

**Conservation and Revitalisation Strategies for Historical and
Ecological Heritages of Grass Island: A Case Study of a More
Than 400 Years of History Island's Sustainability
(Project No. EP86/27/24/11-23)**

Long-Term Conservation Management Plan

(After 10 years plan, year after 2035)

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1. Environmental Conservation

Cattle Problems

Since the lifespan of cattle is approximately 20 years, we anticipate that the cows in Tap Mun will gradually disappear within the next 20 years, and there will no longer be any cattle grazing on the grasslands there. Therefore, it is conservatively estimated that by 2045, there should be no cows living on the island. This will also improve the hygiene issues related to cow dung. However, before that, we believe that, according to the recommendations of the mid-term report, it is important to continue using cow manure compost to provide nutrients for the grasslands, as well as to educate visitors on the correct attitudes toward interacting with the cattle.

In addition, as the number of cattle in Tap Mun gradually decreases, there may be other situations. For instance, the population of wild boars may continue to rise. Without competition from cattle for land, wild boars could potentially continue to inhabit and reproduce in Tap Mun. Furthermore, the absence of cattle to graze on the grasslands may result in faster grass growth, potentially exceeding the current growth levels. Additionally, the lack of cows to disperse seeds of other plants may affect or slow down the succession process of the grasslands. These changes could have profound impacts on the ecosystem of Tap Mun, and further research and consideration are needed in managing the ecology of this area.

Grass Problems

If the grasslands in Tap Mun have been improved in the past 10 years according to the recommendations from the mid-term report—such as educating the public about not burning grasslands, monitoring the condition of the grasslands, using cattle dung compost to provide nutrients, or attempting to restore the grasslands—then the

grasslands in Tap Mun should gradually improve over the next decade. Additionally, with the issues related to cattle gradually decreasing, it is believed that the pressure on the grasslands will also slowly diminish. Although the grasslands will still be affected by weathering and erosion, the problems should not significantly worsen.

We recommend that if it is indeed necessary to preserve the grassland habitat, regular removal of scrubs and weeds from the grassland is essential. These shrubs and weeds are spread by mammals and, as a result, grow in the grasslands of Tap Mun. Therefore, it is crucial to regularly eliminate these shrubs to fully preserve the grassland habitat.

Succession of the Tap Mun Plants

Based on aerial imagery from the past 30 years, it is projected that the current grassland in Tap Mun will eventually transition into shrubland. Therefore, if we want to preserve the current location of the grassland, it is essential to regularly clear weeds and remove shrubs every year in order to ensure that the grassland can continue to be maintained.

Experts have also proposed another suggestion: to build artificial platforms on the grassland. These platforms would feature a green design, allowing camping enthusiasts to set up camp on them. Since the platforms would be elevated above the grass, the grassland can grow naturally without being subjected to human pressure. This design not only protects the grassland ecosystem but also provides a comfortable environment for campers, while promoting sustainable outdoor activities. However, since these platforms are artificially constructed, we must gather opinions from villagers and the public before considering the construction of these platforms. This engagement is essential to ensure that the project aligns with community needs and addresses any concerns they may have. Involving local stakeholders will help create a

more sustainable and accepted solution for everyone involved.

Terns' Conservation

The tern festival will continue to be held every year, and if the response is positive, we can consider expanding the tern festival to other areas of Hong Kong, including places like Sai Kung. This would help attract more visitors from places like Sai Kung to Tap Mun, allowing a greater number of people to recognize the importance of tern conservation. By raising awareness and engaging the community, we can foster a stronger commitment to protecting this vital species and its habitat.

Apply for UNESCO Biosphere Reserve/Global Ecovillage

Based on the ecological diversity of Tap Mun, including bird ecology, butterfly ecology, and plant ecology, we could consider researching whether the areas of Tap Mun, Port Island, and Hoi Ha can be designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. If this can be achieved, it would create a new tourist attraction in Hong Kong that not only preserves the marine ecosystem but also attracts more visitors.

Many foreign biosphere reserves typically draw significant international tourism while effectively promoting conservation efforts. UNESCO provides guidelines for these reserves, which would enable us to manage and protect these areas systematically and appropriately.

Additionally, we could consider implementing an entrance fee, which would not only help fund the operations of the reserve but could also contribute to the economic development of Hong Kong as a whole. Overall, this initiative would help raise public awareness of environmental protection and strike a balance between ecological conservation and economic growth.

In addition, we could consider transforming Tap Mun village into a sustainable community, establishing it as a sustainable island. This would allow us to join a global network of sustainable villages, enhancing its status and recognition as a model for sustainability.

As a complement to this initiative, we will discuss the specifics of creating a sustainable village in the following chapters. This could include aspects such as renewable energy usage, waste management, sustainable agriculture, and community engagement, all aimed at fostering a harmonious relationship between the environment and the local community. By leveraging sustainable practices, Tap Mun could serve as an example for other communities, promoting eco-friendly tourism and enhancing the overall quality of life for its residents.

2. Culture Conservation

Culture of “Chiu/Jiao”

Although the Chiu/Jiao ceremony is currently listed as an intangible cultural heritage of Hong Kong, the Tai Ping Qing Jiao of Tap Mun is not included in this list. Therefore, we hope to apply for its recognition as an activity on the Hong Kong intangible cultural heritage list in the future.

The Tai Ping Qing Jiao of Tap Mun is unique because it is a communal celebration that involves multiple villages, making it more distinctive and special compared to similar events in other communities. By securing this recognition, we can help preserve this important cultural tradition, promote awareness of its significance, and enhance cultural tourism in the region. This recognition would not only celebrate the heritage of Tap Mun but also contribute to the broader cultural landscape of Hong Kong.

Culture of Fishermen vs Hakka

In addition to the Jiao ceremony, Tap Mun has a unique characteristic: it is home to both fishing culture and Hakka culture, which coexist on this small island. This provides us with an opportunity to educate the public about the distinct cultural traditions of Hong Kong.

We can showcase these two different cultures in an education centre, introducing their histories, customs, and values. Visitors would get to experience the lifestyle of fishermen as well as the traditions of the Hakka community. In addition to cultural displays, we can promote food items that are representative of these cultures. For instance, traditional Hakka rice cakes and various seafood-related dishes made by fishermen can be highlighted. By bringing these unique foods to market, we not only allow residents to taste local delicacies but also help them understand the cultural significance and origins of these foods.

Hosting food markets or cultural exchange events could further enhance the understanding and appreciation of both cultures, establishing Tap Mun as a cultural exchange hub that attracts more visitors. This initiative would not only help protect and promote local heritage but also contribute to the economic development of the area.

3. Sustainable Tourism

Camping Problem

Camping has a long history on Tap Mun, and it was once a very popular camping destination. However, due to ecological succession and erosion, the grassy areas on Tap Mun have diminished significantly, leading to a decline in grass quality. As a result,

more soil is being exposed, and there is less grass available for campers. We have the following suggestions to address the situation:

- **Replanting Grass:** We can replant grass in alternative shrub areas on Tap Mun to provide new camping spaces for visitors. This would help restore the grassy areas and improve the overall camping experience.
- **Enhancing Transportation:** We suggest strengthening the speedboat transport between Tap Mun and Wan Chai, allowing visitors to access this camping area more conveniently. Improved transportation would encourage more people to visit, which could help support local businesses.
- **Developing Homestays:** Considering the successful homestay regulations in places like Lai Chi Wo, we could convert some residential properties on Tap Mun into suitable homestays. This would not only provide accommodations for visitors but also offer an additional form of overnight experience on the island.
- **Utilizing Community Spaces:** We could also open up the basketball courts at the education centre for public camping, allowing campers to set up tents there. This approach would create a camping atmosphere while maintaining the integrity of the natural grassy areas.

However, it is crucial to manage the camping issue effectively. If the grasslands are not properly maintained, their quality will continue to decline, negatively impacting the landscape and the overall experience for campers. Therefore, implementing these suggestions can help preserve Tap Mun's natural environment while still accommodating the needs of campers.

Education Centre and Tours

Here are some suggestions for educational centre in Tap Mun organizing themed

tourism activities.

Theme of Educational Centre

- **Interactive Learning Areas:** Create interactive exhibits and simulations that allow visitors to experience cultural heritage, such as participating in traditional fishing practices or learning to prepare Hakka dishes.
- **Workshops:** Offer workshops on traditional crafts and cooking skills, such as making Hakka rice cakes or fishing techniques. This will attract both tourists and local residents to participate.
- **Environmental Education Programs:** Regularly host courses on local ecology and environmental protection to raise awareness among the public about the importance of conservation.

Themed Fishing Experience Workshop Plan

- **Collaboration with Local Fishermen:** Partner with local fishermen to co-design the fishing experience activities. They can share their expertise and techniques, making the event more authentic and engaging.
- **Introduction to Fishing Equipment:** Introduce various fishing tools and gear, such as fishing nets, rods, and floats, and explain how to use them safely.
- **Techniques Demonstration:** Have fishermen demonstrate fishing techniques, teaching participants the proper ways to catch and fish.
- **On-the-Water Fishing:** Schedule regular outings to take participants out to the waters off Tap Mun for hands-on fishing experiences, including setting nets, pulling them in, and celebrating the catch.
- **Environmental Education:** Throughout the activity, discuss the importance of sustainable fishing and protecting the marine environment. Introduce

participants to the local marine ecosystem, its biodiversity, and emphasize responsible fishing practices.

- **Sharing the Catch:** At the end of the fishing outing, consider organizing a small sharing event where participants can showcase their catches. A cooking workshop could also be held to teach them how to prepare and enjoy their fresh catches.
- **Encouraging Ongoing Participation:** Encourage participants to leave their contact information so they can be invited to future related activities or expanded workshops, fostering a sense of community engagement.

By organizing such a fishing experience, you can help visitors gain a deeper appreciation for local fishing culture while promoting interaction with the community and raising awareness about cultural preservation and marine conservation.

Themed Tourism Activities

- **Cultural Experience Tours:** Organize guided tours that lead visitors through historical sites in Tap Mun, such as ancient fishing villages, temples, and unique local architecture, providing relevant historical stories and cultural insights.
- **Food Tours:** Create food experience itineraries that allow visitors to taste local specialties, such as seafood and Hakka cuisine, while learning about the origins and preparation of each dish.
- **Ecological Exploration Tours:** Organize birdwatching, hiking, and coastal ecological exploration activities to educate visitors about local flora and fauna and the importance of ecological conservation.
- **Camping Experiences:** Offer themed camping activities that combine the resources of the educational center with outdoor camping experiences, allowing

families and groups to enjoy nature overnight, participate in campfire gatherings, and share stories.

- Festivals and Events: Regularly host various themed community festivals, such as a Fisherman's Festival or Hakka Cultural Day, to attract more visitors to engage with and experience local culture.

Through the establishment of an educational center and diverse themed tourism activities, Tap Mun can not only attract tourists but also promote the preservation and transmission of local culture, enhancing the community's economic development.

Tap Mun Educational Laboratory Plan

- Establishment of the Laboratory: Set up a dedicated laboratory within the education center, equipped with basic marine testing equipment and experimental tools such as water quality analyzers, microscopes, and sampling bottles.
- Sea Water Sample Collection: Implement a regular schedule for collecting sea water samples from Tap Mun and its surrounding waters. These samples can be analyzed for water quality parameters, including dissolved oxygen levels, pH, salinity, nutrient concentrations, and more, providing insights into the local marine environment.
- Marine Experiments and Educational Activities: Develop hands-on marine experiments targeting various age groups
- Water Quality Testing: Teach participants how to analyze sea water samples and explain the impact of different water quality indicators on marine ecosystems.
- Marine Organism Observation: Use microscopes to observe plankton and other microscopic organisms in the water and discuss their role in the ecosystem.

- Aquaculture Experiments: Conduct small-scale marine organism cultivation experiments, such as raising shellfish or seaweed, and study their growth conditions.
- Attracting Academic Collaboration: Collaborate with universities and research institutions to invite them to conduct field studies and experiments in Tap Mun. This could provide students with internship opportunities while enriching local scientific research. Organize regular seminars or lectures featuring scholars and experts to share their research findings, encouraging engagement from students and the public.
- Community Involvement and Promotion: Encourage local communities and schools to participate in laboratory activities by hosting open days or workshops that raise awareness and engagement with marine environments. Highlight the educational significance and scientific research importance of the laboratory through social media and promotional materials at the visitor centre to attract more participants.
- Ongoing Research and Data Collection: Establish a database to record the results of each water quality analysis to monitor long-term environmental changes. This data can be utilized for academic research and public education as well as for policy recommendations. By setting up this educational laboratory, Tap Mun can transform into a hub for education and scientific research, enhancing public awareness of marine conservation and promoting sustainable development.

Tap Mun Trail and Waterway Development Plan

Trail Construction

- Trail from Kung Pui Wan to Lung Keng Kan: Develop a scenic trail connecting Kung Pui Wan to Lung Keng Kan, equipped with rest areas and informational signs that

introduce local ecology and culture. The trail should consider accessibility for people of all ages and abilities.

- Island Loop Trail: Extend the trail from Kung Pui Wan to Hau Tsz Kok, creating a loop trail around the island that allows visitors to hike and enjoy the scenery, encouraging activities like jogging and walking.

Waterway Improvement

- Speedboat Routes: Establish speedboat services from Tap Mun Pier to destinations like the fish rafts at Hau Tsz Kok, creating a circular route around the island. This will not only provide convenient transportation but also allow tourists to enjoy the stunning coastal views.
- Water Activities Collaboration: Snorkeling and Kayaking Activities: Partner with snorkeling and kayaking teams to offer experiences at various locations around Tap Mun. Provide equipment rentals and professional guidance to ensure participants can safely enjoy these activities.
- Ecological Tours: Design ecology-themed guided tours for snorkeling or kayaking participants, educating them about the local marine ecosystem and conservation efforts.

4. Sustainable Village

Transforming Tap Mun into a sustainable village involves a comprehensive approach that addresses environmental, social, and economic factors. First, establishing protected ecological areas is essential to conserve native plants and wildlife, thereby promoting biodiversity. Implementing sustainable agriculture practices, such as organic farming and crop rotation, will reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers and pesticides. This can be complemented by efficient water resource management,

including rainwater harvesting systems and water recycling practices, ensuring that residents have access to safe drinking water while minimizing waste.

To encourage renewable energy, it would be beneficial to install solar panels on residential houses.

Transportation and infrastructure should be designed to promote green practices. Encouraging walking, hiking, and the use of green transport can be achieved by developing electronic bus from Sai Kung to Wong Shek Pier, and developing electronic engine ferry may also be a direction of public transport in future.

Community engagement and education play a pivotal role in this transformation. Organizing regular community events and workshops focused on sustainability, environmental conservation, and ecological preservation will raise awareness among residents. By involving them in the village's decision-making processes, they will feel a greater connection to their home and the changes taking place. Also, we suggest using e-medical services in the visitor centre, providing distance medical services to residents, allowing the elderly to receive medical services instantly.

Diversifying the local economy is also vital for sustainability. Developing eco-tourism initiatives can attract visitors interested in environmental preservation while creating jobs for the community. Promoting local products, such as organic produce and fishermen goods, through markets will stimulate the local economy and encourage residents to support one another.

Lastly, to ensure continuous improvement, it is important to set sustainable development indicators that can be monitored regularly. This will allow the community

to assess progress and make necessary adjustments to their initiatives. Through these combined efforts, Tap Mun can evolve into a sustainable village that embodies environmental stewardship, social cohesion, and economic vitality, ultimately providing an enriching living experience for both residents and visitors.

5. Community Engagement

Other than the Tap Mun tern festival and Jiao festival, we suggested that Tap Mun may become a sport and hiking hub

Tap Mun Unique Sports Events Plan

Triathlon Competition

- **Event Design:** Create a triathlon that starts with a cycling segment from Sai Kung to Wong Shek Pier. Following the cycling, participants would kayak from the pier to Tap Mun, and then finish with a running segment that takes them on a scenic loop around the island.
- **Route Planning:** A triathlon competition themed around a route on Tap Mun that explores its culture, history, and ecology can be developed.
- **Unique Features:** Emphasize the stunning natural landscapes participants will encounter throughout the competition, making for attractive photo opportunities.

Regular Hiking Competitions

- **Trail Development:** Once a round island trail around Tap Mun is completed, organize regular hiking competitions or events encouraging residents and tourists to explore the scenic route.
- **Event Structure:** Host different categories (e.g., family-friendly walks, competitive

races, and themed hikes) to attract a wide range of participants. Consider including checkpoints or challenges along the route to make it more engaging.

- Community Involvement: Encourage local schools, clubs, and organizations to participate, fostering community spirit and inclusivity.