

Environmental Research, Technology Demonstration and Conference Project

ECF Project:	ECF 2022-97
Project Title:	Environment and Conservation Fund - Discovering Hong Kong sea slug diversity, distribution and habitat preference through joint effort of scientific survey and citizen scientist programme
Principal Investigator:	Dr Tsang Ling Ming, School of Life Sciences, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Total Approved Grant:	\$1,365,060
Duration:	1/8/2023 to 31/7/2025
Project Status/Remarks:	On-going
Project Scope:	<p>Sea slugs are ornate and attractive marine invertebrates to the general public and their diversity and ecology in Hong Kong are poorly documented. Recent efforts by the research team based on the review of previous records and the engagement of citizen scientists compiled a checklist of Hong Kong sea slugs with a total of 257 species from 126 genera. More importantly, 71 records are new to Hong Kong and seven species have not been reported elsewhere from Hong Kong. The true biodiversity, however, remains underestimated, given the high proportion of novel records especially when many previous records were not observed. Furthermore, there is a lack of ecological information on this explosion of sea slug records, calling for more rigorous sampling and a more inclusive citizen science programme. The proposed study will conduct a joint effort programme based on research by academia and input from citizen scientists to comprehend the understanding of Hong Kong sea slug diversity and ecology (e.g. distribution, abundance and habitat preference). The programme will not only generate valuable information on the marine biodiversity distribution in Hong Kong but also establish an education programme platform and survey protocol for long-term monitoring of the marine ecosystem by citizens.</p>
Summary of the Findings/ Outcomes:	To be available upon completion of the project