

PILOTAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Study on Marine Traffic Risk Assessment for Hong Kong Waters (Implementation of Recommended Improvement Measures)

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the findings of the Stage II Study on the recommended implementation strategy of improvement measures.

Stage II Study

2. On completion of the Consultancy Study (Stage I), the Marine Department (MD), in collaboration with other relevant Government bodies, have conducted the Stage II Study. The purpose of the Stage II Study is to assess the recommendations of the Consultancy Study, and to develop a strategy to implement the selected improvement measures, taking into account the views/concerns received from the Pilotage Advisory Committee (PAC), Port Operations Committee (POC) and Provisional Local Vessels Advisory Committee (PLVAC) respectively in April and May 2004.

3. The Study first carefully considered the views, concerns and suggestions collected from the Consultative Committees, and concluded that the majority of the comments have been adequately addressed in the Consultancy Study. The Study then went on to examine the recommendations made by the Consultant.

The Improvement Options

4. The “Passage Plan Approval System” (PPAS) to assist the safe access and scheduling of large vessels is at a conceptual stage. It employs a technique of forecasting real time marine traffic movements based on continuous updating of the vessel traffic management information. The system will work in concert with the Vessel Traffic Services System to further enhance the safe passage of vessels. The Consultancy Study recommended that the PPAS would be required when the volume of large-sized vessels transiting Ma Wan reached a certain number. The future traffic volume at Ma Wan will depend on whether the Tonggu Waterway is constructed.

5. Taking into consideration that the PPAS was still at the conceptual stage, the Study recommended that MD should monitor its development and explore its application in Hong Kong waters. Furthermore, if the increasing trend in the size and volume of vessels transiting Ma Wan continues, MD should implement the PPAS concept as far as practicable to enhance the safety of navigation at that location.

6. On traffic management in the Yau Ma Tei Anchorage (YMTA), currently, vessels up to 100m in length may anchor in YMTA. Through diverting vessels exceeding 50m in length to the new Kellett Bank Anchorage (KBA), the Consultant estimated that the density of the YMTA would initially decrease by at least 15% thus reducing congestion and risk of collision. While the space vacated might be filled by other smaller vessels, it was believed that a great number of larger vessels would be diverted to KBA in future years due to the growth in size of river-trade vessels and local barges. The Study concluded that this recommendation would be cost-effective to ease the congestion and reduce the number of collision at YMTA, and proposed that MD should implement this measure as soon as possible.

7. The Study agreed that stringent enforcement of speed limits within the Central Harbour would improve navigation safety. Whilst it has educational value to vessel operators/masters, sustainable results would require continuous deployment of one or two patrol boats at the Central Harbour. Therefore, the benefit to be achieved by this measure might be

largely offset by the additional patrol resources. As it would be extremely difficult to bid for new resources, the Study recommended that MD should accord priority and to first implement this measure through conducting more frequent planned enforcement operations. The result in terms of incidents in the Central Harbour would be reviewed at suitable intervals to assess its effectiveness and, whether it is justifiable to request for more resources to focus on this task.

The Implementation Strategy

8. After examining the options proposed by the Consultant, the Stage II Study recommended to adopt the following implementation strategy :

- a) To give priority for implementing speed control within the Central Harbour as an immediate measure;
- b) To divert vessels above 50m in length from the existing Yau Ma Tei Anchorage to the future Kellett Bank Anchorage as a near term measure; and
- c) To closely monitor the development of the PPAS and to implement the concept of the PPAS as far as practicable.

Presentation

9. The paper will be presented by Mr. M. K. Chan, Senior Marine Officer of the Marine Department.

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