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD).

11. Different types of vessels (mainly fish vessels and fish collectors) use the seafront of an FMO wholesale fish market for unloading of fisheries produce according to the pre-arranged schedule.

Current Usage of Wholesale Fish/Food Markets

12. Three out of seven wholesale fish markets managed by FMO fall within the Victoria Harbour, which are in Shau Kei Wan, Kwun Tong and Cheung Sha Wan. Apart from wholesale fish markets, fisheries operators transporting live fish or freshwater fish may also use wholesale food markets operated by AFCD. The Cheung Sha Wan and the Western Wholesale Food Markets are within the Harbour Limit. A map showing the locations of the wholesale fish and food markets within the Harbour is at **Annex B**.

13. Currently all wholesale fish markets within Victoria Harbour have reached full capacity with a throughput of 20,250 tonnes in 2011. The utilisation rates of the two wholesale food markets also hit over 90%, handling 22,069 tonnes of fisheries produce by port access in 2011. Fishing vessels of various sizes (ranging from about 10 to 40 metres in length) use landing facilities in the wholesale fish markets.

Facilities and Costs

14. To facilitate operations, derricks and berthing facilities are usually necessary for fish landing. Ancillary facilities such as cold storage, chill rooms and ice stores are provided for preservation of fish landed at the markets. The market users shall be payable to FMO for the services provided in respect of sale of marine fish and using the ancillary facilities (e.g. berthing) in the wholesale fish markets.

¹ According to Cap 291, marine fish means any fish or part thereof, whether fresh or processed, in any manner indigenous in sea water or partly in fresh water and partly in sea water, including any product derived therefrom, but excluding all crustaceans or molluscs and fish alive and in water.

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15. FMO provides market facilities and services for landing and wholesaling of marine fish from fishing vessels and fish collectors, and charges a commission of 7% of the value of fish sold through auction or negotiation, or \$5 per 15 catties for fish sold through direct sales. Ancillary facilities are in general allocated to market users by a tenancy agreement through open tender.

Essential Criteria for Wholesale Fish Markets

16. The wholesale fish markets should be strategically located in different districts in Hong Kong to supply fresh marine fish to the public. To ensure smooth business operations, market users (i.e. fishermen, fish wholesalers and buyers) consider that wholesale fish markets should meet the following criteria –

- good access to seafront and piers;
- sufficient water depth for berthing of fishing vessels and fish collectors;
- good transportation network;
- proximity to retail markets; and
- availability of sufficient space and facilities for trading businesses.

17. AFCD has not received adverse opinions from the market users concerning the provision and locations of the existing wholesale fish markets thus far.

CARGO HANDLING AND FISH LANDING AT PUBLIC LANDING FACILITIES

18. Cargo handling is prohibited at public landing facilities (i.e. public piers and public landing steps) as the landings are mainly provided for embarkation/disembarkation of passengers and their accompanied luggage only. Notice boards (a picture of which is at **Annex C**) are erected to inform and remind the public of the appropriate use of the public landing facilities. MD will also take enforcement action as necessary in accordance with the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (General) Regulation (Cap 548F).

19. Similarly, landing of marine fish is also forbidden at public landings. Such activities should be conducted at respective wholesale fish markets as aforementioned. AFCD carries out enforcement operations with the Police against illegal fish landing activities regulated by the Marine Fish (Marketing) Ordinance (Cap 291).

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CONCLUSION

20. As conducting port operations at public landing facilities is prohibited by law, marine trade users shall make use of the designated facilities such as private wharves, terminals and PCWAs for cargo handling, and wholesale fish/food markets for landing of fisheries produce respectively. These designated facilities provide proper and necessary equipment to facilitate the transfer of cargoes and fish catches from the vessels to the land side and vice versa. Road access is also established to enhance the transport of cargoes and fisheries. On the other hand, using public landing facilities for cargo handling and fish landing will not only create safety problems to the users of the facility but also the land traffic in the vicinity.

ADVICE SOUGHT

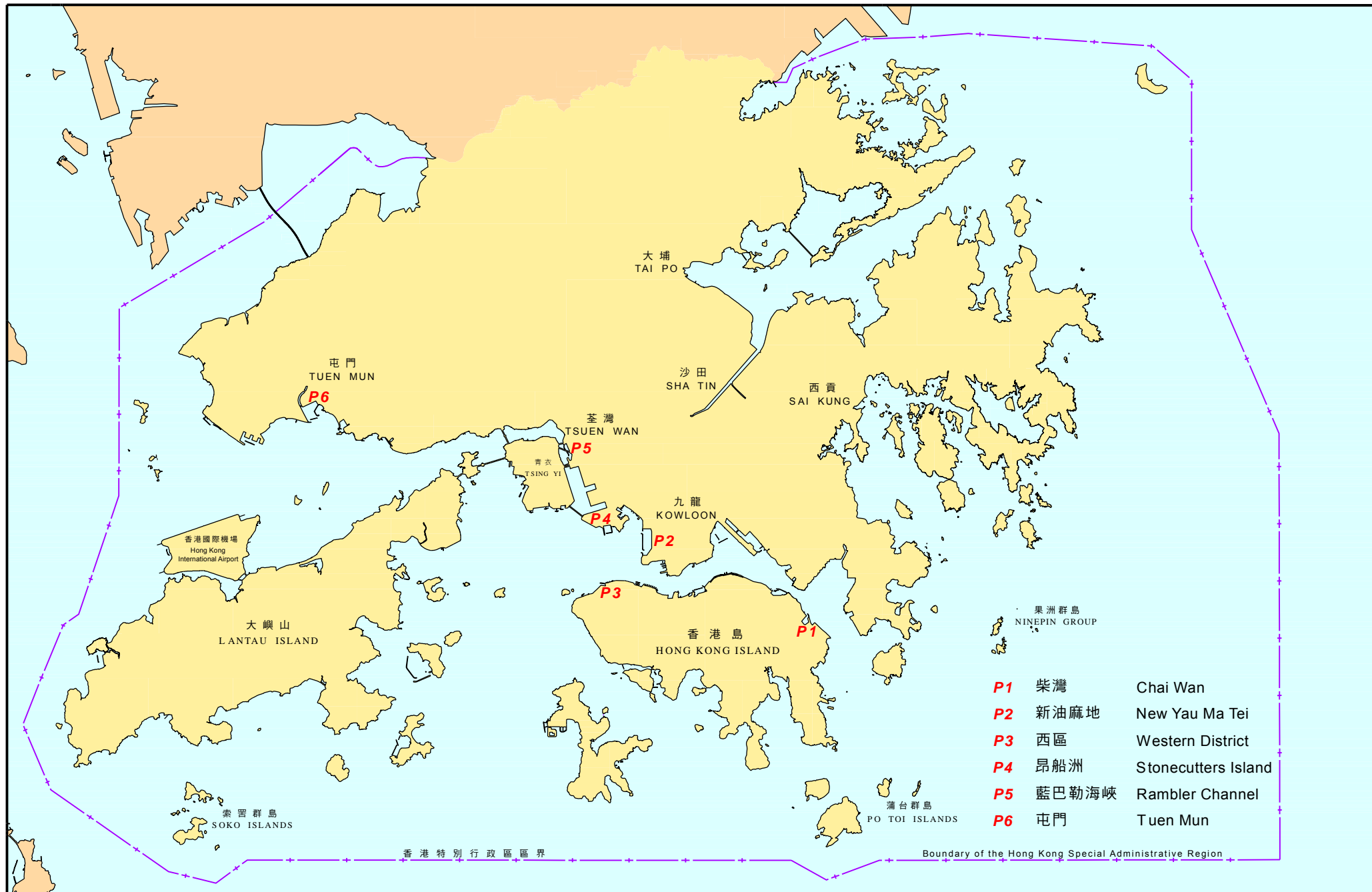
21. Members are invited to note the information provided in this paper.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
Marine Department
October 2012

公眾貨物裝卸區位置圖

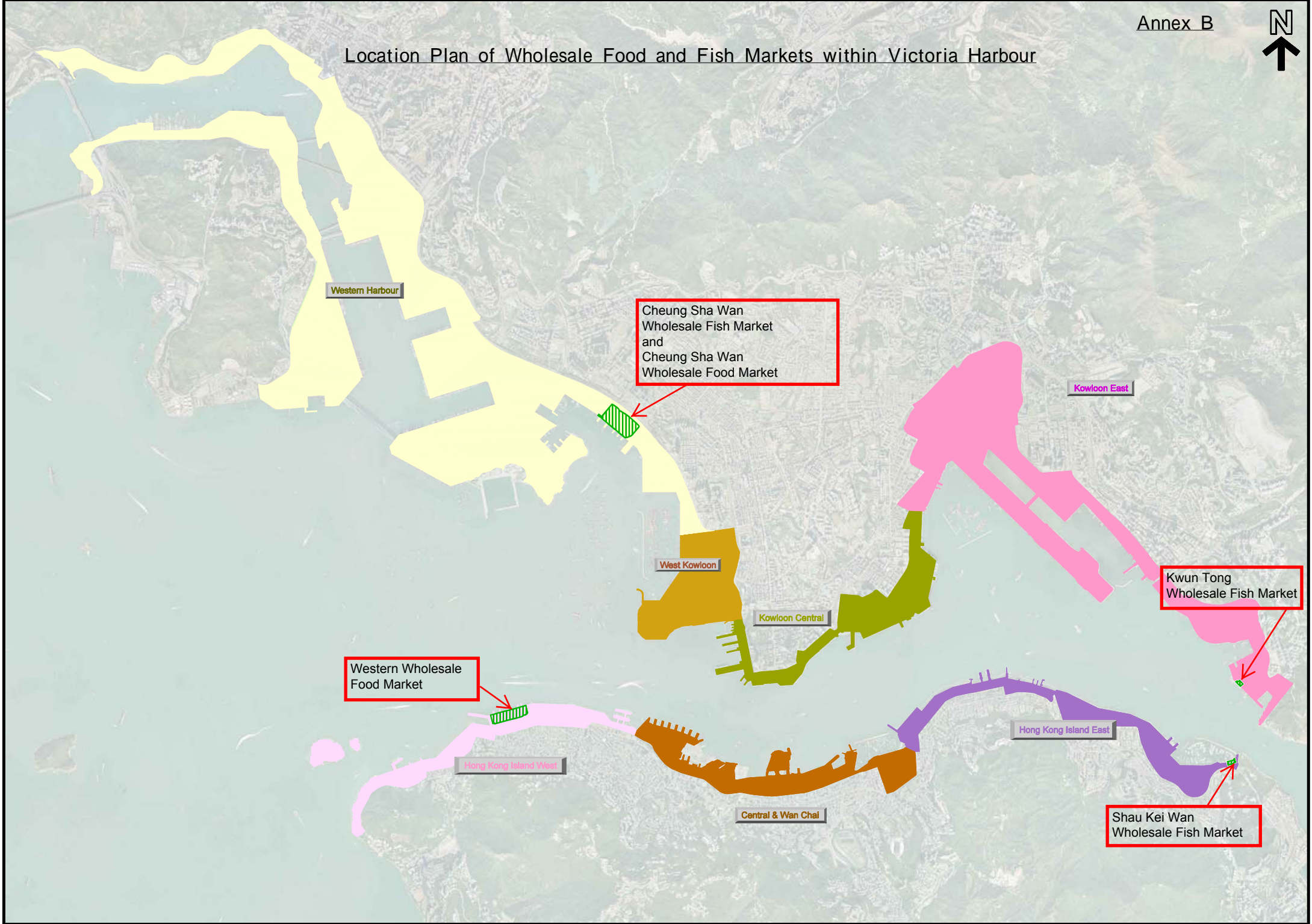
Location Plan of Public Cargo Working Area

Annex A





Location Plan of Wholesale Food and Fish Markets within Victoria Harbour



Western Harbour

Cheung Sha Wan
Wholesale Fish Market
and
Cheung Sha Wan
Wholesale Food Market

Kowloon East

West Kowloon

Kowloon Central

Kwun Tong
Wholesale Fish Market

Western Wholesale
Food Market

Hong Kong Island West

Central & Wan Chai

Hong Kong Island East

Shau Kei Wan
Wholesale Fish Market

Notice Board at Public Landing Steps

