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ACE Paper 4 /2026
For advice on 11 May 2026

Report on the 164th Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee Meeting

PURPOSE

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Subcommittee considered the EIA report on “Development of the Loop – Eastern Connection Road” (the Project) submitted under Section 6(2) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO) at the meeting on 29 April 2026. The EIA report was submitted by the Civil Engineering and Development Department (the Project Proponent).

2. Members are requested to note the views of the EIA Subcommittee and advise on whether the EIA report should be endorsed.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

3. The development of the Loop was one of the ten major infrastructure projects announced in the Chief Executive’s 2007-08 Policy Address to foster economic growth. The Project, namely the Eastern Connection Road (ECR), will connect the eastern part of the Loop to the Kwu Tung North New Development Area (KTN NDA) via the Ma Tso Lung (MTL) area, serving as a key transport linkage between these two major development nodes under the Northern Metropolis development strategy. The alignment of ECR follows the existing Border Road near Tse Koo Hang through modification and widening to minimise habitat loss.

4. The ECR was originally assessed in the approved EIA report for the “Development of Lok Ma Chau Loop (LMCL)” (EIAO Register No. AEIAR-176/2013) in 2013. The Project Proponent subsequently put the construction of the ECR on hold due to changes in planning circumstances. Nevertheless, full ecological compensation for the entire LMCL project, including the habitat loss attributable to the ECR, Western Connection Road (WCR) and Direct Link, had already been implemented. Following the approval of LMCL EIA report, approximately 10 hectares (ha) of compensatory wetland habitat (i.e. Off-site

Wetland Compensation Areas (OWCAs)) for the ECR have been created under the LMCL project since 2022, well in advance of the construction of the Project.

5. The WCR, constructed under the “Development of LMCL” project which commenced in July 2021, is currently the only external transport link connecting the Loop to the wider road network. Upon implementation of Phase 2 development of the Loop, the WCR is expected to operate at or above capacity, resulting in traffic congestion, reduced vehicle speeds, and increased vehicular emissions. The ECR is therefore essential to support Phase 2 development by providing an alternative route to distribute traffic more evenly, enhancing connectivity between the Loop, KTN NDA, and the wider New Territories north, and reinforcing the Loop’s strategic role as an international innovation and technology hub within the Greater Bay Area.

6. Please refer to ACE-EIA Paper 2/2026 (*Annex A*) for details of the EIA project.

VIEWS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

7. Members noted that the EIA report was made available for public inspection during the period from 26 February 2026 to 27 March 2026 and EPD has received a total of 5 public comments. All public comments were submitted to Members of the EIA Subcommittee for consideration before its meeting.

8. Relevant extract of the draft minutes of the EIA Subcommittee meeting held on 29 April 2026 is at *Annex B*.

VIEWS OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

9. The Director of Environmental Protection (DEP), in consultation with relevant authorities, considered that the EIA report has met the requirements of the EIA Study Brief and the Technical Memorandum on EIA Process, for the purpose of its exhibition for public inspection under Section 7(4) of the EIAO.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

10. Having regard to the findings of the EIA report and information provided by the Project Proponent and its consultants, the EIA Subcommittee recommended the full Council to endorse the EIA report with the following conditions –

Brief Introduction:

(a) According to Section 8.13.4 of the EIA Report, an updated Habitat Creation and Management Plan (HCMP) for the OWCAs and Area 4 (i.e. Ponds 36 to 38 for ecological enhancement) shall be submitted.

Condition (1) is to require the Project Proponent to provide a detailed and updated HCMP as recommended in the EIA Report to the DEP for approval no later than 3 months before commencement of construction of the Project.

- (b) Having taken into account the public comments, **Condition (2)** is to require the establishment of a well-represented Environmental Committee (EC) which would advise on the preparation of the HCMP, and review the effectiveness of implementation of the proposed ecological mitigation / enhancement measures of the Project according to the EIA Report and the approved HCMP.

Conditions of Endorsement

The Project Proponent shall –

- (a) submit a detailed and updated HCMP for the OWCAs and Area 4 (i.e. Ponds 36 to 38 for ecological enhancement) as recommended in the EIA Report to the DEP for approval no later than 3 months before commencement of construction of the Project. The HCMP shall set out design details (including specifications for the target habitats and species), location of wetland compensation and enhancement works, implementation schedule in table form to clearly list out the measures to be implemented, implementation party, implementation programme, environmental performance required for implementation of the measures, management strategy, ecological monitoring and audit requirements, and details of smart initiatives (including AI-powered camera) to enhance the monitoring works of birds and mammals at the wetland compensation and enhancement areas. The Project Proponent shall consult the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) on the HCMP prior to submission to the DEP; and
 - (b) set up an EC no later than 3 months before the commencement of construction of the Project. The EC shall advise on the preparation of the HCMP, and review the effectiveness of implementation of the proposed ecological mitigation / enhancement measures of the Project according to the EIA report and the approved HCMP. The EC should have a wide representation such as representatives of the relevant government departments (including AFCD), green groups and academics. The list of members and terms of reference of the EC shall be submitted to the DEP for approval.
11. The Project Proponent would be required to attend the subsequent ACE meeting to present and explain the project details to the full Council.