

For immediate release

PRESS RELEASE

**Integrated Harbour Vision and Delivery Plan – The Business Case
to maximise the comparative advantage of Victoria Harbour**

30 November 2009, Monday, Hong Kong – The Harbour Business Forum (HBF) today launched its latest Study Report titled an “Integrated Harbour Vision and Delivery Plan – The Business Case” which sets out a new integrated and holistic approach to the planning, development and management of Victoria Harbour. The goal is to see Hong Kong’s harbour and harbour-front areas become a genuinely vibrant, accessible and sustainable world class asset.

The Study shows that the problems affecting the harbour are complex and multi-dimensional. Some challenges are harbour specific, such as the lack of an overarching policy that prioritises the harbour and the absence of an overarching responsible body; others are Hong Kong wide, such as restrictive public space management practices and inadequate plan making and implementation systems.

The HBF proposals are based on a nine-month study which has adopted a rigorous, evidence-based and participatory approach. This included extensive research, joint workshops with senior government officials and members of HBF, as well as meetings with Chambers of Commerce, relevant government departments and bureaux.

Maggie Brooke, Chair of the Best Practice Committee of the HBF, said: “Victoria Harbour is a physical symptom of underlying challenges of governance, planning and delivery systems in Hong Kong that result in inefficiency, poor investment decisions and a missed opportunity in making the best use of Hong Kong’s defining natural asset.

Improving the harbour needs a new approach. HBF has set out its vision and priorities and asks the Government to commit to a Delivery Plan that will realise the vision.”

Given the complexity of the challenges facing the harbour, the Study calls for an entirely new approach to harbour planning, development and management, including the establishment of an overarching responsible body. The Study sets out HBF’s vision of what the harbour, one of Hong Kong’s greatest assets, could do for Hong Kong. The Delivery Plan shows how that vision can be realised through a series of step by step actions based on a new integrated approach. The new approach comprises six key components:

1. Policy commitment to prioritise the harbour to establish direction and leadership
2. A vision to unite all stakeholders in a common goal and agreed targets
3. A strategic framework to show how actions on the ground link back to the vision and vice-versa
4. A strategic plan to show how the vision will be realised

5. The Establishment of an overarching responsible body so that a single party is both responsible and accountable
6. Changes to the planning and delivery system to support the implementation of the strategic plan and provide the responsible body with authority and management tools

Vincent Cheng, Founding Patron and Spokesperson of HBF, said: "Since the launch of the Harbour Business Forum, we have collectively invested considerable resources in further research, in engagement with community stakeholders, in discussions with the Government and in further raising public awareness. In short, we have collectively invested considerable resources in coming up with a new approach to harbour management and planning that is holistic and integrated.

We very much appreciate the constructive dialogue that has developed between the Government and the Harbour Business Forum, and the recognition of a common goal of a vibrant, accessible harbour for the people of Hong Kong."

As the report notes, realising a world class harbour for Hong Kong is not just about enhancement or beautification, but about improving efficiency and creating greater value for public money; as well as providing more opportunities for growth, jobs and community value, and this makes good business sense.

To deliver the vision, the Study sets out a Delivery Plan with a timeline from now to 2013-14, covering a number of critical actions. These include a commitment to an overarching policy, the adoption of HBF's vision and priorities, the appointment of a harbour champion, the establishment of a Harbour Committee and ultimately the establishment of a Harbour Agency.

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For further information please contact:

Brenda Fung
Harbour Business Forum
Tel: 2784 3938
Email: brenda@bec.org.hk

Notes to the media

About the Harbour Business Forum:

The Harbour Business Forum (HBF) was formally launched in 2005, due to a concern about how developments in and around the harbour could have a negative impact upon the future development of Hong Kong. An initiative of the Business Environment Council, HBF is a membership-supported organisation and now one of the largest business alliances with 121 business members – including 10 Patron Members, 29 Corporate Members, 53 Professional Members and 29 Supporting Members from business chambers and professional associations. HBF is primarily a research driven think tank with a distinct, if discreet lobbying edge defined by its principles and objectives. These include the creation of an overarching agency for the harbour and the need for any harbour development to have greater access to the harbour. The full report can be found on HBF's website: <http://www.harbourbusinessforum.com>