Environmental Research, Technology Demonstration and Conference Project

ECF Project:	ECF 2018-83
Project Title:	Identifying and mapping threats to the health of Hong Kong's endangered dolphins and porpoises to benefit their conservation
Principal Investigator:	Dr Nathalie Mauroo, Hong Kong Wildlife Health Foundation Limited
Total Approved Grant:	$389,070
Duration:	1/1/2020 to 31/3/2022
Project Status/Remarks:	On-going
Project Scope:	Characterising Hong Kong stranded cetaceans' injuries (vessel related trauma, entanglement etc.) and diseases and their effects is an essential element in the selection and implementation of conservation and management measures for these endangered species. If mitigation measures are to be put in place to counteract the effects of human developments and environmental degradation on declining Indo-Pacific finless porpoises and Indo-Pacific Humpback dolphins, a sound knowledge of the population baseline health status is needed. Furthermore, quantifying and obtaining a spatial map of threats is needed. Using a non-invasive veterinary and forensic approach based on pathological (post-mortem) examination will provide practical knowledge of diseases and traumatic injuries which contribute to animals dying or stranding on the coast. These findings will be extremely useful to teams and organisations working towards the conservation of the Chinese white dolphin and the Indo-Pacific finless porpoises both in Hong Kong and the Pearl River Estuary. To date, no marine mammal has been successfully released to the wild in Hong Kong. The information derived from this study will benefit live stranded animals by providing information guiding treatment. This project will increase chances of survival of the species and the rate of successful rehabilitation of rescued marine mammals.
Summary of the Findings/Outcomes:	To be available upon completion of the project