



3rd January 2014

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Chairman of Harbourfront Commission
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Dear Chairman of Harbourfront Commission,

**Phase 1 Public Engagement on the
Proposed Establishment of a Harbourfront Authority**

In response to the Phase 1 Public Engagement Exercise on the Proposed Establishment of a Harbourfront Authority ("HA"), which has been jointly undertaken by the Development Bureau and the Harbourfront Commission ("HC"), Business Environment Council ("BEC") is pleased to submit our views.

Over the last two decades, BEC has taken a leading role in advocating environmental excellence in Hong Kong, including sustainable development of harbour and waterfront. We are a membership-based organisation, with over 170 member companies that spans across major holding companies in Hong Kong, to multinational conglomerates, and to small and medium-sized enterprises. In recognizing the importance of Hong Kong's harbour, BEC set up the Harbour Business Forum ("HBF") in 2005.

Views expressed in this submission are those of BEC, and are based on consultation with our HBF members but may not necessarily correlate with the views of individual members. According to the suggestions listed in the Public Engagement Consultation Digest ("Digest"), this submission is specifically structured to address the questions set out on page 19 of the Digest.

1. BEC concurs with the common aspirations for Victoria Harbourfront described on page 6 of the Digest and strongly endorses the proposal to establish a dedicated body, namely a HA that is able to press ahead with harbourfront development in a holistic manner and with a flexible management approach, so as to realise the attractiveness, accessibility and vibrancy of Victoria Harbour similar to other renowned world-class harbours.
2. BEC recommends that the HA should be an independent statutory authority with dedicated resources and be financially autonomous with integrated planning, design, construction, operation and management powers.
3. So far as planning and design is concerned, ideally, all harbourfront areas should fall within the remit of the HA, as otherwise an integrated and holistic approach will be hard to achieve.
4. In regards to construction and operation, BEC considers a phased approach to the vesting of land is reasonable and feasible so that the HA could start with the readily available

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harbourfront sites, for instance, the Central harbourfront. BEC anticipates that additional or alternative approaches would be proposed in the Phase 2 Public Engagement Exercise, which could provide the HA with the adequate control over the harbourfront areas as well as to respond to any public concerns.

5. BEC considers that the HA should be a champion for our harbour and will streamline existing systems rather than increasing bureaucracy, while at all times respect existing property rights and the statutory planning powers of the Town Planning Board.
6. In terms of the functions and advantages listed on page 16 of the Digest, BEC considers that the HA should aim to realize these with adequate resources and structure. More importantly, the Phase 2 of the Public Engagement Exercise should give a more detailed account of the process of achieving these objectives.
7. Regarding the possible approaches set out in the Table on page 17 of the Digest, BEC considers that the HC should be disbanded and the HA should take on both advisory and advocacy roles, subject to adequate checks and balances are in place and with a meaningful level of public participation.
8. BEC is of the view that in order for the HA to become a dedicated body, it should have an independent, properly qualified and experienced executive arm.
9. BEC recommends that the establishment process for the HA should be expedited wherever possible. If there is anticipated delay in the legislative process, BEC will support the establishment of an interim HA (perhaps the current HC's powers could be appropriately expanded for a temporary period) to ensure that there is no unnecessary vacuum in the planning and design of the new waterfront areas, the drafting of a business plan for the HA and other necessary actions.

BEC strongly supports the proposal to establish a HA and would be delighted to see our views be duly considered in the formulation of a mainstream model and detailed framework for further discussion in the Phase 2 Public Engagement Exercise.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN CHAI

Prof John Chai
Chairman
Business Environment Council Limited

- c.c. Mr. Paul Chan, MH, JP – Secretary for Development
c.c. Mr. Vincent Ng – Chairman of Harbourfront Commission's Core Group for Public Engagement
c.c. Mrs. Winnie Kang – Principal Assistant Secretary (Harbour), DEVB
c.c. Ms. Agnes Li – CEO of BEC