

PRESS RELEASE

“Modernising Hong Kong’s Water Management Policy

Part 1: Conservation and Consumption: Towards a Water-Smart Hong Kong”

Civic Exchange calls for the Government to adopt a multi-faceted water management approach that takes into consideration current inefficiencies within its water strategy and long-term challenges in the Pearl River Delta.

HONG KONG, 6 June 2019 – In a report published today, independent think tank Civic Exchange called for the Government to set more robust water reduction targets, review the water pricing structure, close data gaps and implement regulatory mechanisms to allow for more efficient water management. “We acknowledge the water management policy efforts the Government has been doing, but our research finds that such policy is not sufficient nor comprehensive enough.” Evan Auyang, Chairman of Civic Exchange, hopes that the Water Supplies Department (WSD) would address this issue when reviewing the Total Water Management strategy.

This is part of a two-part research project on modernising Hong Kong’s water management policy – one on conservation and consumption, the other on local water infrastructure – to study the implications of increasing pressures on the fresh water supply in Hong Kong due to population and economic growth as well as competition for water resources in the Pearl River Delta region. In this first report on conservation and consumption, we propose critical suggestions in pushing for behavioural change of consumers and more rapid responses by WSD to infrastructural failures.

“Hong Kong water pricing has not been updated in a quarter of a century. The last review was in 1995. At the time, the average size of a Hong Kong household was 3.7 persons and the production cost of water was around HK\$6.45. Today, the latest government figures showed that average household size has shrunk 26% to 2.75 persons, and the production cost has increased by 1.57 times to HK\$16.60. We urge the government to engage the public in an open dialogue to see how Hong Kong may revive the user-pays principle to conserve water – a precious resource that we all have a responsibility to protect,” Natalie Chan, Senior Advisor of Civic Exchange, says.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, Dr Frederick Lee, Fellow of Civic Exchange, believes that we must consider three aspects for a water-smart Hong Kong: “On the technological front, we need to broaden the implementation of smart meters to enable real-time monitoring of water consumption and data transmission. On the policy front, we must develop a comprehensive long-term vision that accurately reflects the true price of water. On the behavioural front, we need to encourage normative change that results in a water-conscious public.”

Key Policy Recommendations

- More ambitious water targets for 2030
- Water pricing restructuring
- More robust and transparent data
- Technology
- Regulations
- Water-saving devices
- Education programmes and school initiatives



From left to right: Natalie Chan, Senior Advisor of Civic Exchange, Dr Frederick Lee, Fellow of Civic Exchange, Evan Auyang, Chairman of Civic Exchange and Dr. David von Eiff, Associate Researcher of Civic Exchange participated the launch of the report.



Dr Frederick Lee shares the key findings of the report.

Please scan the follow QR codes to download our Full Report and Executive Summary:

Full Report



Executive Summary



About Civic Exchange

Civic Exchange is an independent public policy think tank with a vision to shape a liveable and sustainable Hong Kong. Our mission is to engage society and influence public policy through research, dialogue and the development of practical solutions. Civic Exchange has been ranked among the top 50 environment policy think tanks in the world by the University of Pennsylvania since 2011.

Media Enquiries

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