



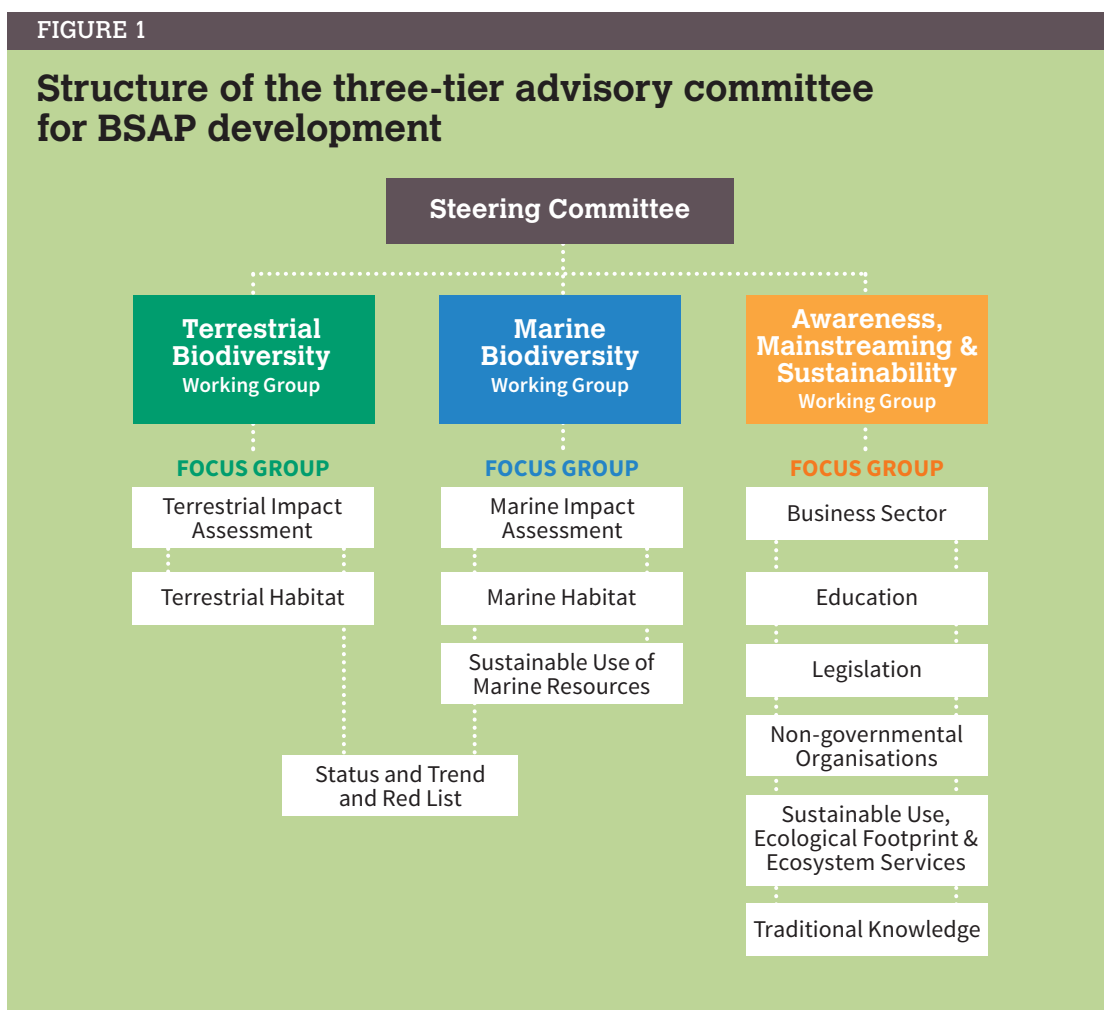
### **3 | The Proposed Hong Kong's First Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP)**

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### 3.1 Background

**What it is:** Our Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) will create strategies and set out actions to conserve our biodiversity and support sustainable development in the next five years. The plan will evolve. Changing conditions and experiences gained will be taken into account when the plan is updated after five years. The plan will involve everyone in our society: the Government, the commercial sector, non-profit-making organisations, interested groups, youth and adult groups, and schools from primary to university level. All of us have a stake in preserving our natural environment that sustains our life and brings us beauty and pleasure.

**Collecting inputs across Hong Kong:** Work on a city-level BSAP began in 2013 when the Government created a three-tier advisory committee (Figure 1). The committee includes biodiversity experts and academics, as well as representatives from NGOs, professional bodies, universities, rural communities,



private and public sectors, and relevant government bureaux and departments. The committee has identified priority issues and makes recommendations on the terrestrial and marine biodiversity in Hong Kong, as well as on raising awareness and mainstreaming biodiversity across the society. Public views and participation are also actively sought.



Two invited discussion sessions (7 and 14 June 2014) were held, attended by

**117** participants from  
**48** organisations

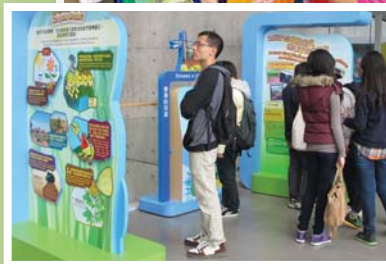


A website<sup>6</sup>, a YouTube channel and a Facebook page have been set up.

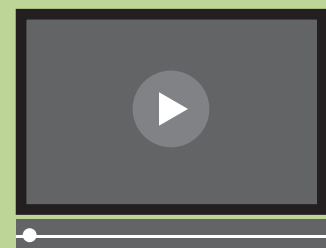
A series of **10** public lectures was held in the Hong Kong Science Museum and other venues, and was well attended.



A three-month Hong Kong Biodiversity Festival was organised in August 2015 involving 20 partner organisations including NGOs and universities. The first Biodiversity Carnival was held in Kowloon Park to showcase biodiversity in the centre of the city. Over **160 000** persons joined the workshops, eco-tours, seminars and exhibitions.



Promotional short videos were publicly broadcasted, and roving exhibitions were placed throughout the city.



6. The BSAP webpage is at <http://www.afcd.gov.hk/bsap>





At the same time, government bureaux and departments continue to explore ways for further collaboration among themselves to foster biodiversity conservation for sustainable development.

After 18 months of thorough discussion, the committee has made a set of recommendations on the first BSAP of Hong Kong. The full set of the committee's recommendations can be found at [www.afcd.gov.hk/bsap](http://www.afcd.gov.hk/bsap).

## 3.2 The proposed Hong Kong's first Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

### Preamble

The Government is committed to developing a city-level BSAP with a view to stepping up conservation efforts and supporting the sustainable development of Hong Kong in the next five years. The first BSAP will facilitate the implementation of the CBD, enhance nature conservation and help achieve sustainable development of our city.

The Government has carefully and thoroughly considered the steering committee's recommendations, views collected during public engagement in the past two years, experiences of other city-level BSAPs and Hong Kong's needs and priorities. Taking into account the prevalent circumstances in Hong Kong and the fact that it is a city-level BSAP, the Government believes that under the BSAP, our efforts should focus on enhancing our existing strengths, mainstreaming biodiversity, increasing the understanding and engaging different sectors in the dialogue and actions. Being the first BSAP created for Hong Kong, we consider that the top priority should be to focus on mainstreaming biodiversity so as to cultivate an enabling environment. To this end, we do not intend to initiate major changes at this stage, such as changing existing policies and legislation. By proceeding progressively and deliberately, we can build up the necessary public support and understanding of biodiversity so as to ensure that our efforts will be effective and efficient in the long term.

The primary objective of Hong Kong's first BSAP is to:

- a) **Contribute to the Global Effort on Biological Diversity:** being an international city and part of the global and regional ecosystem, Hong Kong has a role to play in global efforts on biodiversity. Though there is no obligation under the CBD for the HKSAR to formulate a city-level BSAP<sup>7</sup>, the Government wishes to develop Hong Kong's first city-level BSAP according to Hong Kong's own conditions and capabilities with a view to contributing to global efforts on biological diversity. The Secretariat of the CBD has advised that the city-level BSAP should be practical, so that people will see results and are willing to support.

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7. Under the CBD, it is up to the Party to the CBD to consider as appropriate the development and implementation of subnational and local biodiversity strategies and action plans in support of national strategies and action plans.

BOX 9

## China's National BSAP

China announced its first National BSAP in 1994 after joining the CBD in 1993. In 2010 it published an update to its national BSAP for the next two decades in China's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2011-2030). The 100-page document sets forth four foci: biodiversity conservation, sustainable use of biological resources, public participation, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and traditional knowledge.



- b) **Contribute to China's National BSAP:** Article 6 (a) of the CBD provides, inter alia, that each Party to the CBD shall, in accordance with its particular conditions and capabilities, develop national strategies, plans or programmes for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. The HKSAR is not a Party to the CBD on its own. That said, with the CBD being extended by the Central People's Government to the HKSAR, the HKSAR Government has to assist the Central People's Government in fulfilling its obligations under the CBD insofar as the HKSAR is concerned. The China's National BSAP (see Box 9) provides strategic guidance for conservation of biodiversity in China. As part of China, Hong Kong will take into account its local needs and priorities and formulate its BSAP to contribute to national efforts on biological diversity.

In formulating the Hong Kong's first BSAP, the Government has taken into account the objectives and principles of the CBD and local needs, economic and social priorities as well as aspirations of the people. We will emphasise conservation of specific species and habitats in major government policies.

We appreciate the importance of ecosystem functioning, ecological connectivity and the provision of ecosystem services. We also appreciate Hong Kong's rich biodiversity and the importance of proper planning, designation and management for biodiversity conservation. We believe that education and public awareness is the cornerstone of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. We recognise the contributions of various stakeholders from different sectors to the development and implementation of the Hong Kong's BSAP.



## Proposed Vision and Mission

Taking account of the committee's recommendations and in accordance with the particular conditions of Hong Kong, we propose the following vision and mission for the Hong Kong's BSAP:

### Vision

*“The rich biodiversity of Hong Kong is valued, conserved, restored, sustainably managed and wisely used, thereby maintaining essential ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy and liveable place and delivering benefits for all people.”*

### Mission

*“Our mission is to value, conserve and restore the rich biodiversity of Hong Kong, to ensure that it is sustainably managed and wisely used, and to promote the mainstreaming of biodiversity issues and values across all sectors of the society, with social and economic aspects duly considered and balanced, so that ecosystems are resilient and continue to provide essential services, and the precious environment that supports and enriches the life of Hong Kong people is passed on to future generations.”*

A photograph of a small, spotted piglet standing in a grassy field. The piglet has brown and white stripes and is looking to the right. The background is a soft-focus green field.

**“The rich biodiversity of Hong Kong is valued, conserved, restored, sustainably managed and wisely used, thereby maintaining essential ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy and liveable place and delivering benefits for all people.”**

“Our mission is to value, conserve and restore the rich biodiversity of Hong Kong...so that the precious environment that supports and enriches the life of Hong Kong people is passed on to future generations.”



### Proposed Action Areas

Following the CBD’s guidance and taking into consideration the recommendations of the committee, stakeholders’ views and local circumstances, we propose four major areas to be considered as a framework for our first BSAP. These areas are:

#### AREA 1 **Conservation**

continue to implement and enhance existing conservation measures



#### AREA 2 **Mainstreaming**

incorporate biodiversity considerations into planning and decision-making to achieve sustainable development



#### AREA 3 **Knowledge**

conduct biodiversity surveys and studies to fill knowledge gaps



#### AREA 4 **Community Involvement**

promote public awareness and knowledge of biodiversity among stakeholders and the public





### 3.3



#### Action Area 1 Conservation

##### Intention

Continue to implement and enhance existing conservation measures that maintain and support biodiversity.

##### Rationale

Among cities in Asia with a similar size and level of development, our dedicated efforts through the years have yielded very positive results both in terms of the share of areas protected for nature conservation as well as the level of biodiversity. To keep up our existing conservation measures would mean that we would continue to evolve in response to changing environmental and other challenges.

##### Possible actions

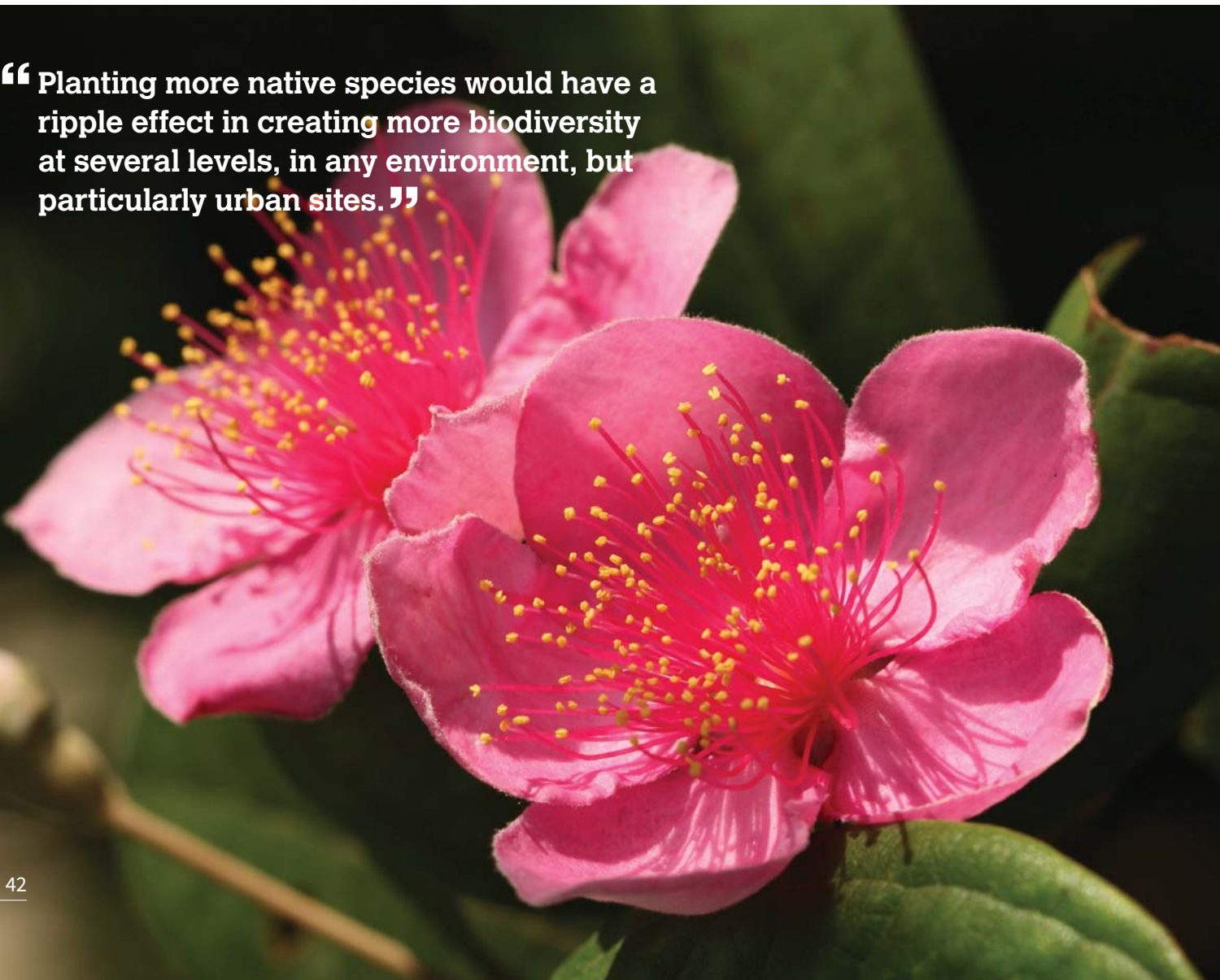
**Habitat protection:** Protection of specific geographical areas is a well-recognised method for safeguarding biodiversity, and it has been successfully used in Hong Kong, for example, in the designation of country and marine parks.

- While maintaining existing protected areas, we are planning to pursue new country/marine parks, including the Brothers Marine Park, the Soko Islands Marine Park, the Southwest Lantau Marine Park and the Robin's Nest Country Park, as well as a nature park at Long Valley under the Kwu Tung North and Fanling North New Development Areas project.
- We would designate fisheries protection areas to protect important fish spawning and nursery grounds, as well as to manage fisheries resources in an effective and sustainable way.
- We would enhance our management of protected areas through developing/reviewing management plans. We would also enhance conservation of ecologically important sites, in particular natural streams and rivers.

**Species protection:** We would continue to use the existing administrative and legislative approaches to ensure our local biodiversity is conserved. We would also implement ongoing species conservation measures and species action plans, such as those for Black-faced Spoonbill (see Box 5), Romer's Tree Frog, and Chinese White Dolphin. In addition, we would seek to protect more species of conservation concern, especially those that are highly endangered or of particular ecological value.

**Planting native species:** Since native plant species are generally more adapted to the local environment and more valuable within the ecosystem, as sources of food and habitats for wildlife, we would plant more native species in urban areas as well as in the countryside and country parks. This would have a ripple effect in creating more biodiversity at several levels, in any environment, but particularly urban sites.

**“Planting more native species would have a ripple effect in creating more biodiversity at several levels, in any environment, but particularly urban sites.”**



## 3.4



### Action Area 2 Mainstreaming

#### Intention

Incorporate biodiversity considerations into planning and decision-making across the society, in public and private sectors, to achieve sustainable development.

#### Rationale

To “mainstream biodiversity” means to include conservation as a consideration in plans made at every level and, in every sector of society. It is not about creating parallel or artificial processes and systems. It is about integrating biodiversity into existing structures, processes and systems. It is a long-term and complex process that requires sustained efforts on several fronts. The Government plays a role, but participation of organisations and individuals is even more important. Under the first BSAP, the Government would continue to incorporate biodiversity considerations into its plans, projects and programmes according to the particular situations in Hong Kong. At the same time it would aim to cultivate an enabling environment for effective mainstreaming and to share lessons learnt with other sectors.

#### Possible actions

**Planning and decision-making:** As described in Chapter 2, the Government has been taking biodiversity into consideration in its decision-making and operation. We would continue these efforts.

- **HK2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030:** We would incorporate biodiversity considerations in updating the territorial development strategy, which examines the strategies and feasible options for overall spatial planning as well as land and infrastructure development for Hong Kong beyond 2030.
- **Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG):** Biodiversity considerations will be considered for inclusion in the HKPSG, which is a government manual of criteria for determining the scale, location and site requirements of various land uses and facilities, as appropriate. The HKPSG applies to planning studies, and preparation/revision of town plans and development projects.



**Works implementation:** On the technical front, we would increase consideration of biodiversity in works projects particularly those involving freshwater areas.

- In carrying out large-scale drainage improvement works and drainage planning for new development areas, we would adopt the concept of revitalising water bodies to promote biodiversity and habitat at river channels; and use ecologically friendly measures.
- In New Development Areas, greening and conservation initiatives would be implemented in tandem with infrastructure works. Consideration would also be given on revitalisation of water bodies and creation of blue-green infrastructure to enhance the environment and biodiversity.
- To enhance the integration of biodiversity into environmental hygiene works at rivers and streams, we would prepare/revise guidelines on these works with a view to minimising the ecological impacts.
- Together with the Water Supplies Department, we would explore feasible designs and maintenance measures for irrigation reservoirs and water catchment channels that are more wildlife friendly.

**“Connector” education:** We would encourage professional bodies or frontrunners of various sectors of the economy to introduce to their partners the linkages between sustainable development and biodiversity, and to share knowledge about how sustainable operation that can lead to better economic performance, social responsibility and environmental benefit. For example, in landscaping, there is a great opportunity to include native species in their projects, thereby enhancing biodiversity. The Zero Carbon Building (see Chapter 2) demonstrates how native biodiversity can be incorporated into a building project.

**Public awareness:** Measures described under Action Area 4 – Community Involvement will help mainstream biodiversity. The more people in Hong Kong understand what biodiversity means to them, to Hong Kong, and to the planet, the more quickly, easily, efficiently and creatively will biodiversity considerations become an integral part of planning and decision making in every sector.

## 3.5



### Action Area 3 Knowledge

#### Intention

Conduct biodiversity surveys to monitor the status of local biodiversity and studies to increase our understanding.

#### Rationale

Knowledge is critical to good decision-making. It ensures right decisions are made at the right time, and our resources are effectively used to bring the outcomes we want. Surveys will tell us what the situation is; studies will probe the correlations and help reveal the causes and effects. Evidence and logical arguments will help us communicate effectively and act appropriately.

#### Possible actions

**Monitoring:** Long-term surveys are necessary to track status and trends of species and habitats. We would continue to conduct territory-wide biodiversity surveys on target groups of plants and animals.

**Public database:** We would endeavour to consolidate the data that is currently scattered — collected and held by different parties and organisations — and make it widely available in a publicly accessible database or platform.

**New initiatives:** We believe that the consolidated information will suggest new initiatives. For example, the data may point out species or habitats that need conservation, or reveal the distribution of valuable sites within a geographical area. Or it may give information on invasive alien species that should be controlled.

**Research gaps:** In working on the BSAP, we have identified major gaps in our knowledge. These relate to ecosystem services, keystone or functionally important species, fisheries resources and fishing activities as well as traditional knowledge. We would encourage relevant institutions to begin commissioning research on these important topics.



## BOX 10

## Existing funding support

### **Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF):**

Established in 1994, it is one of the Government's long-term commitments to environmental protection and conservation. It has supported over 4 000 education, research, and projects run by local NGOs. The Government will continue to support studies related to biodiversity conservation through ECF funding. In fact, "Biodiversity Studies and Conservation" is already one of the priority research themes for the ECF.

### **Sustainable Development Fund (SDF):**

In 2003, the Government set up a \$100 million SDF to provide financial support for initiatives that will help enhance public awareness of sustainable development and encourage sustainable practices. As at end of 2015, a total of \$63.9 million was approved for 63 projects with the objectives of, inter alia, building a sustainable community, promoting sustainable lifestyle or practice and encouraging sustainability reporting.

### **Ad hoc studies commissioned by the**

**Government:** Various government departments have commissioned ad hoc studies on conservation and sustainable use of biological resources by academic researchers, consulting firms and appropriate NGOs on an as-needed basis. These studies collect the baseline status and information

on the distribution of habitats and species, analyse the appropriate monitoring and management strategies targeting environmental stressors, and investigate the feasibility or effectiveness of habitat enhancement measures.

### **University Grants Committee (UGC):**

The UGC is a non-statutory advisory committee responsible for advising the Government on the development and funding needs of higher education institutions in Hong Kong. Other than providing block grants to UGC-funded institutions, it supports academic research through supporting research postgraduate places at an annual cost of \$1.4 billion. In addition, the Research Grants Council operating under the UGC, with an annual earmarked allocation of about \$770 million per year, invites and approves funding applications for academic researches submitted by UGC-funded institutions.

**Philanthropic Foundations:** Hong Kong has a large number of private grant-making bodies which have a significant role in the social life of the society. Some of these have longstanding interest to fund both formal education projects, as well as general public education campaigns. Some foundations have provided generous support to NGOs to conduct environmental and conservation work.

**Coordinate research and funding:** At present, a number of local NGOs and academics are conducting studies and research on topics related to biodiversity. At the same time, there are funding sources relevant to biodiversity that could be, but may not have been, tapped (see Box 10). We would explore ways both to coordinate research and to connect funding sources with projects so that limited resources can be directed to the highest priority areas.



## 3.6



### Action Area 4 Community Involvement

#### Intention

Promote public awareness and knowledge of biodiversity so as to gain public support and involvement at every level, in every sector.

#### Rationale

Appreciation of the importance of biodiversity generates the will to conserve it. Knowledge then informs action, guiding people to take appropriate actions that conserve biodiversity. Raising public awareness and understanding is an important area of focus in our first BSAP. Every sector of society can contribute. A person, or an organisation, or a business's success can encourage others to do the same. Thus, we expect to develop community involvement on a long-term and collaborative process.

#### Possible actions

**Biodiversity education network:** In 2015, the Environment Bureau and the AFCD, in partnership with 20 organisations including universities and NGOs, launched a three-month festival that brought biodiversity to people's attention through exhibitions, guided tours, workshops and online promotions. We would build on this network and engage more partners in promoting biodiversity to the public.

**Museum exhibition:** In bringing the topic of biodiversity and conservation into city centres and "closer" to the public, the Government would set up and curate a permanent exhibition on biodiversity in the Hong Kong Science Museum.

**Agriculture and fisheries support:** Agricultural and fisheries practices could have significant impact on the ecosystem and hence have a key role in biodiversity conservation. We would work to promote environmental-friendly practices in both sectors through education and ongoing support for local farmers and fishermen.

BOX 11

### **Sustainable consumption of biological resources**

Sustainable consumption of biological resources is one of the key aspects of sustainable development. To this end there is worldwide recognition that promoting sustainable procurement and consumption practices is an effective policy tool. The Council for Sustainable Development is planning a public engagement on promotion of sustainable use of biological resources. This will provide a bottom-up, stakeholder-led platform to raise public awareness as well as to solicit views from the community to promote sustainable use of biological resources.











“Raising our children with awareness and appreciation of the beauty and importance of nature will ensure that future generations will have the will and knowledge to carry on our conservation efforts.”

**School programmes:** Raising our children with awareness and appreciation of the beauty and importance of nature will ensure that future generations will have the will and knowledge to carry on our conservation efforts. While biodiversity is included in a number of school curricula in General Studies, Geography, Science (Secondary One to Three) and Biology, we would explore with a view to continuously incorporating the concept of biodiversity into the formal school curriculum at both primary and secondary levels with equal importance accorded to knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, and providing capacity building opportunities for teachers. We would encourage and create opportunities for experiential learning, guided field trips and volunteer work in outdoor settings.

**Business and professional sectors support:** We need partners in the business and professional sectors. In our initial communication with representatives from these sectors when developing BSAP, we learned that they want to contribute but don't quite know what to do or how to do it. In light of this, we would develop and create ways to provide the knowledge they need and to collaborate in designing and implementing programmes.