

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

*In the process of re-examining the original CACF, the Consultative Committee and its three AGs have considered a number of issues in developing the recommendations.*

#### **3.1 Government's Policy on Culture and the Arts**

3.1.1 Paramount to WKCD is the Government's cultural policy. "Culture" is a word that is frequently used but difficult to define. The three tiers of meanings of "culture" are: everyday life culture, high culture and spiritual culture. The Government can and should exercise influence through its policy primarily on high culture (i.e. culture and the arts).

3.1.2 Hong Kong's "cultural policy" mainly refers to the policy on culture and the arts. The policy objective is to create an environment which is conducive to the freedom of artistic expression and creation, and the wider participation in cultural activities. The policy comprises the following four major elements -

- respect freedom of creation and expression
- provide opportunities for participation
- encourage diversified and balanced development
- support environment and conditions (venues, funding, education and administration)

This policy is in line with the core values of Hong Kong as a free, diversified and open society. As a facilitator, the Government will neither impose an official definition on culture and the arts, nor influence the specific operation of artistic creation or contents of creativity. Instead, it is committed to upholding the freedom of cultural and artistic creation and expression, as well as providing an environment that keenly supports the development of culture and the arts.

3.1.3 The Government's cultural policy is generally in line with the six principles and strategies put forward by the Culture and Heritage Commission (CHC) in its Policy Recommendation Report, published in April 2003<sup>5</sup>. The Government studied the Report carefully and issued a response in February 2004, adopting it as the blueprint of Hong Kong's cultural policy and accepted most of its recommendations.

## **3.2 WKCD as an Arts and Cultural Project**

3.2.1 WKCD is an arts and cultural project, not a property development project. The Government has committed not to ask property developers to develop and operate arts and cultural facilities. In other words, WKCD project should be developed as a major initiative to implement our existing policy on culture and the arts.

3.2.2 In any modern knowledge-based economy, public expenditure on culture and the arts is regarded as an "investment", which is as important as investment in new technology or in education. Investment in arts and culture is an investment in community building and development, as well as social harmony and cohesiveness, which should not and could not be evaluated in terms of financial returns. In other words, investment in culture and the arts is not entirely demand-led, but is more supply-led and vision-driven, while being mindful of prudent financial principles over the commitment of public resources.

## **3.3 Current Provision of Arts and Cultural Facilities in Hong Kong**

3.3.1 The Government has been carefully monitoring the utilization of arts and cultural facilities in Hong Kong. In

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<sup>5</sup> The six principles are "people-oriented", "pluralism", "freedom of expression and protection of intellectual property", "holistic approach", "partnership" and "community-driven". For details, please refer to [www.hab.gov.hk/wkcd/eng/cc/doc/20060421cc02.pdf](http://www.hab.gov.hk/wkcd/eng/cc/doc/20060421cc02.pdf).

deliberating on the CACF in WKCD, the Government has provided all relevant data of local venues to PATAG and MAG for reference. PATAG and MAG were mindful of the current provision of such facilities in Hong Kong, and that in re-confirming the need for the CACF in WKCD, any unjustified overlapping should be avoided.

### *Current Provision of Performing Arts Facilities*

3.3.2 As at end 2006, there were 26 Venues for Performing Arts (PA Venues) in Hong Kong with a total seating capacity of 75 626. Among these venues, 15 are managed by LCSD with a maximum seating capacity of 33 379. The other 11 non-LCSD venues account for the remaining 42 247 seats.

3.3.3 The 15 PA venues managed by LCSD can be broadly classified into three categories: purpose-built PA venues; moderately equipped venues; and sports/entertainment venues which have been used as performance venues. Basically, LCSD PA venues are designed as multi-purpose venues to cater for different types of performing arts and community activities with priority use for arts-related activities. In other words, they are not purpose-built for particular performance companies.

3.3.4 With growth and expansion in the performing arts sector over the years, there has been an acute shortfall to meet increasing demand for centrally located performing arts venues. This could be illustrated by the consistently high utilization rate of these PA venues (at or close to 100%) and the considerable quantum of unsuccessful applications (averaging at 45%). LCSD subsidizes between 50%-90% of the annual total operating expenditure of most PA venues, with the exception of the Hong Kong Coliseum for which there is an operating surplus of 92%.

3.3.5 As for the other 11 non-LCSD venues, they are mostly PA venues operated by non-profit organizations/tertiary institutions or non-PA venues (like convention and exhibition facilities) adapted for performance use. Many of these venues, such as the Hong Kong Arts Centre, the Hong

Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, the Sunbeam Theatre and the Fringe Club have also been heavily utilized over the years.

3.3.6 The current provision of performing arts facilities in Hong Kong is at **Annex F**.

### Current Provision of Museums

3.3.7 As at April 2007, there were 26 museums (including a film archive) in Hong Kong. 15 of which (and the film archive) are managed by LCSD. The other 10 museums are small scale ones run by tertiary institutions, non-profit or private organizations, Correctional Services Department and Hong Kong Police Force. Taken together, LCSD manages about 94% of the total museum space (150 768 m<sup>2</sup>) whereas other government and non-government organizations manage the remaining 6% (10 420 m<sup>2</sup>).

3.3.8 In Hong Kong, the ratio between the population and the number of museums in 2006 was 290 410 citizens per museum, which is relatively low as compared with 30 560:1 in the US, 172 110:1 in Japan<sup>6</sup>, and 99 174:1 for Beijing<sup>7</sup>. Meanwhile, the information provided by “Museums of the World” in 2002 revealed that there were 203 museums in London, 52 in Los Angeles, 107 in New York, 211 in Paris and 121 in Tokyo. Comparing with the above, the number of museums in Hong Kong (26 in total) is quite unimpressive.

3.3.9 On the other hand, the attendance rate of LCSD museums has shown a steady growth from 3.35 million in 2000 to 4.24 million in 2003 and further to 4.36 million in 2006. About 110 exhibitions and 20 000 – 25 000 educational programmes are organized by LCSD museums each year. In 2005/06, LCSD subsidizes between 78% (Hong Kong Space Museum) and 99% (Lei Cheng Uk Museum) of the operational expenditure of its museums.

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<sup>6</sup> Wang, Hongjun (王宏鈞) (ed.) *Zhongguo Bo Wu Guan Xue Ji Chu* 《中國博物館學基礎》 (*The Basics of Chinese Museology*), Shanghai, 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Beijing Municipal Administration of Cultural Heritage, 2006.

3.3.10 Among the 10 non-LCSD museums, the two university museums are art museums that carry a strong educational function. The Tung Wah Museum and Po Leung Kuk Museum are museums depicting the history and services of these two charitable organizations. The Hong Kong Maritime Museum, Hong Kong Museum of Medical Sciences, Hong Kong Racing Museum and Museum of Ethnology are private museums that are developed on specific themes, in particular in the context of Hong Kong history, city life and the associated industries. The Correctional Services Department and Hong Kong Police Force have their own museums to promulgate the history and services of the respective departments.

3.3.11 The current provision of museum facilities in Hong Kong is at **Annex G**.

### **3.4 The Long-term Infrastructure Needs of Hong Kong's Arts and Cultural Development**

3.4.1 In the past ten years, despite ups and downs in the economy, the local arts and cultural sector remains vibrant and pluralistic. For example, a rough estimate shows that there are more than 1 000 performing arts groups in Hong Kong. The majority of these arts groups are small-scale and amateur. Through various kinds of support provided by LCSD and Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC), some 560 performing arts groups have staged a total of 4 780 performance/activities, reaching some 2.4 million audience in 2005-06. An increasing number of young local artists have won international awards, such as Colleen Lee, Rachel Cheung, Aristo Sham, etc.

3.4.2 With a view to promoting community appreciation of performing arts, the art groups are more active in doing large scale events and promotions in recent years. For instance, the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra staged an outdoor performance in Hung Hom last year which attracted some 20 000 audiences, the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra has been organizing an annual instrument-based community

event every summer in the past few years and attracted thousands of participants; and the Theatre Ensemble and Hong Kong Sinfonietta jointly presented two shows in the Hong Kong Coliseum last year with over 20 000 people attended. At the same time, there has been a remarkable increase in outbound cultural exchange programmes undertaken by local arts groups at the invitation of renowned cultural institutions in other places, as shown by the phenomenal increase in outbound cultural programmes supported by the Arts Development Fund.

3.4.3 The local visual arts and other visual culture sectors are equally resilient and vibrant. This could be illustrated by the number and types of visual artists and groups supported by HKADC over the past few years, the enthusiastic response from the visual arts sector to the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre at Shek Kip Mei<sup>8</sup>, the growing number of commissioned local art works through museums and galleries, and the expansion of visual arts education.

3.4.4 Many art dealers, designers, architects and those involved in the creative industries have been expressing concern that there are inadequacies in existing exhibition space, e.g. insufficient space and facilities, complicated scheduling etc. Responses solicited from the MAG consultative forums, special meetings and focus groups meetings also favoured having an art space for art education as well as for local artists to exhibit their art works. The high utilization rates of both commercial venues (like HKCEC) and non-commercial venues (like the Exhibition halls of HKCH and the Central Library) reflect that there is an urgent need to provide additional space for art fairs, auctions, exhibitions and other events relating to the creative industries.

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<sup>8</sup> The Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre is a joint initiative of the Home Affairs Bureau, the Hong Kong Jockey Club, the Hong Kong Baptist University, the Hong Kong Arts Development Council and the Hong Kong Arts Centre. Its aim is to turn a decommissioned factory building in Shek Kip Mei into a home for artists and designers to pursue their creative work and an arts and cultural hub for the community.

3.4.5 There is a strong body of opinion that the healthy growth of the arts and cultural sector in Hong Kong is inhibited by the limitations and shortcomings in our infrastructure. On the performing arts side, there has been no new public performance venues built in Hong Kong since 2000, the last one being Yuen Long Theatre and there is no major territory-wide, purpose-built PA venue built since the completion of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre in 1989.

3.4.6 Demand for proper venues is also fully demonstrated in the increasing difficulties and frustrations expressed by performing arts groups, both local and overseas, in securing slots for their long-run productions. As a result, the development of the local arts and cultural sector is hampered in the following aspects –

- (a) many renowned overseas long-run productions could not secure sufficient time slots in our PA venues for their performances, which has in turn forced them to drop their plan to stage performances in Hong Kong, depriving Hong Kong people's opportunity to enjoy these quality programmes;
- (b) similarly, many quality local productions requiring significant investment in script, stage and costume could not secure enough time slots in prime venues, which has in turn dampened their enthusiasm to produce and perform and denied local audience the chance to watch and appreciate good performances. Such audience building is crucial to the healthy growth of the arts sector;
- (c) the shortage of venues has made it difficult for good productions (theatre productions in particular) to become financially viable, as the art groups are not able to increase the number of performances (hence lower their production cost) even if their shows have proven to be extremely popular. This is detrimental to the growth of creative industries in Hong Kong and has forced

many arts groups or artists/technicians to heavily rely on Government subvention for survival; and

- (d) the lack of purpose-built venues dedicated to specific types of performances e.g. new, avant-garde or experimental performances, children's performances, small-scale performances which require quality venues, etc. has adversely affected the development of new, budding and small-scale arts groups who are normally not able to compete for use of LCSD's venues. There is also a lack of purpose-built resident facilities in our PA venues for art groups.

3.4.7 In recent years, there has been strong advocacy for a dedicated venue for Cantonese opera, the most unique and vibrant traditional indigenous art form in Hong Kong. The Cantonese opera sector has been able to operate on a self-sufficient basis over the years. However, the shortage of venues caused by the closure of many commercial theatres in the past decade is threatening the survival of the entire profession. The issue of having suitable venues is crucial to the sustainable development of the sector.

3.4.8 On the museum front, there is also a problem of insufficient space. The Hong Kong Museum of Art, for instance, has to cope with collections and exhibitions of Chinese and Western art from different periods within a very limited space, which consequently blurred the vision and the role of this museum, as well as dampening the impact of its exhibitions. A similar problem is also emerging in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum. Moreover, with the increasing acquisition of collection items over the years, most museums are facing the problem of shortage in storage space. Museums need to store some of the items at off-site storage premises in which the environmental conditions may not be satisfactory.



3.4.9 The Committee on Museums<sup>9</sup>, which was established in November 2004 to advise the Secretary for Home Affairs on the provision of public museum services in Hong Kong, has recently proposed in their recommendation report to the Government, to develop “flagship” museums with impressive architectural design, which could be located in WKCD, to showcase the cultural characteristics of Hong Kong and the region, having regard to themes and collections available. In this connection, the Committee suggests to establish one single Modern/Contemporary Art Museum as the flagship museum, instead of setting up separate museums for different themes on modern art, ink, design and moving image as earlier proposed for WKCD. This single flagship museum could, through curatorial programming, embody various themes and unique contemporary art forms and design of Hong Kong and contribute to making Hong Kong a hub of international cultural events.

3.4.10 Hong Kong has not been investing in major arts and cultural facilities for many years. Our current PA and museum facilities are gradually lagging behind contemporary standards. In recent years, the society, the middle class in particular, is attaching more weight to quality of life issues – as reflected in much more vocal calls for appreciation of the arts, culture, heritage, lower building density, spacious environment, air quality, quality harbourfront, etc. With improved transportation network and the “Individual Visit Scheme” for Mainland residents, our target audience group has also been expanded to cover the Mainland, the Pearl River Delta region in particular. At the same time, our neighbouring cities like Shanghai, Bangkok, Shenzhen, etc. have been investing heavily to improve their arts and cultural facilities. To maintain its competitiveness as a quality city and to meet public aspirations, the Government has to address the arts and cultural facilities shortfall without delay. This general consensus is reflected in the common wish to

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<sup>9</sup> Committee on Museums (“CoM”) was established by Government in November 2004 in response to the recommendations of the Culture and Heritage Commission. Its term ended on 31 January 2007. The CoM advised the Secretary for Home Affairs on the provision of public museum services. It comprised 22 unofficial members appointed by the Secretary for Home Affairs. It had two sub-committees, namely Sub-committee on Governance of Museum Services and Sub-committee on Development Strategy of Museum Services.

see WKCD proceed as early as possible despite differing views on the implementation details.

### **3.5 Growth and Development of Cultural and Creative Industries in Hong Kong and WKCD**

3.5.1 According to the “Baseline Study on Hong Kong’s Creative Industries” commissioned by the Central Policy Unit in 2003, “creative industries” are defined as a group of economic activities that exploit and deploy creativity, skill and intellectual property to produce and distribute products and services of social and cultural meaning – a production system through which the potentials of wealth generation and job creation are realized. They are characterized by the generation and/or exploration of intellectual property rights (IPR) for wealth and job creation.

3.5.2 Under the definition in Hong Kong as well as in the UK, performing arts is one of the 11 domains of creative industries. Museums, however, are currently not included in the classification of creative industries, given their non-profit-making nature and reliance of subsidy from the public or the third sector.

3.5.3 Notwithstanding the above, a consultancy study has been commissioned by HAB upon the request of the MAG on the relationship between museums and performing arts and creative industries for the WKCD, with a view to identifying the linkage between the two and how the facilities in WKCD would affect the development of creative industries in Hong Kong.<sup>10</sup>

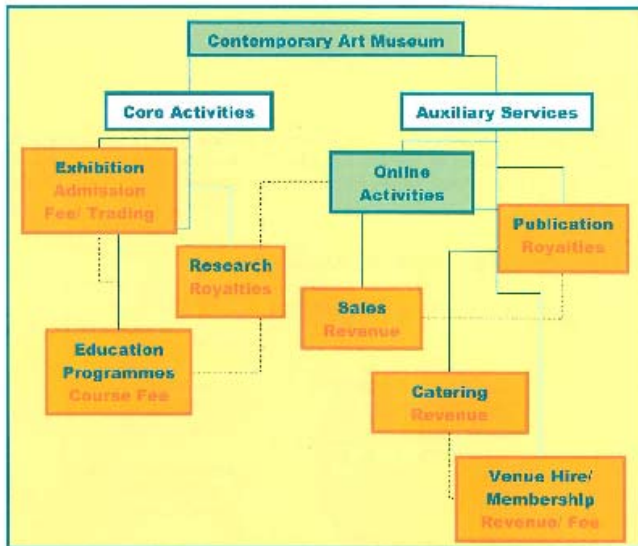
3.5.4 According to the results of this study, the activities in the CACF of WKCD should be able to generate wealth and jobs either through exploitation of IPR such as performances, publication, research and sales of reproduction rights; or through provision of services, such as curatorship, technical/backstage support, catering, venue hire and

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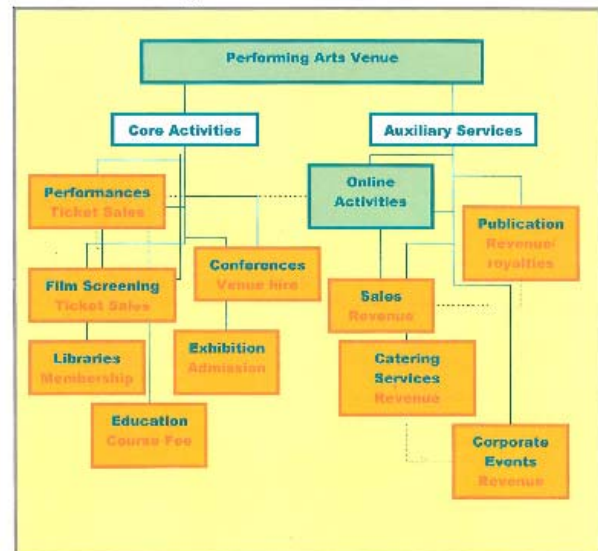
<sup>10</sup> “Consultancy Services for the Study on the Relationship between Museums and Performing Arts, and Creative Industries for the West Kowloon Cultural District Development in Hong Kong”. See Note 4.

management, educational programmes etc. The value chain of these activities are illustrated below -

**Figure 1:** The Value Chain of Museum – Modeled on Tate Modern



**Figure 2:** The Value Chain of Performing Arts Venue – Modeled on the Lincoln Centre for Performing Arts



3.5.5 The value and revenue generating ability of arts and cultural venues are becoming more apparent in recent years. For instance, according to the report *Income Generated by Museums and Galleries* produced by the UK Comptroller and Auditor General, among the museums and galleries in UK, the trading profit on activities such as catering, retailing and the sales of reproduction rights was 18% higher in real terms in 2002-03 than it was five years earlier.<sup>11</sup> According to another study, the economic benefits of Lincoln Centre for the Performing Arts to the New York Metropolitan Region reached US\$1.14B in 2003, creating over 10 000 jobs.<sup>12</sup>

3.5.6 Putting revenue consideration aside, it has to be pointed out that museums and performing arts could function as an instrument of growth for creative industries,

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao\\_reports/03-04/0304235es.pdf](http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/03-04/0304235es.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> The Economic Role and Impact of Lincoln Centre, Economic Development Research Group, October 2004.

especially in improving the ecology of creative industries from a macro point of view.

3.5.7 Specifically, museums and performing arts support creative industries by generating input of research, creative and artistic ideas with less market considerations. Through the showcasing of arts and creative works and the research input, museums could rejuvenate creative industries by offering different kinds of inspirations. Museums and PA venues also act as a platform for exchange and cooperation where creative practitioners network through performances, exhibitions, conferences, symposiums and exchange activities for new ideas.

3.5.8 Many PA venues and museums also have collaborations with educational institutions and practitioners in the creative industries. For example, the Juilliard School is located in the Lincoln Centre area and there are close cooperation between the two organizations.<sup>13</sup> The ZKM in Berlin, consisting of the Media Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art and various institutes and research departments, is another good example to show how museums could collaborate with creative industries. Apart from conserving and showcasing artworks, ZKM is also actively participating in production, which includes a wide range of digital arts, digital music and visual images. For example, the Institute for Music and Acoustic renders studios for music productions; the Film Institute offers infrastructure for film productions.<sup>14</sup>

3.5.9 On the output side, museum and performing arts events offer artistic experiences to the public through exposure of the works, complemented by promotion and education programmes that facilitate consumption activities and audience development. In other words, consumers are equipped with the knowledge and taste to consume creative products. Museums and performing arts also play an

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.lcinstitute.org/wps/myportal/!ut/p/kcxm1/0wcA1NLTeQ!!>, also see <http://www.juilliard.edu/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://on1.zkm.de/zkm/e/uebersicht>

important role in marketing creative products. Creative products such as phonographic products are often linked with performing arts – many concert and musical performances are documented and published in DVD, VCD or CD formats which directly influence distribution of creative industries.

3.5.10 To sum up, museums, performing arts and creative industries are part and parcel of the development of a vibrant cultural scene. They constitute ecologies of their own which are interactive to one another, and make up what we called “cultural ecology” of a society.<sup>15</sup> A sustainable and healthy cultural ecology plays an important role in city development and contributes to city branding, which in turn would favour a city’s economic development, social stability and overall competitiveness in areas like attracting investment, talents and tourists, and helping the city better position itself in the trend of globalization.

3.5.11 An Executive Summary of the “Consultancy Study on the Relationship between Museums and Performing Arts, and Creative Industries for the West Kowloon Cultural District Development in Hong Kong” is at **Annex H**.

### **3.6 Leisure and Tourism Benefits**

3.6.1 The WKCD has presented a golden opportunity not only for cultural development but also for tourism development in Hong Kong. There have been calls from the tourism sector for many years that Hong Kong does not have sufficient cultural and entertainment events to attract tourists to stay longer in Hong Kong, and many overseas performances could not find suitable venues in Hong Kong to stage their shows for a sufficiently long period. In 1998, the HKTA reported to the Legislative Council and proposed that

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<sup>15</sup> “Cultural ecology” refers to a holistic cultural environment in which cultural growth is sustained by a simulative and mutually supporting mechanism within a diversified, multi-faceted yet interdependent cultural equilibrium. Literally speaking, it is the objective environment formed within an integrated network of institutions and practitioners, such as museum, theatre, media, artist, audience, art mediator, educationalists, and policy makers etc. in the making of an overall cultural scenario.

an additional cultural and performance venue should be constructed. In the same year, the Chief Executive proposed in his Policy Address that Hong Kong should be developed into an Asian arts and cultural centre, and one of the key plans was the project of the WKCD. Thus, tourism has always been one of the driving forces behind WKCD.

3.6.2 A successful WKCD will definitely become a major tourist attraction, as demonstrated by many overseas experiences, such as the West End in London, the Museum Mile and Broadway in New York, the Federation Square in Melbourne, the MuseumsQuartier in Vienna, etc. The tourism sector, when consulted by PATAG, has indicated that they are eager to see the early implementation of the WKCD development project, for Hong Kong has the risk of losing its competitive edge to our neighbouring cities, particularly those that have a more vibrant and energetic nightlife. In this connection, it is necessary to take into consideration the leisure and tourism perspectives when re-examining the arts and cultural and other facilities in the district.

### **3.7 Connectivity of WKCD with the Local Community in Its Vicinity**

3.7.1 WKCD is located in the western part of the urban area in Kowloon. The planning and conceptual development of the WKCD should take account of the unique and vibrant culture and spirit of the local community in its vicinity. Efforts should also be made to ensure that the arts and cultural facilities represent a 'common wealth' accessible and affordable to the local district-based arts and cultural groups, and the public at large, especially residents in the surrounding community.