Protecting Sites of Ecological Value:

Decision Checklist for Conservation Planning

August 2012

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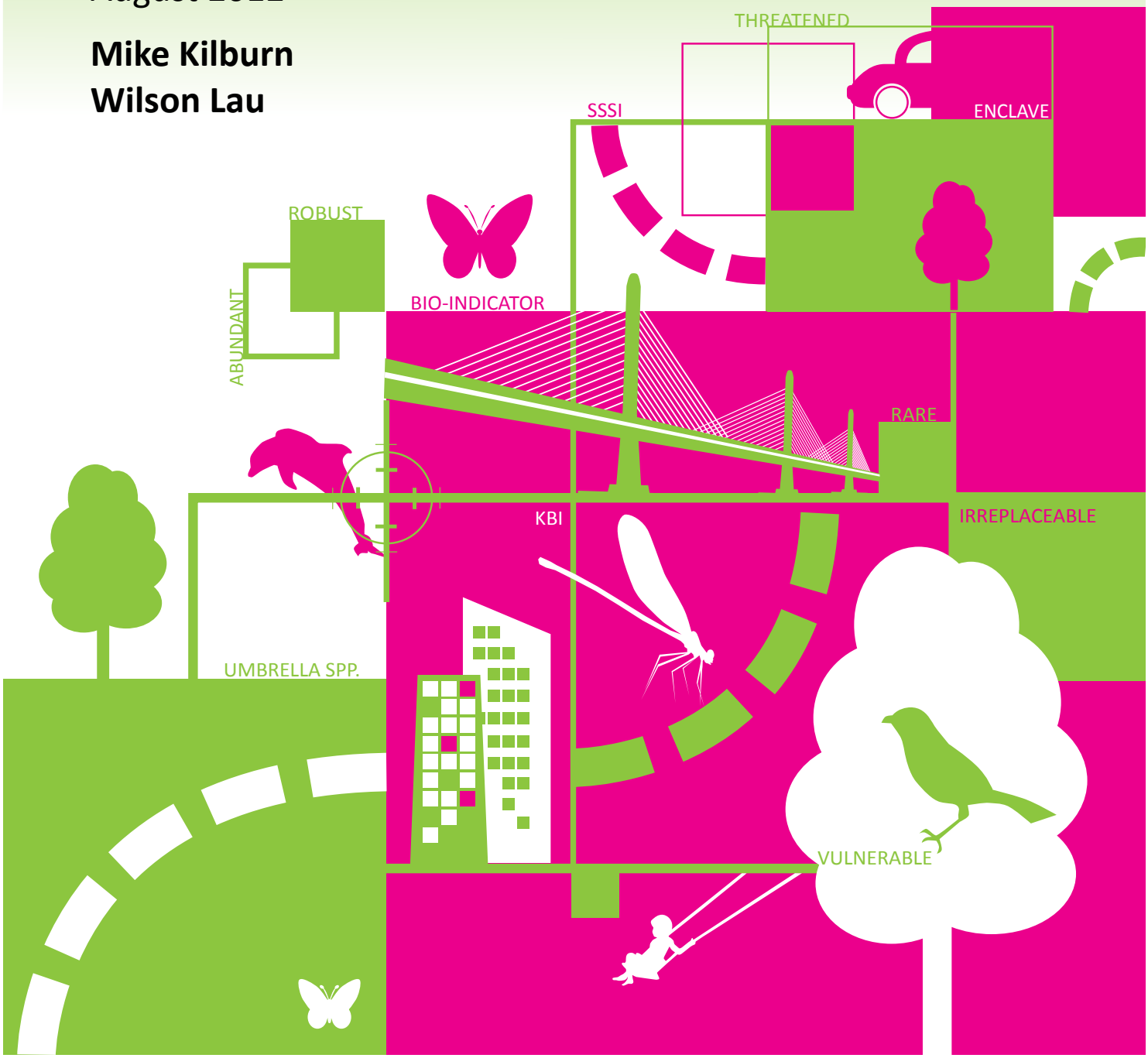

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This checklist is designed to assist decision makers to assess the biodiversity value of a study area, and arrive at a decision framework outlined in the context of the wider plans for conservation of biodiversity in Hong Kong.

The decision checklist follows the framework outlined in *Protecting Sites of Ecological Value: A Guide for Decision-makers*[1], and has been altered slightly to make the checklist more practical for decision-makers.

Study area[2]:

Objective of study:

Key Biodiversity Indicators[3] (KBIs)

(Including biodiversity, species[4], habitats[5], processes, hotspots)

1 What important KBIs are found in the study area? (list all important KBIs)

2 Is it currently been protected within the study area?

☐ No ☐ Yes - To what extent?

3 What *other areas* are important for this type of KBIs? (list areas)

4 How does the habitat in these *other areas* compare to the study area?

5 Are these *other areas* protected within the current protected areas network[6] ?

☐ No ☐ Yes - To what extent ? (in percentage)

6 What gaps are there in the information available? How significant are these gaps?

Goals and Targets[7]

7 Do the conservation goals and targets that exist internationally[8], in Hong Kong or for the protected areas network apply to the study area or its key species?

☐ No ☐ Yes - What are these goals?

8 If properly applied, do these goals and targets enhance the representation[9] and resilience[10] of biodiversity in Hong Kong?

	Representation	Resilience
☐ No What needs to be done to correct this situation?		
☐ Yes How would protecting the study area contribute to achieving the conservation goals and targets?		

Rarity and Threat[11]

9 What is the conservation priority for the study area compared to the areas listed in Question 2 when considering:

Irreplaceability[12] – the area holds endemic or rare species and habitats.
Vulnerability[13] – the area is vulnerable to human threats.

☐ High priority ☐ Medium priority ☐ Low priority

Conservation Actions Required[14]

10 What biological conditions need to be *maintained* within the study area?

11 What biological conditions need to be *enhanced* within the study area?

12 What are the current threats to the study area, and what are actions required to address them?

13 What are the actions needed to realise the *additional values* (e.g. cultural, educational, landscape value, etc.) of this study area to society? (list all additional values if any)

14 How would protecting the study area contribute to meeting Hong Kong's biodiversity targets (if any) under the CBD?[15]

15 Are there other available areas that also fulfill these objectives?

☐ No ☐ Yes - Where are these areas?

Consultation

16 Have outside stakeholders been consulted?

☐ No ☐ Yes - Who are they? What are their views?

17 Are there any information/tools that need to be added or improved in order to make this decision-making process more useful?

RECOMMENDATION

☐ **Enhance protection for the area – using what mechanism/resources?**

☐ **Further information is needed in order to make a properly information decision.**

☐ **Proceed to the next stage of development.**

☐ **No action – maintain current land use or zoning.**

Endnotes

Many of the notes in this checklist are drawn from *Protecting Sites of Ecological Value: A Guide for Decision-makers* (The Guide).

1. Refer to Kilburn, M. and Lau, W. (2012) *Protecting Sites of Ecological Value: A Guide for Decision-makers* (The Guide), Civic Exchange, Hong Kong. http://www.civic-exchange.org/wp/201208siteselection_en (accessed 6 September 2012).
2. "Study area" is the place of study, which can range from a large region to a small site.
3. As part of Steps 1 and 3 of Systematic Conservation Planning; refer to Table 1 in The Guide.
4. Refer to species of conservation concern; refer to Fellowes et al. (2002), see endnote 36 of The Guide for full reference.
5. For habitat type and location, refer to ERM (2009), in endnote 40 of The Guide for full reference.
6. Including the country parks network, special areas, marine parks and reserves, geoparks, restricted areas, and other areas with conservation zoning under the Town Planning Ordinance, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Conservation Area, Green Belts and Coastal Protection Area.
7. As part of Steps 2 of Systematic Conservation Planning; refer to Table 1 in The Guide.
8. Such as adhering to the Convention on Biological Diversity's Aichi Biodiversity Targets, in particularly Target 11 for protected areas target.
9. For further information on biodiversity *representation*, refer to Step Two of The Guide.
10. For further information on ecosystem *resilience*, refer to Step Two of The Guide.
11. As part of Steps 4 of Systematic Conservation Planning; refer to Table 1 in The Guide.
12. For further information on *irreplaceability*, refer to Step Four of The Guide. Refer to the Ratcliffe Criteria, which defines rarity as an important factor for assessing ecologically significant areas.
13. For further information on *resilience*, refer to Step Four of The Guide. Refer to the Preamble of the CBD, Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration, and the Technical Memorandum (EIA Ordinance) 4.4.3(a) and (x) which state that the precautionary principle must be used to assess vulnerability and risks to the environment.
14. As part of Steps 5 of Systematic Conservation Planning; refer to Table 1 in The Guide.
15. Refer to endnote 8 for the relevant Article of the CBD and Aichi Biodiversity Targets; and the Hong Kong Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (and before its publication, refer to Kilburn and Kendrick (2011) – see endnote 13 of Framework Paper for full reference; and Kilburn, M., Cheng, N.M. (2011), *Hong Kong Headline Indicators for Biodiversity and Conservation 2011 report*, Civic Exchange and Hong Kong Bird Watching Society.)

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