

## Environmental Research, Technology Demonstration and Conference Project

<b>ECF Project:</b>	ECF 2020-70
<b>Project Title:</b>	Study on coral reef crustaceans - Identifying the biodiversity hotspot and promoting marine conservation
<b>Applicant:</b>	Dr Tsang Ling Ming, School of Life Sciences, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
<b>Total Approved Grant:</b>	\$1,191,800
<b>Duration:</b>	1/8/2021 to 31/1/2024
<b>Project Status/Remarks:</b>	On-going
<b>Project Scope:</b>	<p>Hong Kong harbours rich marine biodiversity, with over 6,000 species recorded in spite of the relatively small area and short coastline. Unfortunately, rapid coastal development pressurises the marine biota there, of which coral communities are amongst the most sensitive one. Baseline data on diversity and distribution of coral associated fauna are critical in order to identify the biodiversity hotspot for conservation management and long-term monitoring. These data are, however, severely lacking in marine benthic invertebrates other than scleractinian corals in spite of their ecological importance and high species richness, because of the difficulties in species identification and their cryptic lifestyle.</p> <p>The study attempts to perform a comprehensive on the diversity coral associated crustaceans in Hong Kong, which account for a large biomass of benthic invertebrates in coral habitat, based on both quantitative and qualitative analyses supplemented with integrative morphological and molecular identification approach. This study is to identify biodiversity hotspot for future coral habitats management and conservation planning. It can also generate updated crustacean species checklist with distribution/abundance map, photo catalogue and barcoding sequence database in Hong Kong, which will facilitate species identification in future biodiversity survey and monitoring studies, and general public usage.</p>
<b>Summary of the Findings/Outcomes:</b>	To be available upon completion of the project