

Task Force on Water-land Interface

For discussion
on 13 December 2013

TFWL/06/2013

Review on Berthing and Sheltered Space for Local Vessels in Hong Kong

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the preliminary thought of the fundamental review of berthing and sheltered space for local vessels (including pleasure vessels and small visiting vessels) in Hong Kong, which is being prepared by the Marine Department (MD).

BACKGROUND

2. Under the existing policy, the Government will ensure that there are sufficient sheltered spaces for local vessels to take refuge during inclement weather. There is, however, no established policy for the Government to provide berthing spaces for local vessels to meet their operational needs. In practice, the owners of local vessels (particularly for pleasure vessels which are used for leisure purpose) need to arrange appropriate berths for their vessels to meet their own operational needs.

3. MD has been conducting comprehensive assessment periodically on the demand and supply of typhoon shelter spaces for local vessels on a territorial basis. The assessment aims to provide data for the Government's reference in formulating long-term planning for the provision of typhoon shelters, so as to ensure that sufficient sheltered space is available for local vessels to seek refuge during inclement weather. The demand for sheltered space has been assessed on a territorial basis, taking into account typhoon shelters and sheltered anchorages in Hong Kong are, except with particular requirements imposed, open for all types of local vessels. The assessments were generally conducted at an interval of every four to

five years, with the last two releases of the assessment results in February 2005 and December 2009.

4. In 1996, the Port Progress Committee (chaired by the then Secretary for Planning, Environment and Lands) decided that priority of sheltered space within typhoon shelters should be given to commercial vessels; whereas estimated demand arising from pleasure vessels would not be included in future assessments.

THE NEED FOR FUNDAMENTAL REVIEW

5. Since then, the assessments had been conducted in accordance with the decision of the Port Progress Committee. The last assessment was conducted in 2009 and it was updated in 2012 in view of the rising trend in the number of vessels licensed in Hong Kong in recent years, particularly for pleasure vessels. Due to the increase in number and size of pleasure vessels, there is aspiration from the boating community that more sheltered space should be provided for berthing of pleasure vessels, and water space within easy access to nearby road transport or urban areas to be designated for leisure purpose as well.

6. On the other hand, the demand for sheltered space arising from the fishing community is more apparent during Chinese New year and within the two-month (June to August) annual fishing moratorium period, as over 700 local fishing vessels traditionally using Aberdeen (West) Typhoon Shelter as their home base of operations will flood to this typhoon shelter. For this reason, the fishing community has also requested to provide more sheltered space for fishing vessels taking into account sheltered space within Aberdeen (West) Typhoon Shelter is insufficient to meet their demand during festive season and moratorium period, despite the Hei Ling Chau Typhoon Shelter and Cheung Chau Typhoon Shelter, which have an effective sheltered area of 76.6 and 50 hectares respectively, are underutilised. In addition,

MD has also noted that the number and size of Class II¹ vessels are increased and in particular, there is a need to provide sheltered space for high mast dumb steel lighters in the Victoria Harbour to cope with efficient operation of the Hong Kong Port. Hence, there seems to be a mismatch between the overall supply and the local (or regional) demand of sheltered space.

7. In the light of the above development, MD is preparing to conduct a fundamental review, in parallel to the coming comprehensive assessment on the demand and supply of typhoon shelter spaces for local vessels, to look into the established mechanism for provision of sheltered space and the challenges facing by the Government and the floating communities; and to recommend practical solutions with a view to addressing the problems and challenges identified.

THE REVIEW OUTLINE

8. To achieve the objectives of providing the Government with reference data in formulating long-term planning for the provision of typhoon shelter, the best use of water space, and the actions and measures required for meeting future demand arising from the growth of the number of local vessels and development of local vessel industry, MD is planning to carry out the fundamental review in three facets as set out below:

- Facet I: Stocktaking of Supply and Demand Situation
- Facet II: Review of Policy and Management Issues, and Proposal for Options
- Facet III: Consultation and Recommendations for Administration's Consideration.

9. The Facet I of fundamental review will start in March 2014, which includes the following two parts:

¹ Class II vessel means any vessel, other than a class IV vessel, which is permitted to carry not more than 12 passengers, for example work barges and dumb steel lighters.

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- Facet Ia: stocktaking the use of berthing and sheltered space by different classes of vessels on a regional basis in Hong Kong; and
- Facet Ib: assess the demand and supply situation (with projection up to the year of 2030) and identify mismatches, if any, both on a regional and territorial basis.

10. In view of the extensive scale of work involved, it is planned to employ a consultant to take up the duties related to Facet I. Based on the information obtained from Facet Ia, actions will be taken in Facet Ib to identify the problems and concerns of berthing related to different types of vessels and facilities, and to carry out the assessments of typhoon shelter space requirements on both a regional and territorial basis.

11. To steer the work of the consultant; and to develop recommended practical options for better use and management of berthing and sheltered spaces for local vessels, a working group (WG) comprising relevant experts and professionals from relevant Government departments will be formed. Representatives from each class of local vessels i.e. Classes I, II, III and IV² may be invited to attend this WG on a need basis. Prior to finalizing the tasks under Facet II, public consultation with relevant stakeholders will be conducted to collect their views on the best use and management of water space in the public interest. The output of Facet II will be provided to the steering committee (SC) as mentioned in paragraph 12 below for endorsement.

12. A SC comprising relevant Government bureaux /

² Class I vessel means any vessel other than a Class VI vessel which is permitted to carry more than 12 passengers like launch and ferry; Class II vessel means any vessel, other than a class IV vessel, which is permitted to carry not more than 12 passengers (work barges & dumb steel lighters for example); Class III vessel means any vessel used exclusively for fishing and related purposes, which is not permitted to carry passengers; and Class IV vessel means any vessel used exclusively for pleasure purposes regardless of the number of passengers it is permitted to carry.

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departments will be formed to steer the tasks under Facets II and III. The SC will consider the findings from Facet I; the potential challenges, possible implications and the problems identified in Facet II, including the feedback gathered from public consultation; as well as the options developed by the WG, taking into account the legal and resources implications, and future development of Hong Kong, such as business environment of the local vessel community, prior to recommending the way forward and measures to the Administration.

13. Pending policy support and securing of funding required for employment of consultant, it is expected that Facet I will commence in April 2014 for completion by end of the year. Facet II and Facet III will commence in Q3 and Q4 of 2014 respectively for completion of the review in Q2 of 2015.

PRESENTATION

14. The paper is presented by MD for Members' information.

Planning & Development Branch
Marine Department
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