

Information Paper

Islands District Council Paper No. IDC 142/2020

Lantau Conservation Fund

PURPOSE

This paper aims to brief the Islands District Council on the latest development of the Lantau Conservation Fund and the Lantau Conservation and Recreation Masterplan.

BACKGROUND

2. With a wealth of natural and cultural resources, Lantau is unique with conservation chiming in with sustainable recreation opportunities for all walks of lives. The Government announced in the 2018 Policy Address to set up a \$1 billion Lantau Conservation Fund (LCF) to support projects that would contribute to the overall conservation of Lantau, raise community awareness on the conservation of Lantau, and engage the community to put conservation into practice, with a view to fostering a quality living environment for the current generation and beyond.

PROPOSED FUNDING ARRANGEMENT

3. The LCF consists of two parts, including (A) \$500 million for conservation and related projects and (B) \$500 million for minor local improvement works. The arrangement is as follows:

(A) Conservation and Related Projects

4. This part of the LCF is dedicated to providing financial support to local communities, landowners, non-governmental organisations, etc. to carry out

conservation and related projects in Lantau¹.

Project Streams

Conservation and related projects comprise three streams:

- i. Conservation Management Agreement: conservation projects (nature conservation, cultural conservation and / or village revitalisation) involving management of privately-owned land², enhancing and revitalising the ecological / nature / cultural / historical significance of the site;
- ii. Research: conservation-related scientific research or culture and local history research; and
- iii. Education and Engagement: initiatives or activities for community involvement, public education and promotion in relation to conservation and related purposes.

The conservation efforts to be covered by the conservation and related projects may include natural environment, ecology, culture, history, rural character, landscape, geomorphology and other relevant elements. Through provision of resources for implementing these conservation and related projects, it is anticipated that the environmental capacity can be enhanced, culture and rural character can be conserved and sustainable development of Lantau can be promoted.

Eligibility³

To ensure that the funded projects are non-profit-making in nature, this part of the LCF is open for application from local tax-exempt charities, local registered and non-profit-making companies, and local post-secondary education institutions.

Assessment Criteria

¹ Lantau is the main location for promoting conservation under the LCF. If the proposed projects involve adjacent waters / islands of Lantau and will bring benefits for the conservation of Lantau as a whole, they will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

² If the proposed projects involve government land and will bring benefits for the conservation of Lantau as a whole, they will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

³ Details of eligibility are set out in the Guide to Application of the LCF.

To determine whether the project should be funded, the project's overall benefits to achieve conservation purpose, quality of proposal, applicant organisation's capability and quality of budget will be assessed in considering the funding application.

Priority Projects

Priority consideration will be given in the assessment to support the following projects in order to create synergy amongst different projects and to maximise the conservation benefits:

- i. Projects in Tai O, Pui O or Shui Hau⁴; and
- ii. Projects that match with the planning intention of the Lantau Conservation and Recreation Masterplan.

Funding and Duration

Projects seeking funding support from the LCF are expected to be of sufficient scale in order to bring noticeable contributions to the conservation of Lantau. Therefore, the lower threshold limit for application is HK\$250,000. The funding and duration limit of projects under different streams are as follows:

Project Stream	Funding Limit (HK\$ million)	Duration Limit
Conservation Management Agreement	13.0	3 years
Research	2.5	3 years
Education and Engagement	2.0	2 years

(B) Minor Local Improvement Works

5. This part of the LCF will be spent on minor local improvement works to be carried out by the Government on government land in Lantau, with a ceiling of \$30 million for each project.

⁴ The Government announced in the 2017 Policy Address to implement rural conservation pilot projects in areas such as Tai O, Shui Hau and Pui O.

6. These projects aim to conserve/enhance the environment in Lantau, and are generally small in scale. The projects will include (i) improvement works in villages to enhance the accessibility, environment and livelihood of villagers; (ii) improvement works to eco-recreation facilities; (iii) relevant works to facilitate eco-recreation and public education on environmental protection; (iv) reinstatement works on government land affected by environmentally damaging activities, such as planting works and removal of illegal structures as may be requested by other departments, etc.; and (v) enhancement, rehabilitation and other projects for the natural environment/habitat and buildings on government land.

ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION OF FUNDING

7. The Lantau Conservation Fund Advisory Committee (LCFAC) was established on 1 October 2020. The LCFAC comprises 4 official members and 14 non-official members appointed by the Secretary for Development from diverse sectors, including scholars, professionals and practitioners with vast experiences and rich knowledge in their professions, expertise and community services. The terms of reference of the LCFAC are (i) to advise on the overall administration and operation and any other matters relating to the LCF; (ii) to vet applications under the LCF; make recommendations on the supported applications, their relative priorities and amount of fund to be allocated; and to monitor the progress of funded projects; and (iii) to advise on priority of minor local improvement works recommended by the Government.

8. We have established the Minor Works Steering Committee (MWSC). The major roles under the terms of reference of the MWSC are to vet and assess the eligibility of the minor local improvement works (MLIW), and to prioritize the eligible MLIW proposals before submitting to the AC for advice on priority. The endorsed MLIW proposals taking into account the advice from the AC will be submitted to the vote controller for approval. Besides, the MWSC will also monitor and oversee the fund performance under this part of the LCF, including progress and expenditure of the MLIW, and to report regularly to the AC on the latest fund performance.

LANTAU CONSERVATION AND RECREATION MASTERPLAN

9. Under the overarching principle of “Development in the North; Conservation for the South” adopted in the Sustainable Lantau Blueprint and the characters of different parts of Lantau, the Sustainable Lantau Office of Civil Engineering and Development Department has formulated the Lantau Conservation and Recreation Masterplan (the Masterplan) (**Figure 1**) to provide a framework guiding our conservation and recreation initiatives, and orchestrate public and private projects better for achieving synergy in conservation of Lantau.

10. The Masterplan is prepared towards the direction of Conservation of Lantau, including: (1) protection and enhancement, (2) public involvement, as well as (3) public enjoyment. Being multi-faceted, the Masterplan represents a point-line-plane approach, with various attractions, activities and event bases linked up by connectors in term of trails, bike network, road/water transport to form five major themed clusters:

- i. North Lantau Recreation Corridor;
- ii. Northwest Lantau Eco-Cultural Corridor;
- iii. South Lantau Eco-Recreation Corridor;
- iv. Rural Township Improvement; and
- v. Hiking Hub.

11. Under the theme of “Hiking Hub”, we have formulated the Lantau Trails and Recreation Plan (**Figure 2**) and will take forward this visionary plan in phases for developing Lantau into a Hiking Hub for people in Hong Kong.

12. Individual conservation projects to be submitted under the Lantau Conservation Fund could be prioritised if it fits in the planning intention of the Masterplan.

WAY FORWARD

13. A briefing session for potential applicant organisations for conservation and related projects under the LCF was held in November 2020. We plan to accept the first round of funding applications in December 2020 and expect to

announce the results by the third quarter of 2021.

14. The first batch of MLIW is expected to commence in the first half of 2021.

CONCLUSION

15. Members are invited to note the latest development of the Lantau Conservation Fund and the Lantau Conservation and Recreation Masterplan.

ENCLOSURE

Figure 1 - Lantau Conservation and Recreation Masterplan

Figure 2 - Lantau Trails and Recreation Plan

Civil Engineering and Development Department
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