

CHAPTER 2

MODUS OPERANDI OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE AND ITS THREE ADVISORY GROUPS

2.1 Objectives of the Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District and Its Three Advisory Groups

2.1.1 In April 2006, the Chief Executive appointed the Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities (CACF) of the West Kowloon Cultural District (the Consultative Committee) to re-examine and re-confirm if appropriate the need for the CACF of the WKCD as defined in the IFP, to advise the Chief Executive on the justifications for the CACF and other types of arts and cultural facilities to be provided in WKCD and their financial implications.

2.1.2 Concurrently, three Advisory Groups (AGs), namely the Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group (PATAG), the Museums Advisory Group (MAG) and the Financial Matters Advisory Group (FMAG) were appointed by the Chief Executive to assist the Consultative Committee to review the need for the performance venues, museums and art exhibition centre previously proposed in the IFP, and the financial implications of developing and operating the facilities recommended.

2.1.3 The Consultative Committee held a total of seven meetings to set the overall framework of the exercise, consider the reports and consultancy studies prepared by the AGs and various factors, and finalize the Recommendation Report to the Government. The terms of reference and the memberships of the Consultative Committee, PATAG, MAG and FMAG are at **Annex B**.

2.2 The Consultation and Deliberation Process

Public Consultation

2.2.1 The Consultative Committee, taking an overall view of the whole exercise, had invited the AGs to submit reports and other relevant information for its deliberation. In order to carry out the tasks entrusted by the Consultative Committee, PATAG and MAG were well aware that views from the public would be indispensable. In this connection, they respectively conducted a consultation exercise from May to June 2006 to solicit views from the experts, stakeholders and the general public on the need for and major requirements of the CACF.

2.2.2 The public consultation was widely publicised through newspaper advertisements, webpage announcements (www.hab.gov.hk/wkcd), radio APIs, press release etc. Over 1 200 invitation letters were issued to various stakeholders and interest groups. A total of 4 consultative forums, 7 sector-specific focus group meetings, and 3 presentation hearings were held to gauge public views. In addition, a total of 15 and 28 written submissions, and 38 and 30 views via the Public Affairs Forum were received by PATAG and MAG respectively.

2.2.3 Public views expressed during the public consultation exercise supported that WKCD should be developed into an integrated world-class arts and cultural, entertainment and tourism district and action should be expedited to enable its early implementation. The major views are as follows -

General

- (a) the CACF should be able to meet the long-term development of arts and culture in Hong Kong;
- (b) the arts and cultural, entertainment and commercial facilities should be clustered together to create an environment conducive to attracting

people flow day and night, thus creating synergy for the district;

- (c) software development should be accorded the same importance as hardware development in WKCD and the government should increase its resources in developing cultural software; and
- (d) the arts and cultural facilities in WKCD should factor in elements of nurturing budding artists, promoting arts education and enhancing audience building. The facilities should be developed in an organic manner to ensure a mutually beneficial and complementary relationship amongst themselves.

Performance Venues

- (e) an overwhelming majority of the views supported the need for purpose-built performance venues for Cantonese Opera and other Chinese Opera in WKCD;
- (f) a concert hall, which is considered as a ‘must’ for a world-class arts and cultural district, should not be missed out in WKCD;
- (g) there should be more small-sized theatres to cater for the needs of different PA groups and different art forms. This concept fitted well with the atmosphere of diversity and creativity advocated for WKCD; and
- (h) the need for a purpose-built mega performance venue to attract international groups to stage their concerts and entertainment events in Hong Kong is supported. The Hong Kong Coliseum, which has been heavily in demand for pop concerts and entertainment shows since its opening, has a lot of constraints as it is not a purpose-built performance venue.

Museums

- (i) there should be a variety of museum themes in WKCD to demonstrate the unique identities and characteristics of local community and to enhance Hong Kong's culture. Modern art, contemporary art and ink art are the major art themes suggested. Other popular themes include popular culture, moving image and design;
- (j) the architecture of the museum should be able to reflect the unique identity of the museum;
- (k) museum to integrate with the entertainment and shopping facilities is acceptable for it could attract more people traffic;
- (l) regardless of the themes, collections are crucial to the success and identity building of the museum. Collection building should start early as it takes time to build up; and
- (m) in the long-run, with the provisions of new museum facilities in WKCD, the overall positioning of existing museums and relationship between the existing museums and WKCD museums should be mapped out.

Art Exhibition Centre

- (n) support building an art exhibition centre in WKCD for it could provide alternate exhibition and display space for local artists as well as a platform for international art exchanges, art fairs, auctions etc.

Tourism and Others

- (o) WKCD presents a golden opportunity for tourism development in Hong Kong and it should have a magnet effect of drawing tourists to the district; and

- (p) not only does WKCD present an unprecedented opportunity for cultural development in Hong Kong, it also makes available a vast piece of open space for the public to enjoy. There should be a lot of green open space in the district.

2.2.4 More details on views received in public consultative events organized by PATAG and MAG are at **Annexes C** and **D** respectively.

Overseas Experiences

2.2.5 In addition to seeking public views from within Hong Kong, the Consultative Committee and relevant AGs made special efforts to seek reference from many overseas experiences in the course of their deliberations. For instance, MAG has solicited views of museum experts and art administrators from Tokyo, New York, London, Paris, San Francisco and Melbourne.¹ PATAG held a meeting with a renowned international cultural presenter. The MAG had also conducted a study tour to various renowned museums in Paris, London, New York and San Francisco.²

2.2.6 Further case studies on overseas experiences were done through various consultancies. The Financial Advisor (FA) engaged by the Government³ conducted case studies on the Public Private Partnership (PPP) models for developing arts and cultural facilities in Brisbane, Bilbao and Toronto. The FA also drew references from arts and cultural facilities in London, Singapore, Melbourne, Los Angeles, Gateshead and Vancouver. Another consultancy study conducted by the Centre for Cultural Policy Research, University of Hong Kong has examined arts and cultural facilities in New York,

¹ The notes of the briefings are at Annex 8 of the Report of MAG to the Consultative Committee. See www.hab.gov.hk/wkcd/eng/cc/doc/20061124report.pdf.

² The report of the duty visit is at Annex 9 of the Report of MAG to the Consultative Committee. See www.hab.gov.hk/wkcd/eng/cc/doc/20061124report.pdf.

³ See paragraph 2.2.10.

London, Newcastle, Gwangju, Kanazawa, Melbourne and Shanghai.⁴

2.2.7 The major findings from these overseas experiences are -

- (a) many cities are trying to build up their brand and character through the construction of arts and cultural facilities;
- (b) many of the most successful cultural developments are located in area-based projects involving a mix of commercial, residential and community uses which complement the arts and cultural uses functionally and financially. Mixed use area-based development like WKCD is most effectively implemented through the establishment of an independent dedicated development authority or not-for-profit corporation;
- (c) in many cases, a statutory body has been established as an autonomous entity to oversee the planning, development and operation of the mixed use area. This arrangement offers the flexibility and efficiency required and balances the interests of the Governments and their private sector partners;
- (d) most cultural facilities do not cover the cost of operations and maintenance and very few are able to make any contribution to recovering capital costs. This severely restricts risk sharing PPP arrangements which must offer sufficient financial incentives to the private sector. Where there is private sector participation, it is usually in the form of service contracts or leases;

⁴ “Consultancy Services for the Study on the Relationship between Museums and Performing Arts, and Creative Industries for the West Kowloon Cultural District Development in Hong Kong”, Centre for Cultural Policy Research, University of Hong Kong, April 2007.

- (e) the selection of themes for new museums relates to a number of factors, some of which may be subjective, vision led or beyond expectation;
- (f) an impressive and iconic architectural design, together with a spacious surrounding with sufficient indoor area within the building, could be particularly conducive to the development of a museum, especially in terms of boosting attendance. This also applies to performance venues to some extent;
- (g) for a contemporary museum, a flexible configuration of space with movable walls or partitions that accommodate an ever-changing forms of artistic expression is important;
- (h) museums and performing arts influence both directly and indirectly the ecology of creative industries. Conversely, creative industries have reciprocal impacts on the ecology of museums and performing arts. The mutual influences of these two ecologies on each other contribute to a vibrant and dynamic evolution of the cultural ecology of a society;
- (i) cultural ecology contributes to city branding in terms of attracting talents and investments, promoting tourism, local identity, social cohesion and the long-term development of the city. This improves the competitiveness of the city and helps it to better position itself in the face of globalization;
- (j) further researches on how to devise sustainable strategies for WKCD e.g. marketing research, collaboration with other local and cultural institutions, manpower studies etc. would be needed in future when the WKCD project goes to the implementation stage; and

- (k) in order to attract overseas renowned long-run performances, there should be flexibility in venue booking policy, availability of local partners and sponsors, and sufficient good venues located in the heart of the city.

Deliberations by the Consultative Committee and the AGs

2.2.8 In drawing up their recommendations, PATAG and MAG held nine and 14 meetings respectively and there was also a joint PATAG and MAG meeting. There were intensive deliberations and debates on the views and advice received as well as the contents of the recommendations. Their recommendation reports were submitted to the Consultative Committee and discussed at its meetings on 7 September 2006 and 23 November 2006 respectively. The Consultative Committee referred the recommendations of PATAG and MAG to FMAG for financial assessment. In the light of preliminary financial assessment, PATAG and MAG were requested by the Consultative Committee to deliberate further on issues related to their recommendations. Furthermore, in order to enhance the understanding of and solicit consensus from stakeholders on its recommendations, MAG held eight tea gatherings in early 2007 with interested parties and individuals, plus a briefing for postgraduate students who study relevant fields in major universities to explain the philosophy and framework behind **M+** (or **Museum Plus**), the cultural institution recommended by MAG to be established in WKCD. Similarly, PATAG held three tea gatherings for interested groups in late June 2007.

2.2.9 In order to enhance transparency of the deliberation process, the Consultative Committee has adopted an open approach in involving the public with its agenda and papers placed on the website and press releases issued after Consultative Committee meetings, with the exception of financial data and options of which premature disclosure would cause misunderstanding. HAB also makes regular reports to the LegCo Sub-committee on WKCD to keep the latter abreast of the development of the project.

2.2.10 Since the Consultative Committee is specifically tasked to advise the Chief Executive on the financial implications of developing WKCD, the work of FMAG was crucial to the Committee's ultimate recommendations. FMAG met seven times to discuss the financial implications of the CACF and Other Arts and Cultural Facilities (OACF) and various PPP options to operate the CACF in WKCD. To assist FMAG, the Government has engaged a Financial Advisor (FA), GHK(Hong Kong) Ltd. in August 2006 to explore various PPP options and develop the financial model of the project based on inputs from other AGs and relevant Government departments. During the whole period, FMAG held six meetings with the FA to monitor its work and gave necessary guidance and steer. The FMAG also organized a briefing session for the FA to explain to Members of the Consultative Committee and the other two AGs its methodology and financial assessment in early May 2007.

2.2.11 Unlike PATAG and MAG which went on to finish their work and submit a report of recommendations to the Consultative Committee, FMAG saw the need to seek a policy steer from the Consultative Committee on several fundamental points in order to complete their deliberations in a more meaningful manner. These interactive discussions covered issues like the financial discipline, development parameters and the preferred mode of financing. Taking account of the Consultative Committee's guidance, FMAG submitted its report to the Consultative Committee on 14 May 2007.

2.2.12 Having received and carefully considered recommendation reports from PATAG, MAG and FMAG, the Consultative Committee has taken a holistic view of what kind of CACF should be provided in WKCD, as well as the most appropriate and financially feasible approach to be adopted in developing the WKCD project with reference to its vision and objectives. The Consultative Committee's Recommendation Report has been compiled on this basis.

2.2.13 The schedule of meetings held by the Consultative Committee and its three AGs, schedule of the consultative events organized by PATAG and MAG, the list of overseas

museums experts invited by MAG, overseas museums/cultural institutions visited by the MAG delegation, the tea gatherings and briefings held by PATAG and MAG, and the briefing by the Financial Advisor are at **Annex E**.