

Green Hong Kong

Overview

Hong Kong's magnificent cityscape is world famous but visitors are often surprised to learn that most of the territory is green. In fact, about three quarters of Hong Kong is countryside, with urban areas making up less than 25 per cent.

Nearly 40 per cent of Hong Kong's total land area of 1 100 square kilometres is protected for conservation and recreation. Hong Kong's countryside, just a short distance from the city, is unique in its ease of access, and features a stunning variety of scenery and landscapes.

Hong Kong has in place a well thought out plan to be one of the greenest cities in China. Hong Kong has the experience, the talent and the determination to nurture green industry. This includes promoting green innovation and technology.

Improving air quality is also high on the agenda. A new set of Air Quality Objectives (AQOs), broadly on par with the standards in the European Union and the United States, will be adopted. Meanwhile, a range of air quality improvement measures are being taken forward. The AQOs will be made statutory in 2014.

The Government proposes to inject US\$640 million into the Environment and Conservation Fund to provide long-term and sustained support for green initiatives by the community.

Improving Air Quality

Under the Pearl River Delta (PRD) Regional Air Quality Management Plan, Hong Kong and Guangdong authorities have been taking steps to reduce the

discharge of major air pollutants in the region.

Encouragingly, despite the continuing growth of the PRD, results of the PRD Regional Air Quality Monitoring Network in 2012 showed that compared to 2006 levels, the average annual concentration of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and respirable suspended particulates in the region had decreased by 62 per cent, 17 per cent and 24 per cent respectively. In November 2012, Hong Kong and Guangdong agreed on a new emission reduction plan up to 2020, including emission reduction targets for 2015 and 2020. Both sides will implement additional measures to meet the targets.

Hong Kong's power plants are subject to emission caps. Their emissions of three major pollutants, namely sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and respirable suspended particulates, had been cut down by 43 to 72 per cent between 1997 and 2012. The caps for 2015 and 2016 will be tightened by 34 to 50 per cent, compared to 2010. Starting from 2017, the caps will be tightened by a further six to 17 per cent, compared to 2015.

Stringent vehicle emission and fuel standards, on par with the European Union, have been introduced. At present, newly registered vehicles and motor vehicle fuels must meet the Euro V standards. The Government has also set aside US\$1.28 billion as subsidies to owners of heavily polluting diesel commercial vehicles to phase out their vehicles.

To reduce emissions from marine vessels, the Government is taking steps to upgrade the quality of local marine light diesel and make ocean-going vessels switch to cleaner fuel while at berth in Hong Kong.

Combating Climate Change

Hong Kong has taken concrete steps to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and has proposed to set a target to reduce the territory's carbon intensity by between 50 per cent and 60 per cent by 2020, using 2005 as the base level.

Hong Kong is a service economy without any energy-intensive industries. About 90 per cent of daily trips in Hong Kong are on public transport. Local power plants account for 66 per cent of the total local GHG emissions, followed by the transport sector, which accounts for 18 per cent. The Government is now focusing on the power and transport sectors to reduce GHG emissions.

Measures to reduce GHG emissions include raising building energy efficiency and a mandatory energy efficiency labelling scheme for electrical appliances. The fuel mix for local electricity generation will be reviewed. The Government has in place a green procurement policy and promotes cleaner fuels and green transport electric vehicles, carbon audits and the generation of renewable energy. A programme to replace conventional traffic signals with LED lights across the city was completed in 2012.

Greening Hong Kong

Our greening policy is to uplift the quality of our living environment through active planting, proper maintenance and preservation of trees and other vegetation. Over the past decade, more than 111 million trees, shrubs and annuals have been planted. Trees and other vegetation are properly maintained and preserved.

City greening is going on apace with skyscraper greening including roof and vertical greening. In 2012, a new Skyscraper Greenery Awards scheme was launched to promote greening technology and to encourage and recognise quality projects that integrate skyscraper greening into the city's built environment.

Sanctuary

Hong Kong is a sanctuary for some endangered species, such as:

- Black-faced Spoonbill
- Saunders's Gull
- Chinese White Dolphin
- Romer's Tree Frog
(endemic to Hong Kong)
- Chinese Tiger (a dragonfly)
- Chinese Pangolin
- Green Turtle

Country and Marine Parks

Hong Kong has 24 country parks and 22 'special areas' dedicated to conservation and recreation, covering 40 per cent of our land area, including scenic uplands, mountains, forests, marshes, coastline and islands. There are also four marine parks and one marine reserve covering a total of nearly 2 500 hectares, including scenic coastal areas and important marine habitats.

Hong Kong people take great pleasure in their natural environment, paying some 13 million visits a year to country parks to hike, camp and picnic. Well maintained footpaths and country trails provide easy access. Four long distance hiking trails are especially popular: MacLehose Trail (100km), Lantau Trail (70km), Hong Kong Trail (50km) and Wilson Trail (78km). The Dragon's Back Trail on Hong Kong Island has been voted one of Asia's best 'urban hikes' by the Asian edition of *Time* magazine.

Urban Parks

Parks and gardens are abundant in Hong Kong's urban areas. From large parks with various facilities to the smaller gardens surrounding historic temples, these open spaces serve as green lungs in the busy city.

Ramsar Site

The Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site is an internationally important wetland listed under the Ramsar Convention. The site comprises 1 500 hectares of mudflats, fish ponds, reed beds and mangroves and is a feeding and resting ground for over 380 species of birds, including rare and endangered species.

Within the Ramsar Site, one of the world's key transit points for many kinds of migratory birds, the World Wide Fund for Nature Hong Kong manages the Mai Po Marshes Nature Reserve. In winter, 60 000 to 70 000 migrating water birds stop over and nest here and in the vicinity.

Wetland Park

With such a wealth of natural assets, Hong Kong offers many opportunities for ecotourism. The 61-hectare Hong Kong Wetland Park, a nature reserve combining world-class conservation, education and tourist facility, has won many international awards, including the prestigious Global Award for Excellence from the Urban Land Institute in the US.

In 2012, the park introduced a guided tour themed "A Drop of Water" to promote the importance of wetland conservation and protecting water resources.

Geopark

The Hong Kong Global Geopark of China is a unique area, covering 50 square kilometres. It is made up of two regions covering eight geo-areas in the eastern

coastal area of Hong Kong, each with unique geological features.

The Sai Kung Volcanic Rock Region showcases spectacular polygonal volcanic columns, providing a record of geological changes and ancient volcanic activity dating over hundreds of millions of years.

The Northeast New Territories Sedimentary Rock Region represents the most comprehensive stratigraphy of sedimentary rocks in Hong Kong, ranging from 400-million-year-old Devonian sandstone and conglomerate to 55-million-year-old Palaeogene siltstone. Other exceptional features include diverse coastal landscapes and tectonic relics.

The Geopark offers a Geopark hotel, Geopark floating kiosks, a Geopark Gourmet, a number of geo-tour routes and "Journey to the Geopark" mobile app.

Biodiversity

Within its comparatively small size, Hong Kong is rich in biodiversity. It has:

- About 3 100 species of vascular plants
- About 400 species of native trees
- About 520 species of birds – over a third of the total bird species in China
- Over 50 species of mammals
- Over 100 species of amphibians and reptiles
- About 240 species of butterflies
- Over 115 species of dragonflies
- Over 180 species of freshwater fish
- About 1 000 species of marine fish – 30 per cent of the species found in the South China Sea
- Over 80 species of stony corals

For more information, please visit
www.afcd.gov.hk
www.discoverhongkong.com
www.enb.gov.hk