

Project Brief on Major Requirements and Other Considerations of the Conservation Project of Wo Shang Wai

Application Period for the Subject Conservation Project

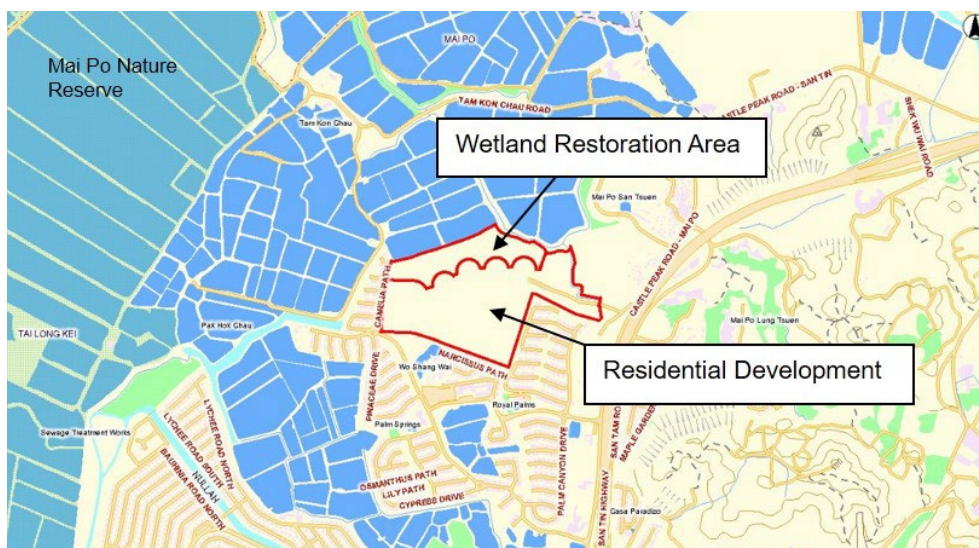
From 25 March 2022 to 13 May 2022 (at 17:00).

The Project Site

Under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Scheme of the New Nature Conservation Policy (NNCP), private developments of an agreed scale and plan will be allowed at the ecologically less sensitive portion of a site within the 12 priority sites with high ecological value for enhanced conservation, provided that land owners of the private land will provide a lump sum contribution to the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) sufficient to generate recurrent income to support the long-term conservation work for the ecologically more sensitive portion (the Conservation Portion) of the site.

2. The development project at Wo Shang Wai (WSW), which is outside the 12 priority sites, has voluntarily adopted the funding and land arrangements of the PPP Scheme and identified the 4.74-hectare Wetland Restoration Area (WRA) for enhanced conservation (i.e. the Conservation Portion of the site). The WRA was originally a dried-up wetland within the Wetland Buffer Area, with the northern side adjacent to the Wetland Conservation Area. The WRA has been restored to marshy habitats as per the proposal approved through planning application no. A/YL-MP/291 under section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance (Cap. 131), and now forms part of the continuous stretch of important wetland habitats of the Mai Po area within the Wetland Conservation Area.

Location Map of the Project Site



Major Project Requirements

3. Under the Maintenance and Management Plan (Conservation Plan)¹ for the WRA of WSW as approved under planning application (No. A/YL-MP/291), the objectives of the Conservation Plan are to provide habitats required for the target species by maintaining the wetland area and habitat characteristics. Three bird species are identified as the target of conservation, namely Little Egret, Eastern Cattle Egret and Chinese Pond Heron. The latest version of the approved Conservation Plan should prevail if there is any discrepancy between the Conservation Plan and this brief.

Target levels

4. The conservation agent shall achieve the target level for each of the three target species, which has made reference to the baseline ecological data prior to operation of the WRA. Regular ecological monitoring is also required for various taxa groups to ensure the wetland habitats are functioning at a satisfactory level.

Habitat characteristic

5. The conservation agent shall maintain the habitat characteristic suitable for the target species in accordance with the parameters set out in the Conservation Plan. Habitats to be provided to the target species include but not limited to open water, reedbed, vegetated islands, non-vegetated islands, tall trees or shrubs, tall grass/shrubs, short grass and fish-free ponds. The conservation agent shall maintain the water area and vegetation coverage in each habitat, remove undesirable floral/faunal species and keep the water quality within the suitable range.

Hydrological management

6. The conservation agent shall carry out hydrological management to maintain the water depth of the wetland habitats. Rainfall is currently the main regular source of water. In case of situations such as prolonged drought or poor water quality requiring replacement of pond water, water will be imported from mains water supply or nearby fishponds. Regular checking of water quality will be required to ensure that water quality is within the limits acceptable to fish, dragonflies, amphibians and other aquatic wildlife.

Fish stocking

7. Fish stocking is also required when fish population in the ponds is low, to provide sufficient food for piscivorous birds, control the vegetation and maintain the water quality of the ponds. The fish stocks may reach a self-sustainable level

¹ Interested applicant may approach the ECF Secretariat for a copy of the Conservation Plan for reference. *[Internal Note: since the Conservation Plan is not placed in the public domain by PlanD, recommend not to upload it to the website by EPD.]*

should there be adequate food and oxygen levels.

Control of human access and disturbance

8. While a two-metre high solid wall buffered with tree planting will be erected along the boundary of residential development to minimise the visual impact, the conservation agent should also be mindful about the timing and arrangement of conducting the monitoring and management activities to minimise the disturbance. For example, vegetation management such as weeding shall avoid the early morning and be confined to a small part of the area at any one time.

Ecological monitoring

9. To evaluate the effectiveness of the management measures and allow adaptive management, the conservation agent is required to carry out various ecological monitoring of the target birds species and other wildlife, including dragonflies, butterflies, freshwater fish and aquatic invertebrates, as well as vegetation coverage, pedology and water quality in accordance with the methodology laid down in the Conservation Plan. Sediment samples and water samples should be collected and sent to a HOKLAS-accredited laboratory for analysis. The monitoring programme should be sufficiently flexible, to allow additional measurements/monitoring to be conducted to inform management decisions (e.g. fish re-stocking) or in response to unexpected events (e.g. algal blooms).

Review of monitoring programme and adaptive management

10. Findings of the wildlife and habitat monitoring programme should be reported and reviewed on a regular basis by a Wetland Ecologist to identify necessary adjustments to the management regime. Non-compliance should be reported and reviewed immediately. Any adjustment of management measures or monitoring programme is to be agreed by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department prior to implementation.

Follow up actions

11. Should the monitoring results reveal any non-compliance e.g. number of target species, area of preferred habitats, actions should be undertaken to achieve the targets as set out in the Conservation Plan.

Reference

12. Applicants are reminded to make reference to the Conservation Plan of the planning application (No. A/YL-MP/291) as approved under section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance for details to ensure full compliance with the relevant requirements stated in the Conservation Plan.