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YAN CHAU TONG VILLAGES CONCEPT PLAN

概念規劃



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Research methodology

Case Studies

A booklet containing 14 global and 3 local case studies has been completed as an appraisal of rural conservation and revitalisation practices. The case study examples used in the report are excerpted from that publication.

Baseline assessment

A comprehensive baseline assessment was undertaken using Geographic Information System in conjunction with on site visits.

Professional consultation

Consultations were carried out with ecological and cultural specialists in December 2021, January & April 2022.

Public opinion collection

The questionnaire survey was conducted in the period between December 2021 and January 2022, during which the surveyors went to the Hing Chun Yeuk area and city centre. In the end, 2,022 responses were collected.

Engagement with local community and other stakeholders

2 focus groups with a total of 15 stakeholders were organized in December 2021, participants included villagers, volunteers, eco-tour guides, village artists, a landscape designer, an agriculture expert, etc.

25 villager and expert interviews were carried out from October 2021 to July 2022. Interviewees included 7 village representatives, residents and diaspora villagers, members of The Hong Kong Countryside Foundation, Sha Tau Kok District Rural Committee, the Legislative Council, etc.

Part 1

Background



Villages are deeply rooted in the land as their naming suggests.
(Source: The Common Map, 沙頭角慶春約 [鄉郊保育文化之旅], 香港地名誌)

Introduction

Yan Chau Tong Villages

Building a modern Yeuk

The Yan Chau Tong villages - which we presently* delimit to include the Hing Chun Yeuk Seven Villages, Kuk Po and Fung Hang - have been undergoing a process of revitalisation since the early 2000s.

Projects to resume agriculture, settle newcomers and leverage cultural and ecological assets have served to rebuild parts of the region and showcase its unique natural and cultural landscapes. The region's diverse traditional settlements are re-emerging as active sites of rural living with economic livelihoods related to rising ecotourism and niche agricultural production. An opportunity exists to move gradually towards regionally scaled development in order to enhance the benefits of revitalisation.

In what follows, we offer an inclusive concept plan towards scaling up revitalisation efforts and enhancing benefits regionally. We establish a vision and a corresponding set of mobilising actions which we hope will give new impetus towards the adoption of a regional master plan. Our aim is to contribute to the long-term sustainability and vibrancy of the region by enabling an expansive planning horizon.

We hope that the results will offer a demonstrative model for Hong Kong, promoting sustainable and inclusive rural revitalisation.

* Over time, we anticipate the Yan Chau Tong designation will gradually expand to include additional villages such as Yung Shue Au, Kat O, Ap Chau, Wu Kau Tang, Sai Lau Kong, A Ma Wat and Kau Tam Tso.

Rural Context At A Glance

Sustainable Green Economy

Rural regions must be key players in the transition to a sustainable green economy as they are disproportionately affected by climate change impacts on agriculture and coastal areas. They can facilitate a green transition through securing and enhancing ecosystem services, food production and clean air.

Ageing population

Rural regions experience strong demographic pressures with ageing as a challenge to sustainable local livelihoods.

Rural tourism

Tourism is seen globally as a tool for reviving rural areas and rehabilitating local economies. Responsible and closely managed approaches that integrate rich ecological and cultural elements can deliver high quality outcomes which enhance livelihood and environmental factors.

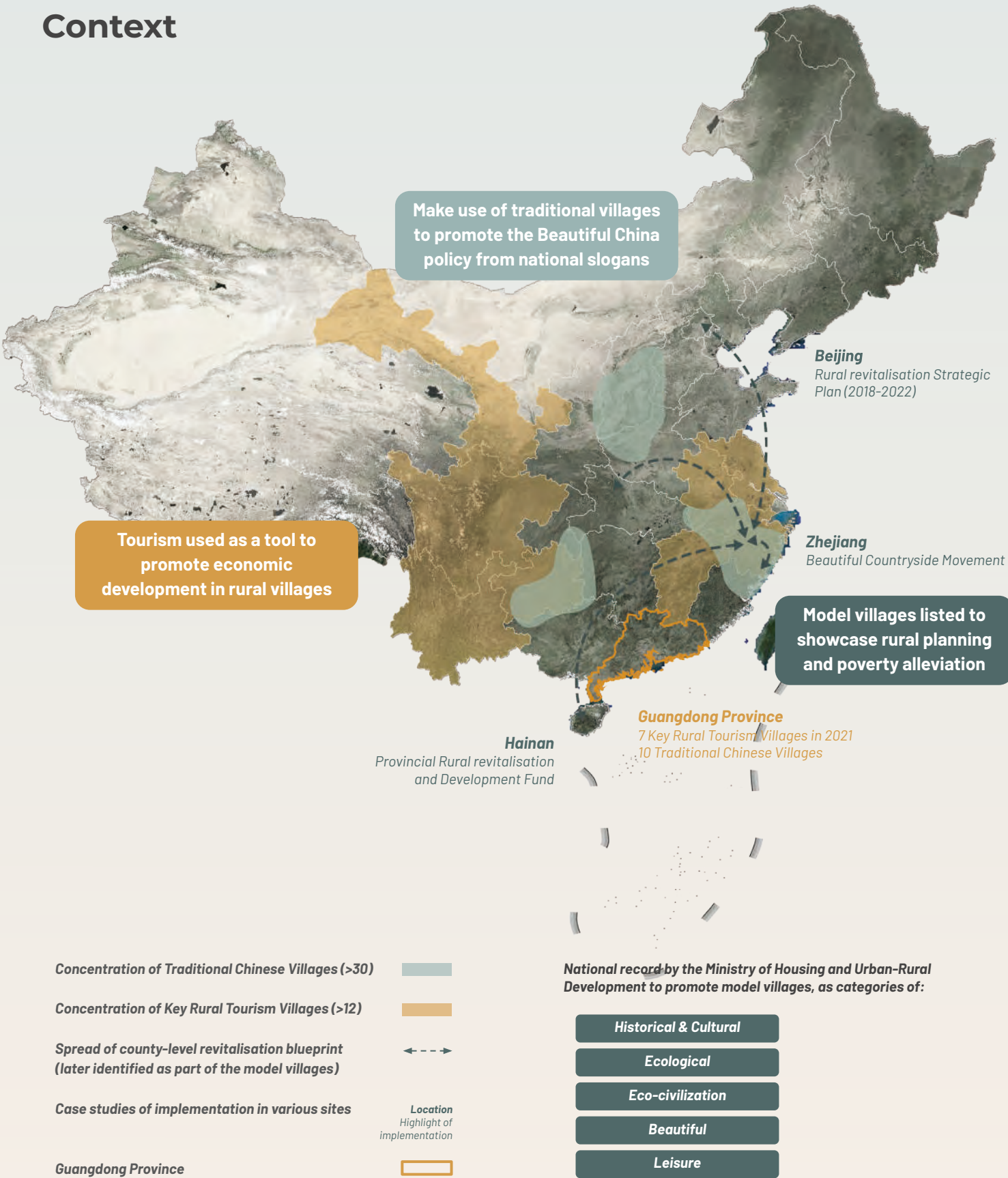
Post-productivism

Rural regions in the post-productivist era are no longer seen as one-dimensional bases of agricultural activity. Today these regions are affiliated with more diverse meanings, such as amenity services, ecosystem functions, and cultural heritage protection. These changing trends affect choices related to workplace and community and can help support new processes of development.



Global
Trends

National Context



Hong Kong existing planning of Yan Chau Tong

HKSAR boundary
HK UNESCO Geopark

Greater Bay Area

Shenzhen Yantian Port

Hong Kong 2030+ vision

Harbour Metropolis
Northern Metropolis

Eastern Knowledge and Technology Corridor
Western Economic Corridor

Proposed railways & major roads expansion

Northern Metropolis Plan

"Two Cities, Three Circles"
(Shenzhen Bay Quality Development Circle,
Hong Kong-Shenzhen Close Interaction Circle,
Mirs Bay/Yan Chau Tong
Eco-recreation/tourism Circle)

Proposed rail & water transport expansion

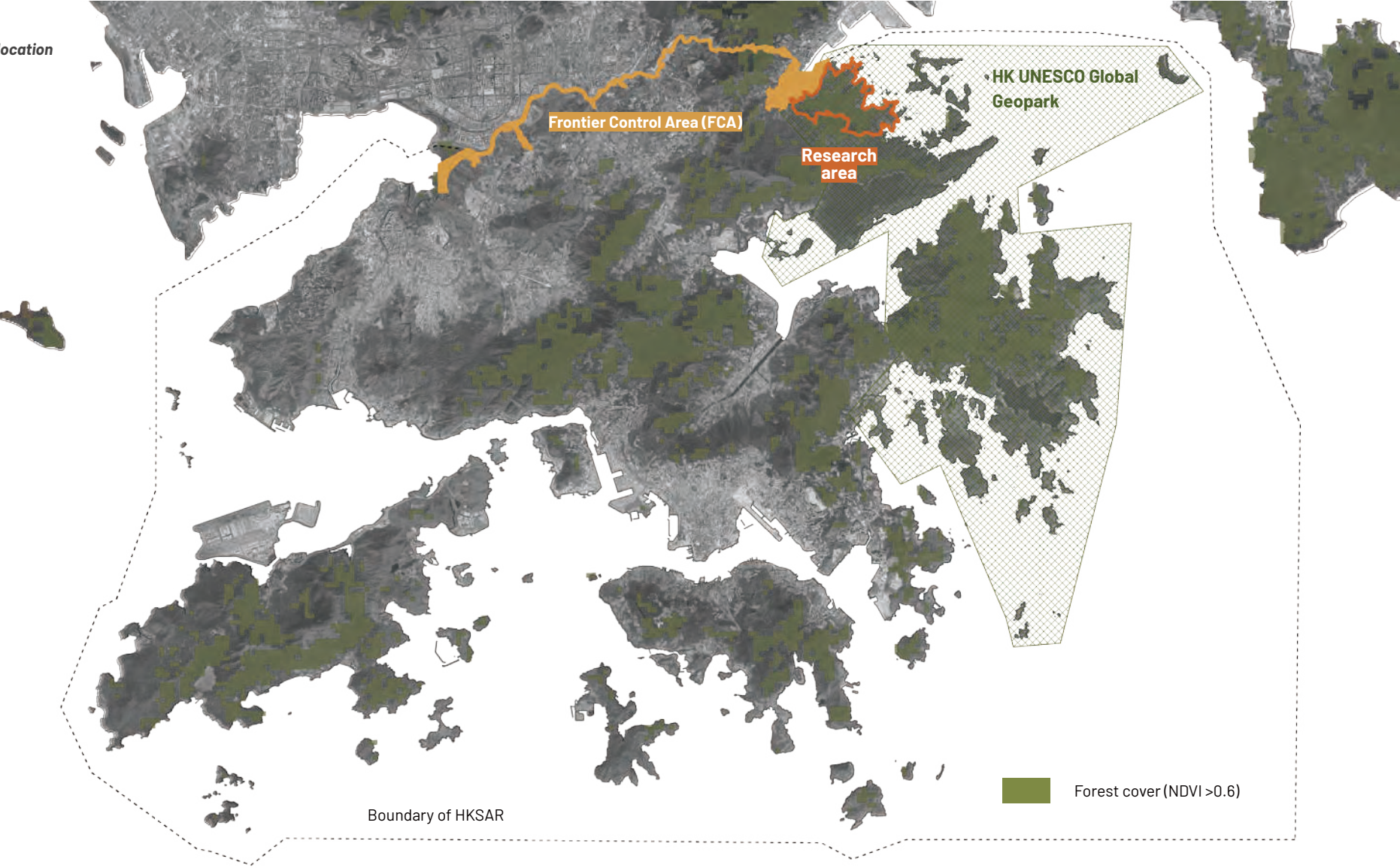
Strategic transport network expansion
supporting the Northern Metropolis

Past deterioration in water
quality from Yantian Port

Joint effort of coastal management
in Eco-recreation Circle

Hong Kong
At A Glance

Keymap of Hong Kong with location of the research area



Baseline

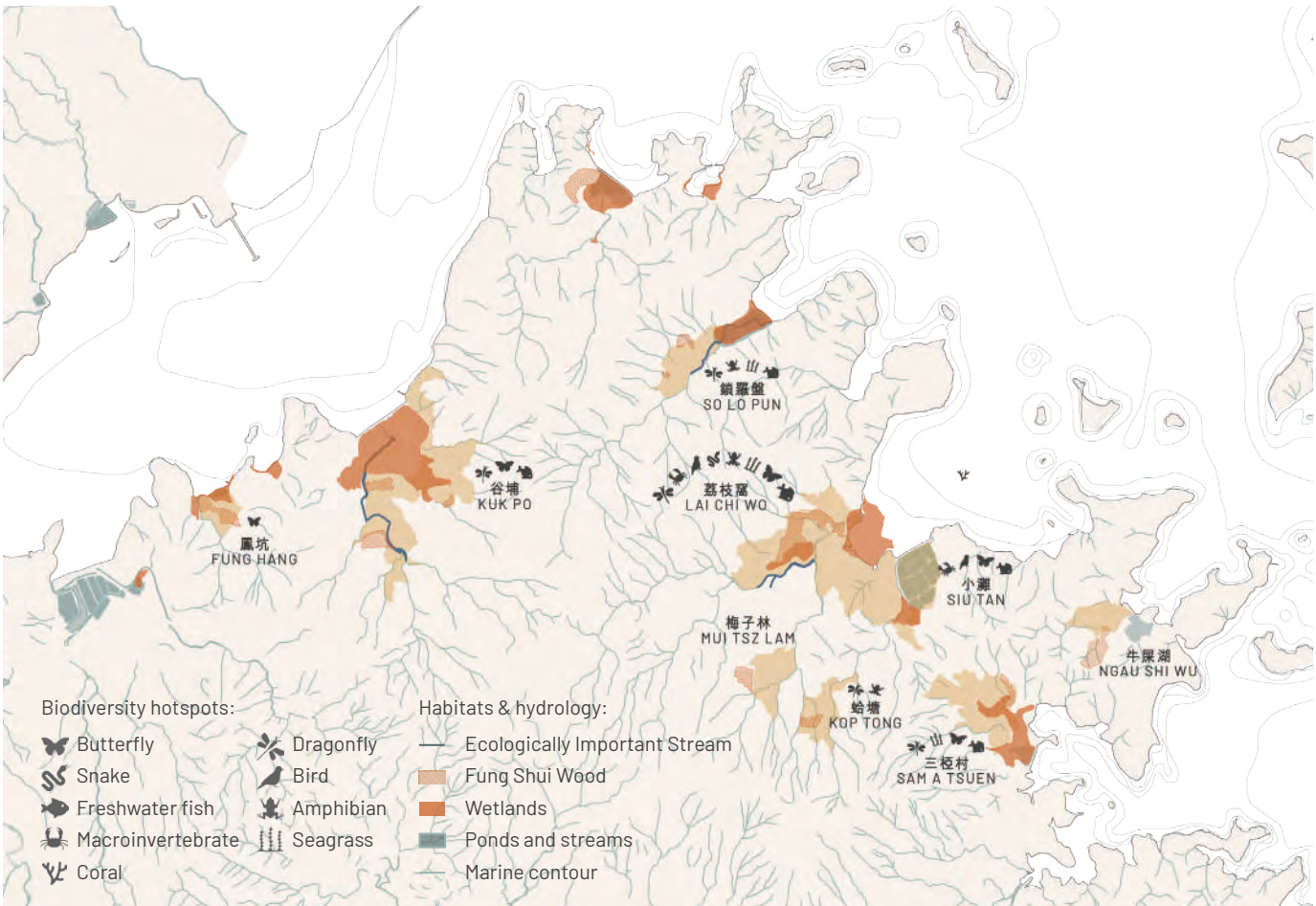
Nature, Transport, Culture, Demographics & Land Use

Research area within conservation zones at the border

The research area is situated in the North District of the New Territories, close to the Hong Kong-Shenzhen border and the Frontier Control Area. It includes the Hing Chun Yeuk Seven Villages, Kuk Po, Fung Hang. The area is characterised by a large area of green cover and is rather remote from other parts of Hong Kong. The nine villages in question are enclaves located within a conservation area system (Plover Cove Country Park, Yan Chau Tong Marine Park, HK UNESCO Global Geopark).

High ecological value but hydrological and human impact challenges

From an ecological point of view, the area is a biodiversity hotspot and the site of the largest remaining cluster of freshwater wetlands in Hong Kong. A major potential exists to leverage the biological and habitat diversity of the area. The key ecological feature of the focus area, the freshwater wetlands, are the product of abandoned wet agricultural lands, and the floodgates which once separated freshwater from seawater have now broken causing the intrusion of brackish water into the wetlands. Similarly, the reduction of water flow in streams has changed the conditions for present day agriculture. Additional threats include the potential deterioration of water quality, increased garbage from human activities, and the broader lack of detailed ecological assessments for villages including Kop Tong, Mui Tsz Lam and Ngau Shi Wu.



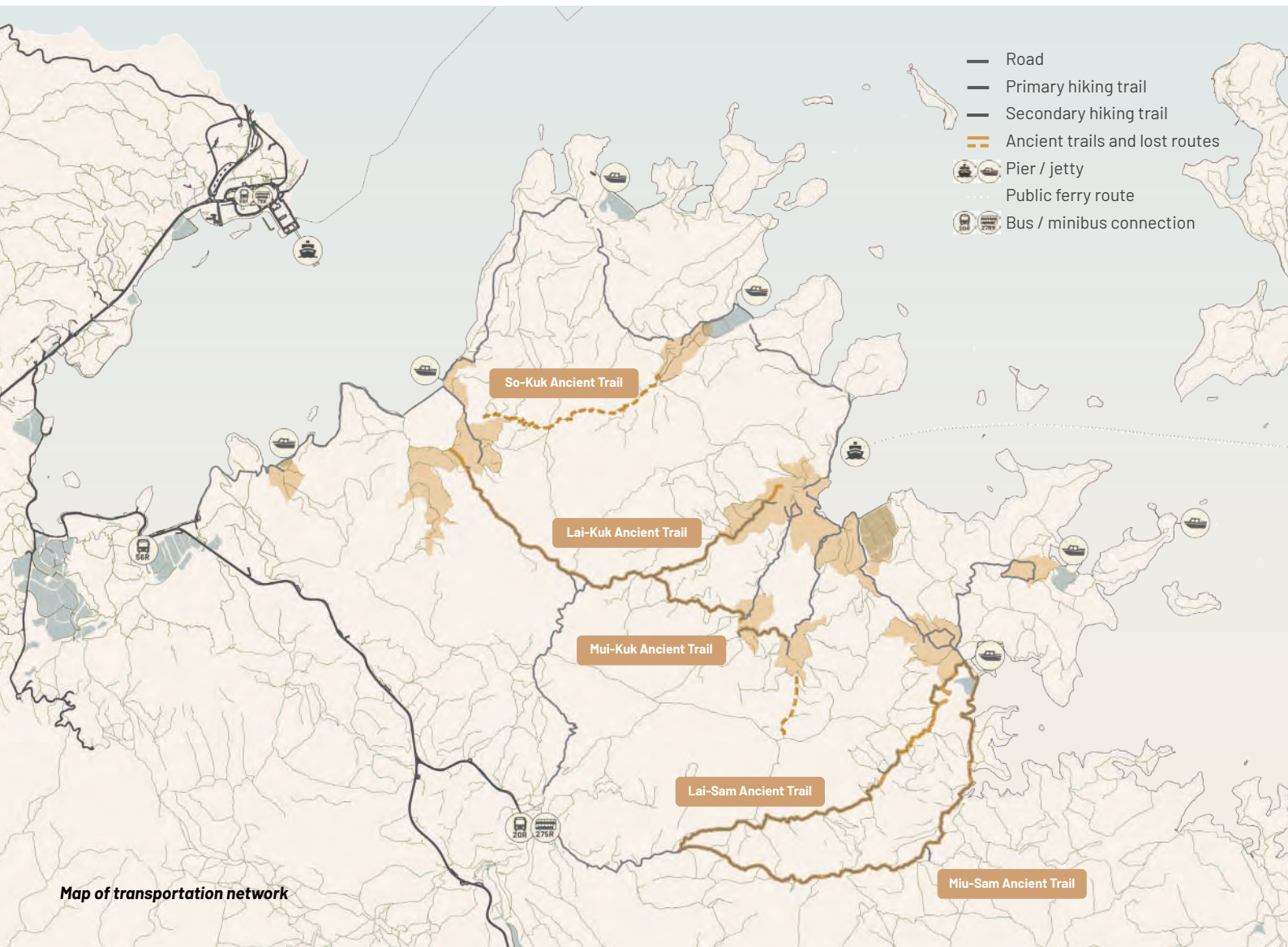
Map of existing hydrology and ecological values

Transportation Challenges

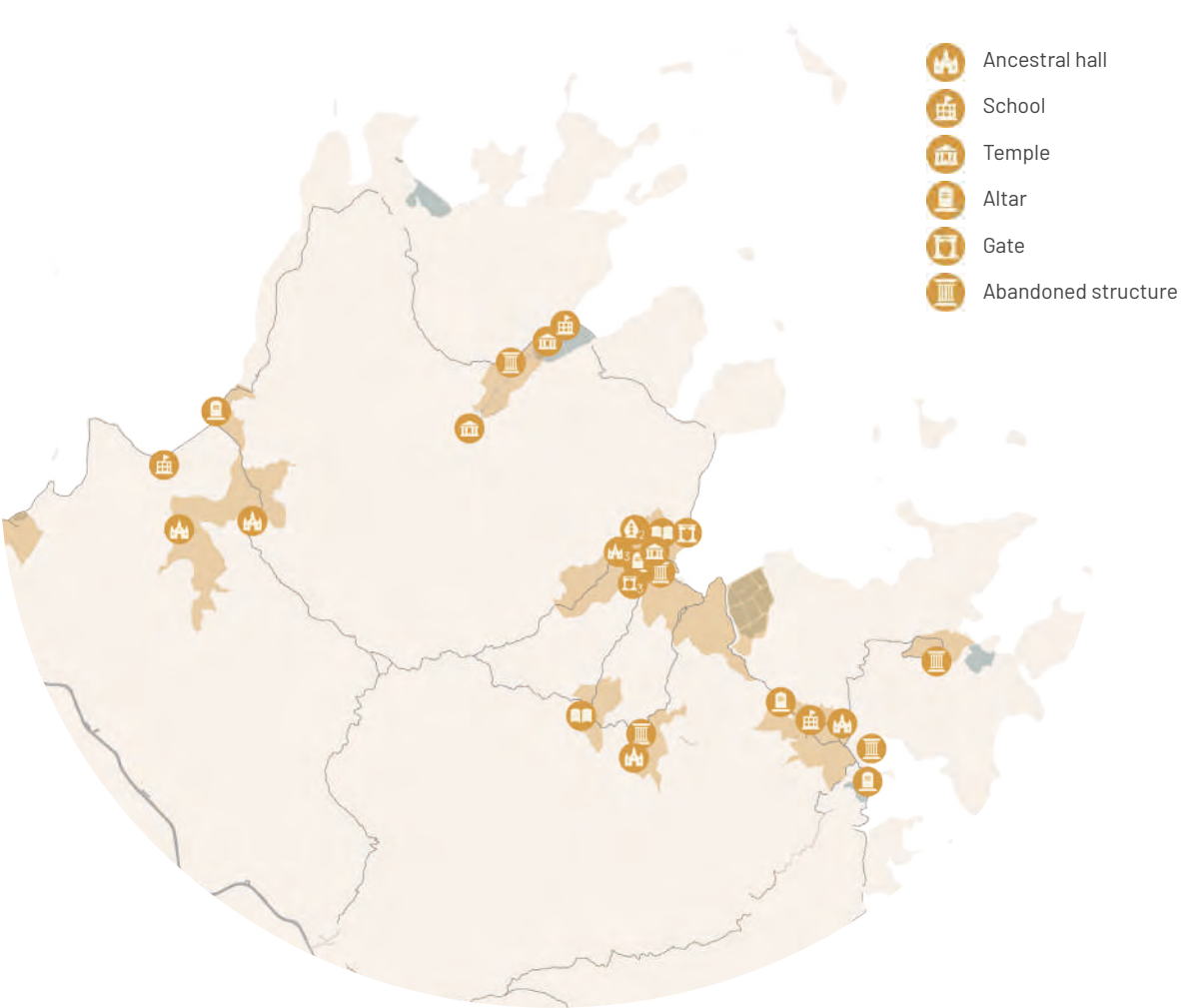
Poor transport connection remains a challenge within the area and between the region and the rest of Hong Kong. Road transport is inconvenient and footpaths to access village areas are moderately long. Besides hiking, people can access the region through water transport in which regular yet limited public ferry services are provided. Lai Chi Wo is the only pier with ferry access at the moment thus limiting the remaining villages to be reached via hiking trails.



Lai Chi Wo Pier



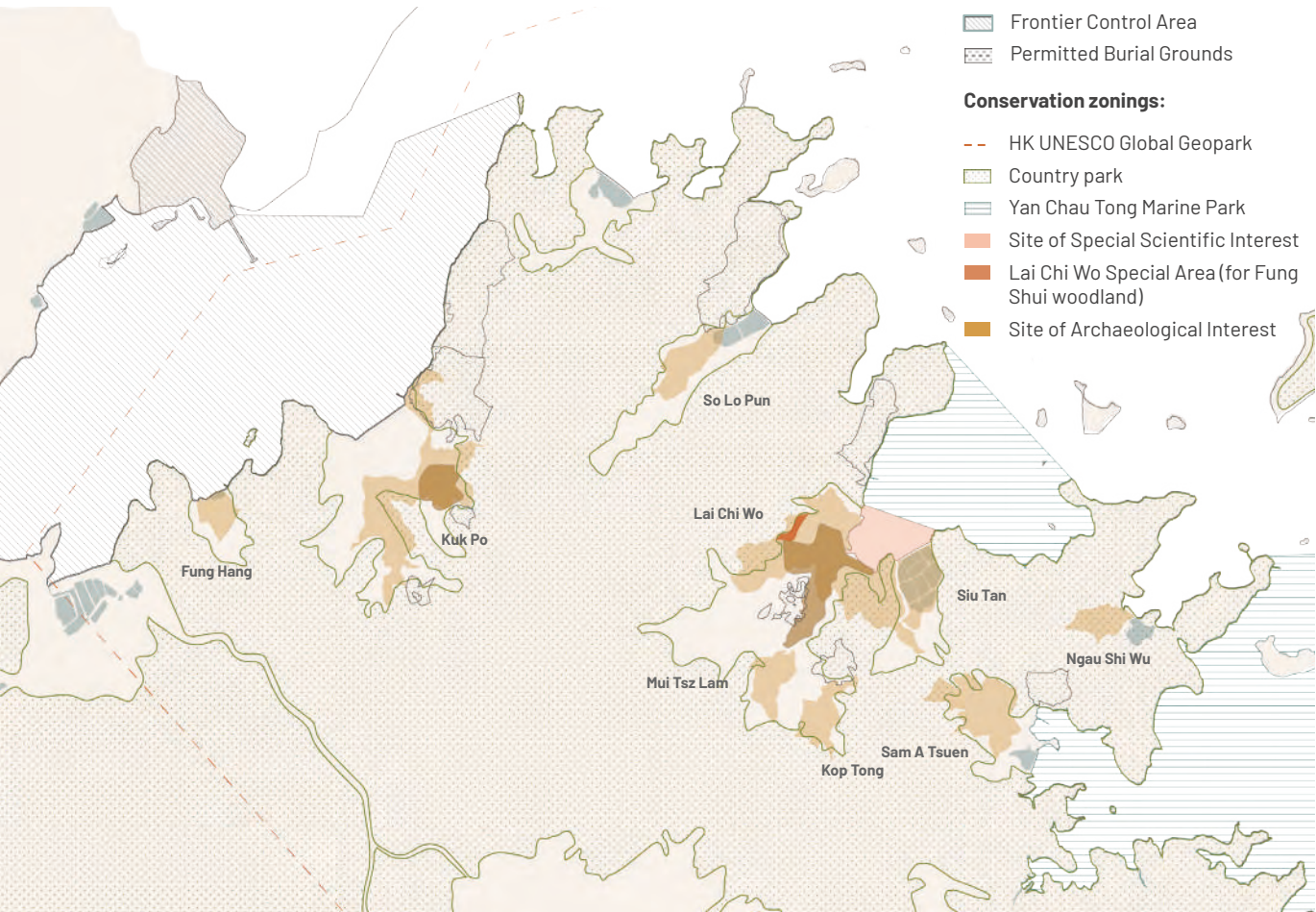
Map of transportation network



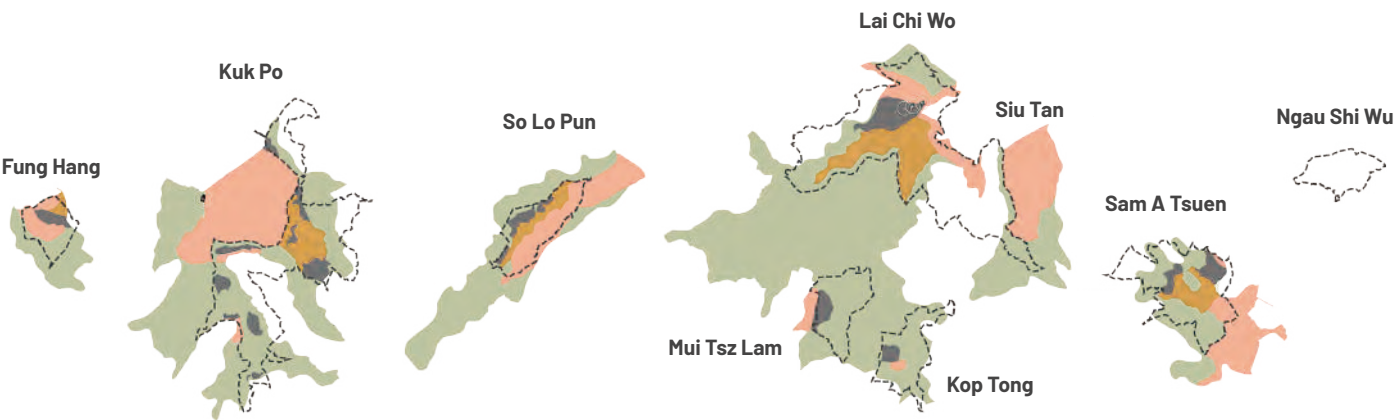
Map of cultural facilities & structures

Rural heritage values

The region's long history of inhabitation has endowed it with abundant built heritages. These include Hakka architectural elements such as walled villages, traditional houses, ancestral halls, and local schools. The area's cultivated landscapes and agricultural heritage meanwhile exemplify the Fung Shui beliefs of Hong Kong's Hakka communities yet remain undervalued and mostly unmaintained. Besides these tangible heritage components, the area benefits from a rich array of intangible cultural elements including traditional festivals and ceremonies, local crafts, as well as various other oral and social practices. These traditions remain especially vulnerable as the ageing individuals who practice and safeguard them are slowly dwindling.



Map of land uses



Outline zoning plan of each village

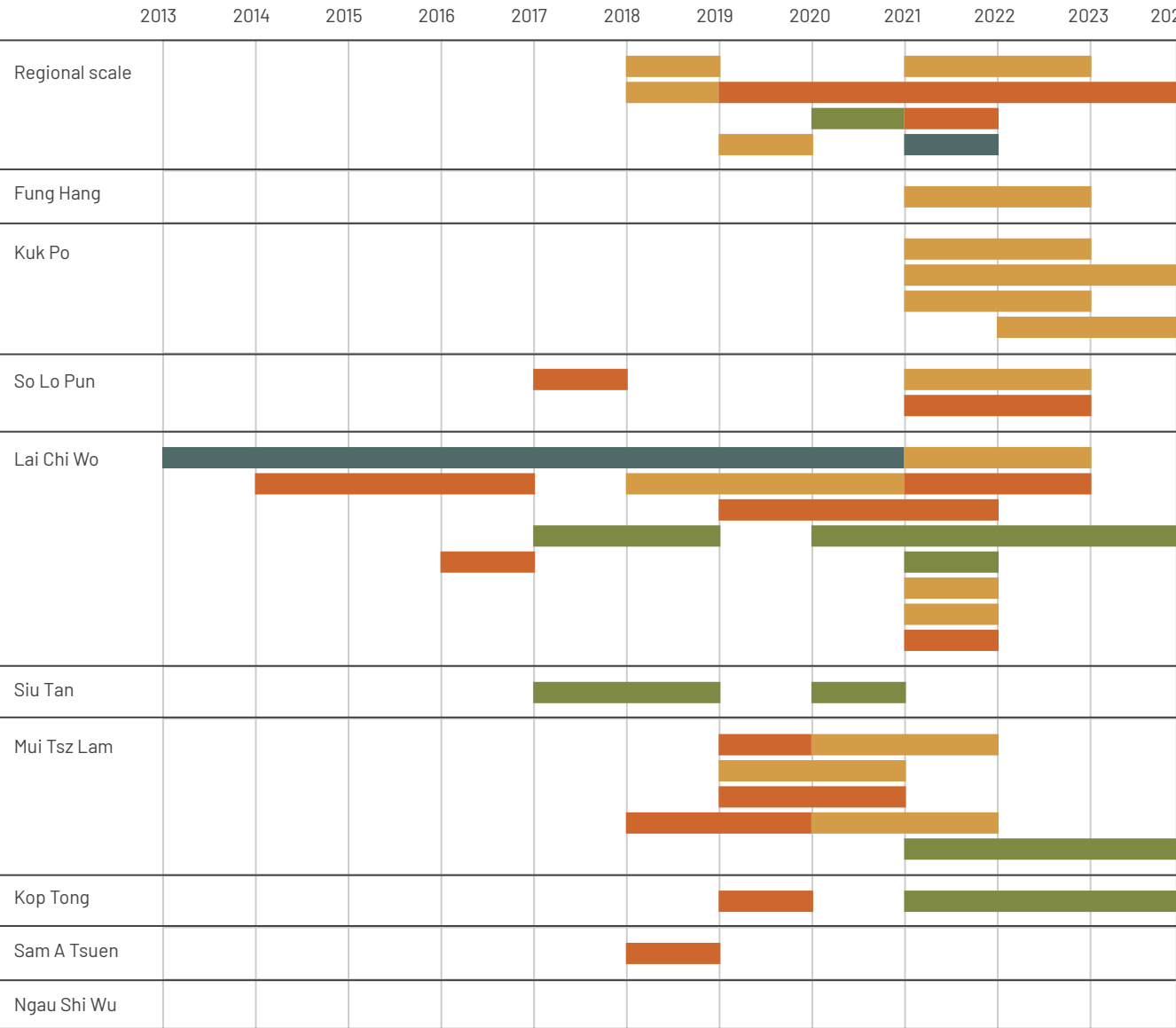
Conservation-oriented planning and the challenge of land rights

In terms of land uses, the geology of the region presents both development constraints and scenic opportunities. The nine villages have conservation-oriented zonings with some facing limited political recognition from government departments who consider them officially abandoned. Most private lands are within enclaves while some lots and Permitted Burial Grounds overlap with country park areas. The fragmentation and ambiguity of land ownerships of the lots are also challenges affecting the kind and scope of future development.

Community revitalisation in the nine Hakka villages

Seven of the villages (not including Fung Hang and Kuk Po) are under the Hing Chun Yeuk. However, their association has weakened since out-migration began in the 1970s and villages became partly or completely abandoned as a result. Currently, Lai Chi Wo and Sam A Tsuen retain the largest residential population, with each home to roughly 20 full-time residents.

The last decade has witnessed a ramp up of revitalisation efforts with the emergence of a multipronged project in Lai Chi Wo and the inception of the government's Countryside Conservation Office (CCO) in 2018. The area has also become increasingly popular with tourists and hikers for its rural scenery and villages. Locals take part in the area's tourism-related activities as well as in renewed small-scale agricultural production. That said, freshwater supply and sewage infrastructure remain critical issues for local village development.



Completed, ongoing & future projects from external parties since 2010s

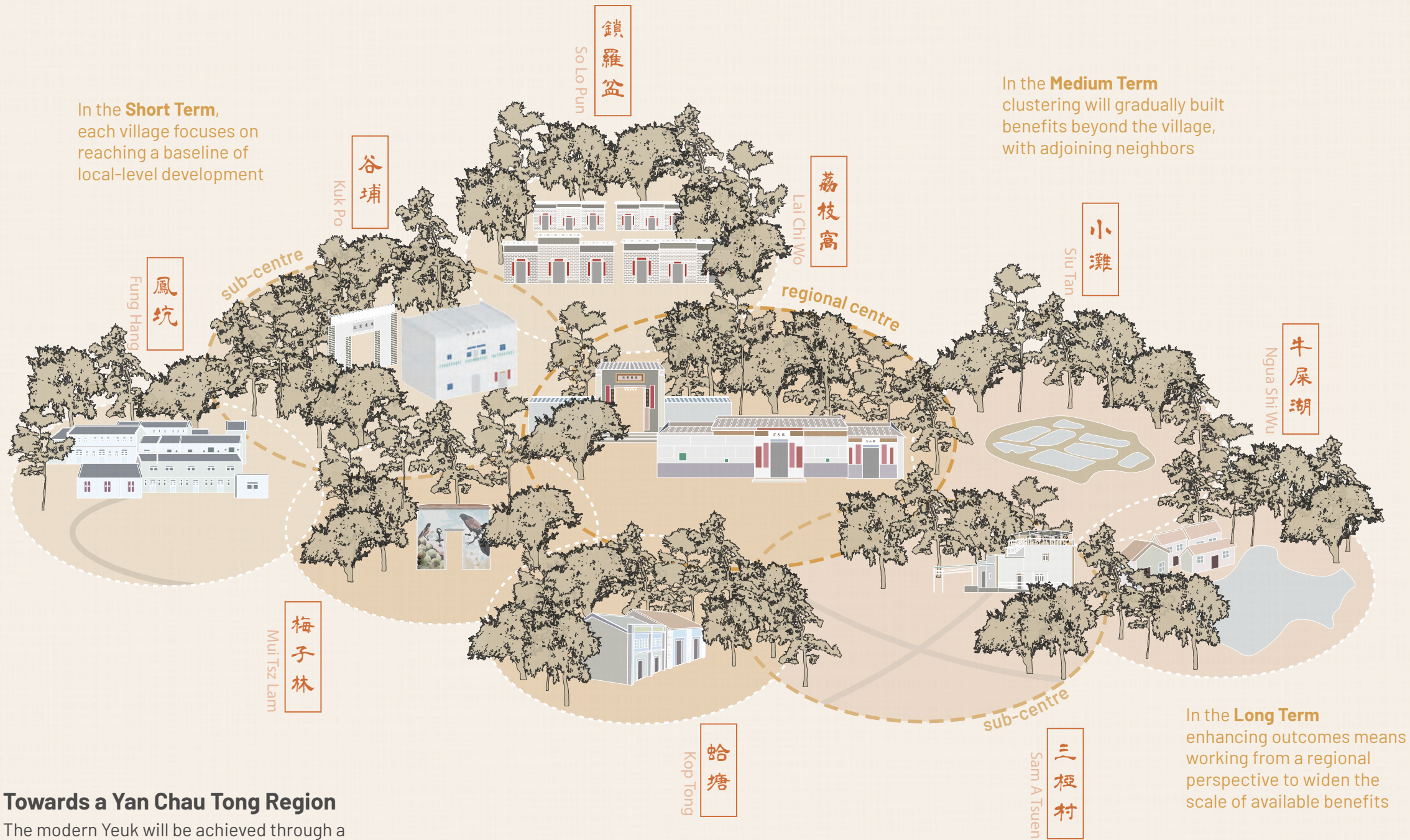
- Environmental projects
- Cultural projects
- Mixed / overall projects
- Public services & facilities

Part 2

Concept Plan

Vision

Building a Modern Yeuk.



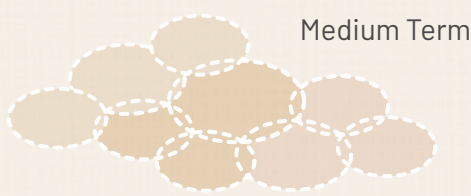
Towards a Yan Chau Tong Region

The modern Yeuk will be achieved through a gradual three-part movement.



Distinct Village Development

will enable each of the communities to pursue contextual, locally decided and non-overlapping visions. Each will then work to restore their village environments to a base-level of essential development.



Mid Range Clustering

will facilitate scaled up actions and projects which require a larger area and capacity for implementation.



Regional Scaling

will extend this process towards a higher plane of revitalisation, thus enabling new kinds of projects which employ the region as the main operational unit.

Concept

We envision a modern alliance between the villages made possible through the rehabilitation of the Yeuk institution and built upon the strong foundation of distinct village identities.

Traditionally many of the Yan Chau Tong villages came together through membership pacts to generate regional benefits and enhance their capacity for action. In the early 19th century, the Hing Chun Yeuk was created for seven of the villages to manage collective resources and protect themselves from external threats.

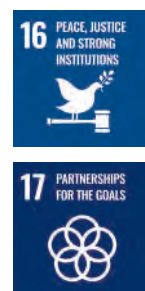
The modern Yeuk will aim to restore the benefits of the traditional alliance while leveraging the individual identities of each village. It will come into being gradually through a series of agreements between villages to scale up actions towards achieving enhanced benefits.

Principles



1 Prioritise Sustainability

Promoting sustainability in all aspects of revitalisation will guarantee community resilience and long-term regional viability. This means working towards a supple local economy, an active long-term community, and balanced natural resource management.



2 Interactive Learning Exchanges

Revitalisation work presents the opportunity for two-way exchanges between villagers, visitors and other stakeholders. These interactions foster the creation of new knowledges which will enhance local villager pride and offer Hong Kongers an understanding of tradition-conscious approaches to development.



3 Valorise Local Engagement

Local villagers and their knowledge are a major asset to revitalisation efforts and projects. By including them in project delivery and collaborating with them more broadly, village revitalisation will benefit from greater project success, management support and long-term community buy-in.



4 Leverage Cultural-Ecological Heritages

Ecological and cultural heritages benefits from preservation through promotion. The abundance of natural, built and cultural heritages in the region can be showcased and integrated in efforts as a way of enhancing their appreciation and incentivizing their protection.



5 Rehabilitate Village Landscapes

Villages in Yan Chau Tong showcase a 300-year interaction between humans and the natural environment. The village atmospheres and other outcomes of this interaction are central to the area's attractiveness. Rehabilitating these landscapes both to preserve what is there and draw out this unique inheritance is an important component of revitalisation.



6 Deepen Rural Character

An opportunity exists to explore non-urban development where the rural is understood not as pre-urban but as an alternative condition. By ensuring that ongoing efforts and future development pursue rural-specific potentials, the region will achieve a unique development path.





O1 The Yan Chau Tong region will model exemplary rural revitalisation

O2 The Yan Chau Tong villages will showcase an evolving human-nature approach to development

O3 The Yan Chau Tong region will provide self-sustaining livelihoods

O4 The Yan Chau Tong region will be home to long-term healthy communities

O5 The Yan Chau Tong villages will benefit from ecotourism outcomes

Objectives



01

The Yan Chau Tong region will model exemplary rural revitalisation

Explanation

Uniquely in Hong Kong, the region's countryside character and remote villages offer the opportunity to put in place an exemplary model of local rural revitalisation. Rural revitalisation in Yan Chau Tong will showcase the Hong Kong-style approach to rural revitalisation, rooted in a community-led approach. To achieve this, a regional model will be developed which aligns with domestic and national goals, promotes investment and achieves integrated long-term outcomes.

“

This area has fallen behind other parts of Hong Kong. Management is the key reason... Villagers think that after all the research projects and the huge amount of money spent, nothing was actually done, So they don't have much trust on these.

— Tsang Yuk On, village representative of Mui Tsz Lam

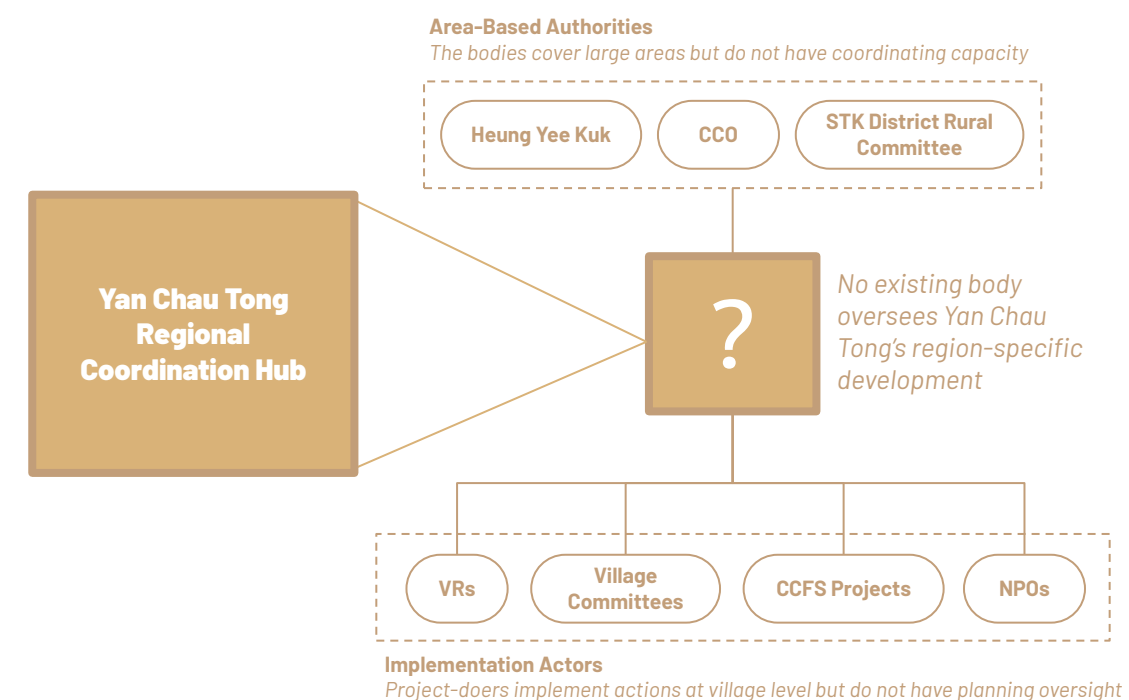
We need a governance structure, without this nothing can be done... So far we've been missing effective communication between government departments, projects and organisations. They should be asking themselves... Who could really help and improve the village and not waste money?

— Suzanne Au, Lai Chi Wo new villager and business owner

Going forward, It is all about making sure that the rural parts of Hong Kong get what they deserve...When we talk about planning, we don't have rural planning institutions... the planning mechanism is still not there yet.

— Andrew Lam, LegCo Member and senior planner

Governance Missing Gap



Justification

The rural revitalisation approach in Yan Chau Tong does not currently have the capacity or institutional design to oversee full scale regional revitalisation. Its institutional matrix is characterized by ad hoc polycentricity, wherein coordinating power is left undefined. Village representative are forced to work autonomously in attracting investment for village-level initiatives. Project stakeholders, meanwhile, often undertake research-heavy and/or short-term financed initiatives to meet the needs prescribed under their specific institutional constraints.

Furthermore, local governance has been hampered by a lack of long-term integrated development planning. Currently no authoritative body has been given the resources to deploy a territorial perspective to planning for the rural villages of Yan Chau Tong. In practice this means that actions are restricted to non-integrated delivery, capable of addressing only correspondingly small-scale challenges. To overcome this, a regionally scaled governance apparatus is needed.

Finally, higher level public bodies which retain financial and implementation power in the rural regions tend to operate under urban concepts and categories given their institutional experiences. In practicing rural development they generally extrapolate their urban framework, applying it to village contexts. This has the effect of diminishing rural character and slowing down overall development as villages are forced to mould themselves to urban standards rather than the other way around.

Aim

Yan Chau Tong will be recognized as the exemplary model for Hong Kong-style rural revitalisation

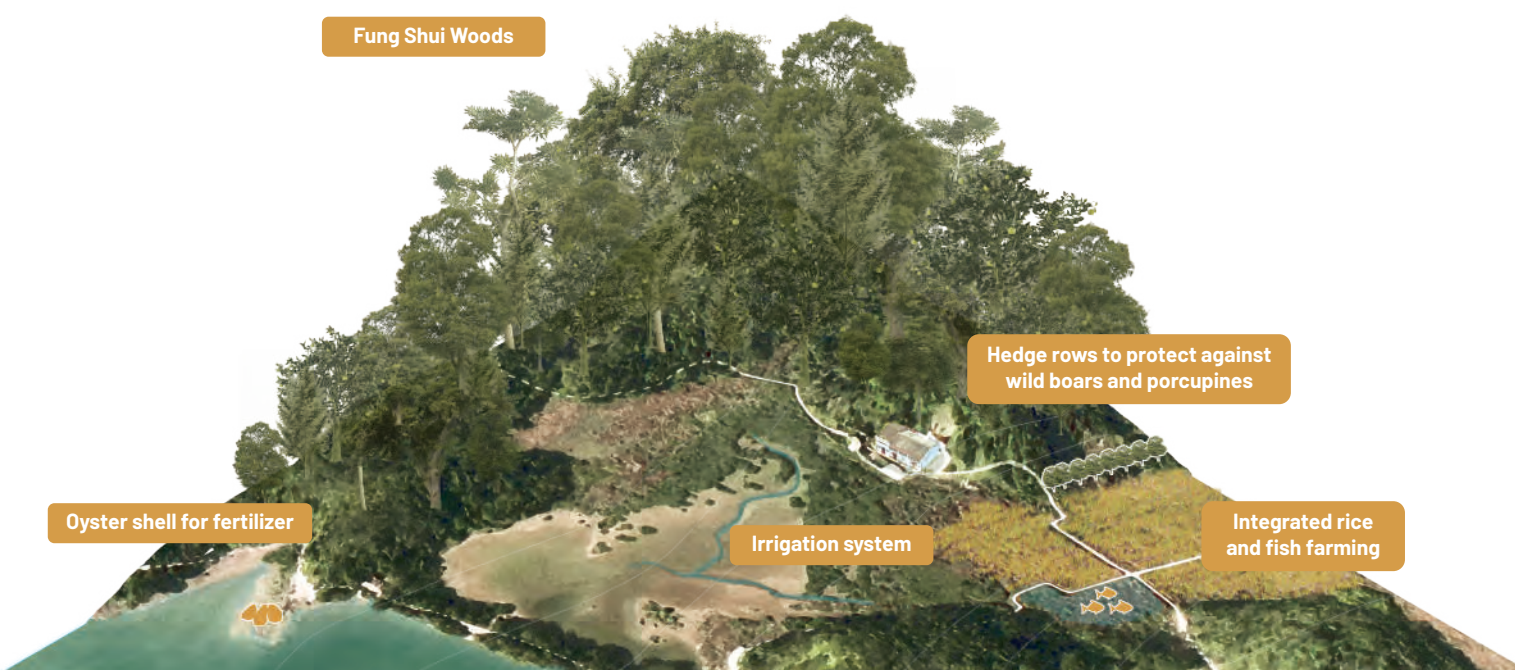
02

The Yan Chau Tong villages will showcase an evolving human-nature approach to development

Explanation

Yan Chau Tong's enclave ecology and the vernacular knowledge passed down through generations of villagers offers a living case study of sustainable living. The villages, both in their design and traditions, emphasise the interconnectedness of human and ecological heritages. These landscapes continue to have important aesthetic and instructional value for the public, showcasing evolving but deeply traditional sustainable practices. With added rehabilitation and management, Yan Chau Tong will offer a meaningful example of stewarded eco-cultural landscapes which balance between human and ecological integrity.

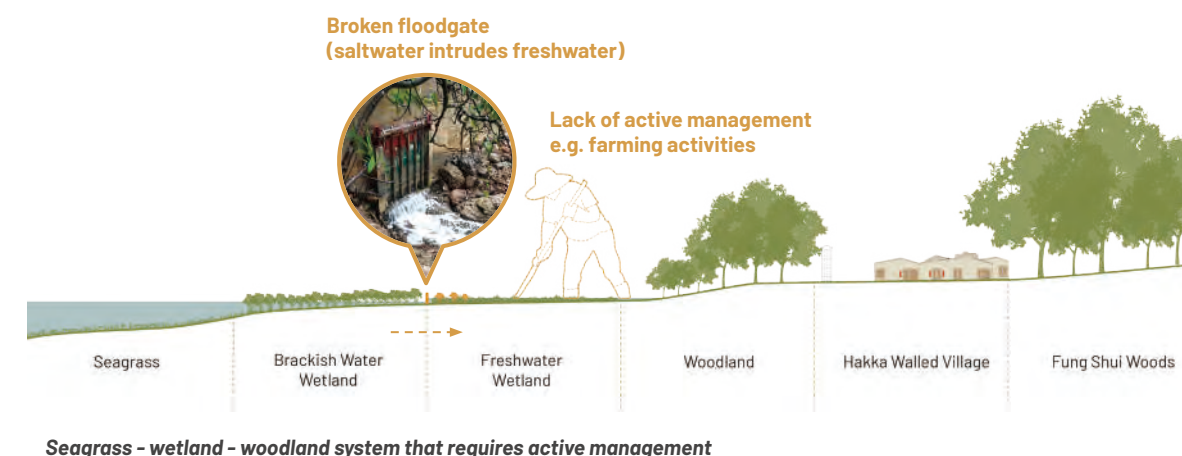
Example of human-nature agricultural approach



Justification

Yan Chau Tong villages showcase a deep interaction with surrounding ecosystems and ecological heritage. The traditional Hakka way of living in the area follows principles of Fung Shui beliefs, showing respect and reliance on natural elements in all aspects of life.

The area's farming in particular displays the deeply articulated interaction between Hakka culture and local ecosystems. Many of the villages are named after the terrain and ecology of the area, and the historical stewardship over the land has given rise to a mosaic of actively managed habitats in the area including Fung Shui woodlands, freshwater wetlands, fish ponds and orchards.



From an environmental perspective, the Yan Chau Tong coast is marked as a marine biodiversity hotspot by the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF, 2012). The area is also home to the largest remaining cluster of freshwater wetlands in Hong Kong and yet preservation efforts continue to fall short. The lack of active management has led to the drying up of these human-aided habitats, resulting in a 40% reduction of wetland area (So, 2021). An opportunity exists to both showcase and rehabilitate these landscapes as a promotion of sustainable living and Hong Kong living history.

Aim

Yan Chau Tong will be designated as a world-class agrarian landscape showcasing a unique human-nature approach

03

The Yan Chau Tong region will provide self-sustaining livelihoods

Explanation

To achieve long-term sustainability, the nine villages will require self-sustaining economies capable of enabling local livelihoods. To help achieve this, revitalisation work needs to encourage villager-initiated activities and factor in longer time horizons for both funding and operations. Revitalisation can enable local livelihoods through stimulating local entrepreneurship, making start-up funding available, and involving villagers in development projects and tourism activities.

Justification

The baseline study has revealed that most of the existing revitalisation activities in the area are externally financed, outsider-led and structured around short project horizons. For those external stakeholders capable of offering financing, many are unwilling or unable to support projects long-term (more than 5 years). Furthermore, existing commercial activities do not generate sufficient capital for wider revitalisation so villages rely on charities and government for these start-up costs (fig 1.1 and 1.2).



Fig 1.1 How much money did you spend on your last visit to the area? (HKD)

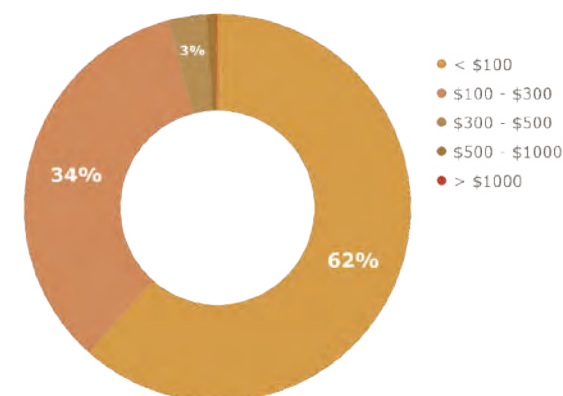
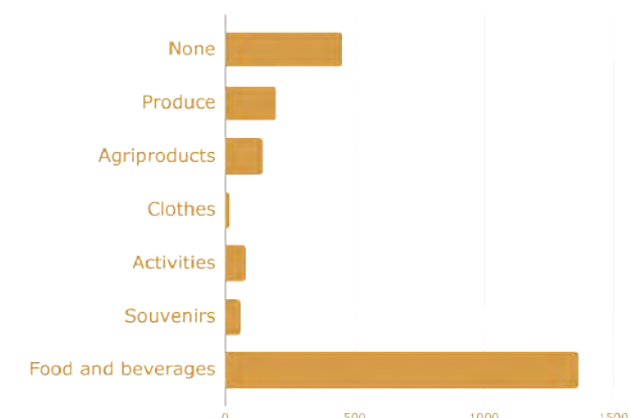


Fig 1.2 What purchases did you make in the area?



Aim

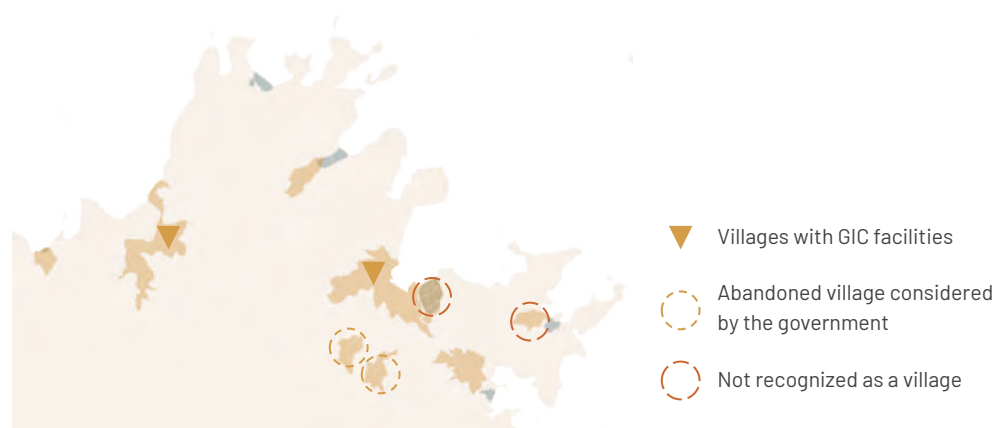
Yan Chau Tong will be defined by a village alliance economy with strong reciprocal relations and indigenous entrepreneurs

04

The Yan Chau Tong region will be home to long-term healthy communities

Explanation

As revitalisation work is scaled up there is an emerging potential to rebuild residential communities and restore lively village atmospheres. One of the main targets of revitalisation will be to restore and improve the conditions of everyday village life. Changes to the built and social infrastructure will help to improve social capital, stimulate rural hospitality, strengthen intravillage community bonds and improve residents' wellbeing. As a unique non-urban area of Hong Kong, the nine villages offer an opportunity to practise and develop a distinct set of rural approaches to community life.



	Overall area for each land use	Ratio
Village Type Development zone	11.38 ha	4.95%
Government, Institution or Community*	0.17 ha	0.07%
Agriculture	14.71 ha	6.39%
Green Belt	153.93 ha	66.89%
Conservation Area	49.92 ha	21.69%
	Total: 230.11 ha	Total: 100%

*Only allocated in 2 out of 9 villages (Kuk Po and Lai Chi Wo)

Justification

Villagers often mentioned that they cherished the elements of Hakka village life that they could not get elsewhere. These unique elements, if positioned properly, could add value and interest while fostering a conducive everyday atmosphere. Ongoing projects like mural art and farming culture, if expanded, could improve the local scenery while the shared common history and culture could be used for new community building programmes to enable long-term social cohesion.

Land use planning remains a major challenge for the area's villages. Because of limited recognition for the settlement of the villages (resident populations having fluctuated over time) planning authorities have laid out smaller areas of zoning for village activities and less consideration has been given to orderly development and sufficient facility provision. Under the OZP system only two villages have been zoned for GIC facilities (Government, Institution or Community, such as community halls and elderly centres), meaning most villages have no designated areas to construct and develop social and communal spaces for public village life.



Aim

Yan Chau Tong will be home to multi-generational living communities practicing traditional and modern village lifestyles



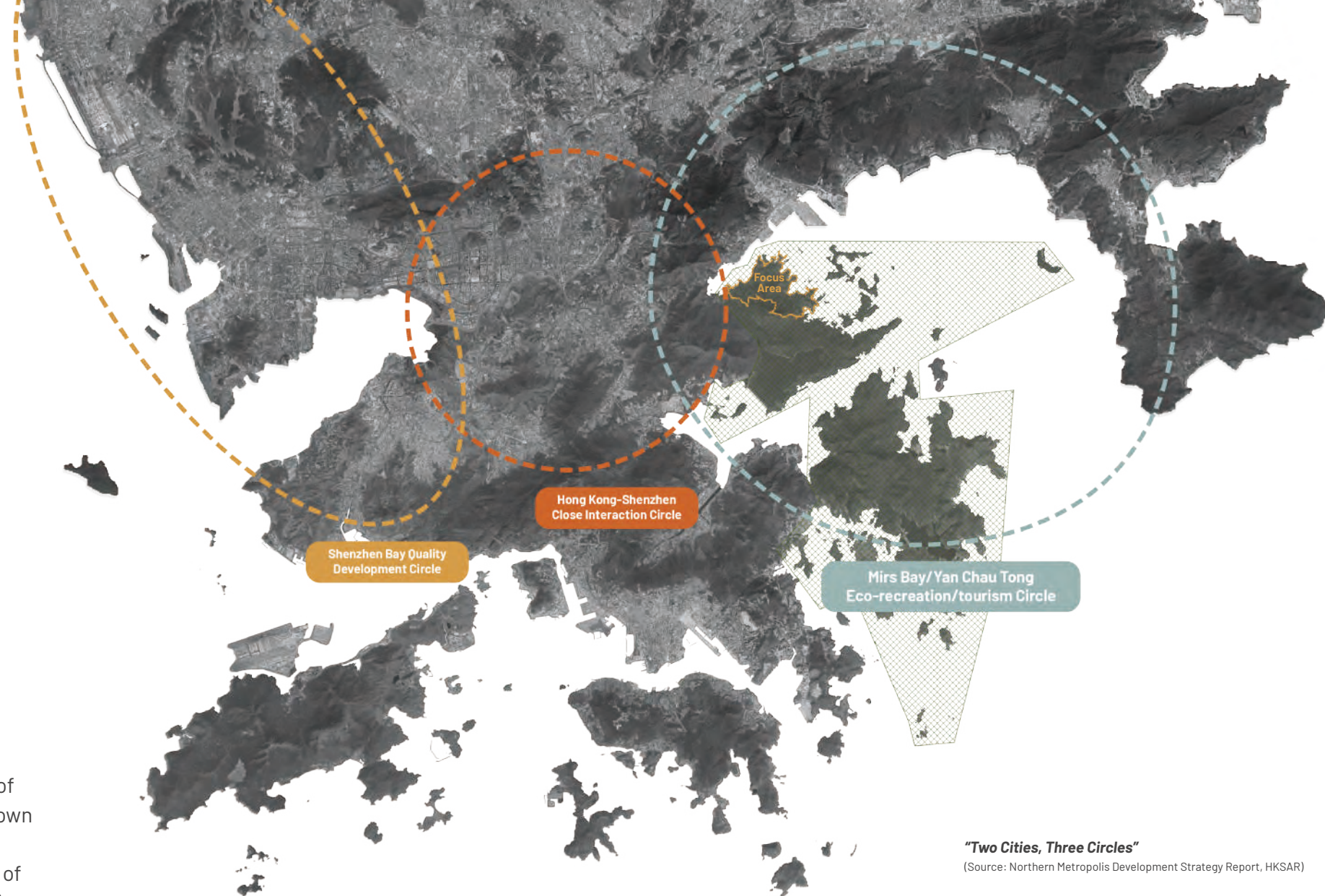
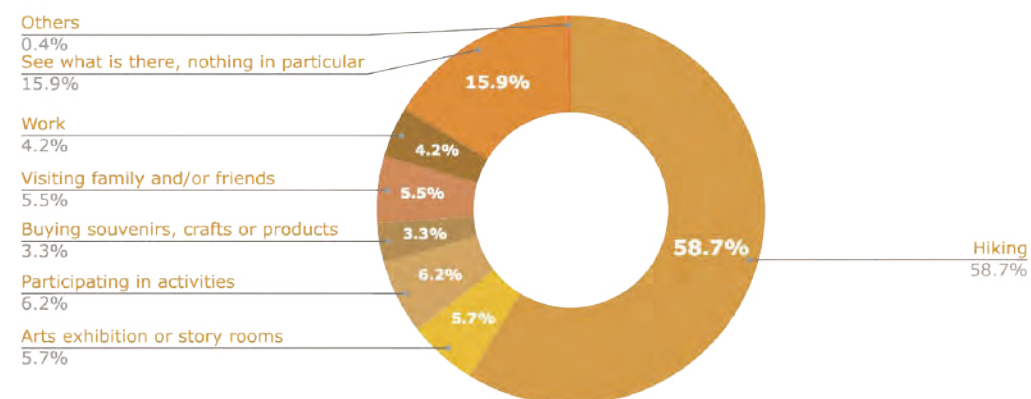
O5

The Yan Chau Tong villages will benefit from ecotourism outcomes

Explanation

The focus area is currently characterised by a growing but unevenly distributed flow of tourism. Major activities include hiking and sightseeing (fig 2.1) but villages better known by the Hong Kong public benefit disproportionately from mass tourism and in some cases experience overcrowding. The objective is to increase the benefits and quality of tourism without overwhelming the area’s carrying capacity. To this end, aligning tourism with village and regional objectives and close management of operations will be essential.

Fig 2.1 What did you do in the area?



“Two Cities, Three Circles”
(Source: Northern Metropolis Development Strategy Report, HKSAR)

Justification

Presently, local businesses rely on weekend mass tourism with stores selling Hakka food and supplies to hikers. Smaller businesses meanwhile target niche markets by selling local farm produce and value-added products. There is an opportunity to use existing weekend visitor demand to enable a local supply economy which will expand livelihood opportunities. With the North Metropolis plan expected to increase tourism to the area, there will be added pressure on existing facilities and services. Regional planning and a considered management approach can help avoid creating undesirable social and environmental costs, while generating greater opportunities for economic benefits and eco-cultural preservation.

Aim

Yan Chau Tong will be host to high-quality rural tourism defined by distinct and vibrant village cultures

Objectives and Strategies

	01	02	03	04	05
	Exemplary Rural Revitalisation	Human-Nature Approach	Self-Sustaining Livelihoods	Long-Term Healthy Communities	Ecotourism Outcomes
Enable Platforms S1	▲				
Rural Heritage S2		▲			
Active Ecosystem Management S3		▲			
Sustainable Agriculture S4		▲	▲		
Local Entrepreneurship S5			▲		
Village High-tech S6			▲	▲	
Resumption of Village Residence S7				▲	
Local Accessibility S8				▲	▲
Ecotourism Network S9					▲

▲ Key Strategy to Achieve Objective

Strategies

S1 Enable platforms for collaboration & local action

Description

Current revitalisation work suffers from efficiency losses and legibility problems due to a lack of channels for stakeholder communication and project partnership.

Villagers have complained about a lack of clear information on ongoing projects even as they remain curious to learn and participate in revitalisation.

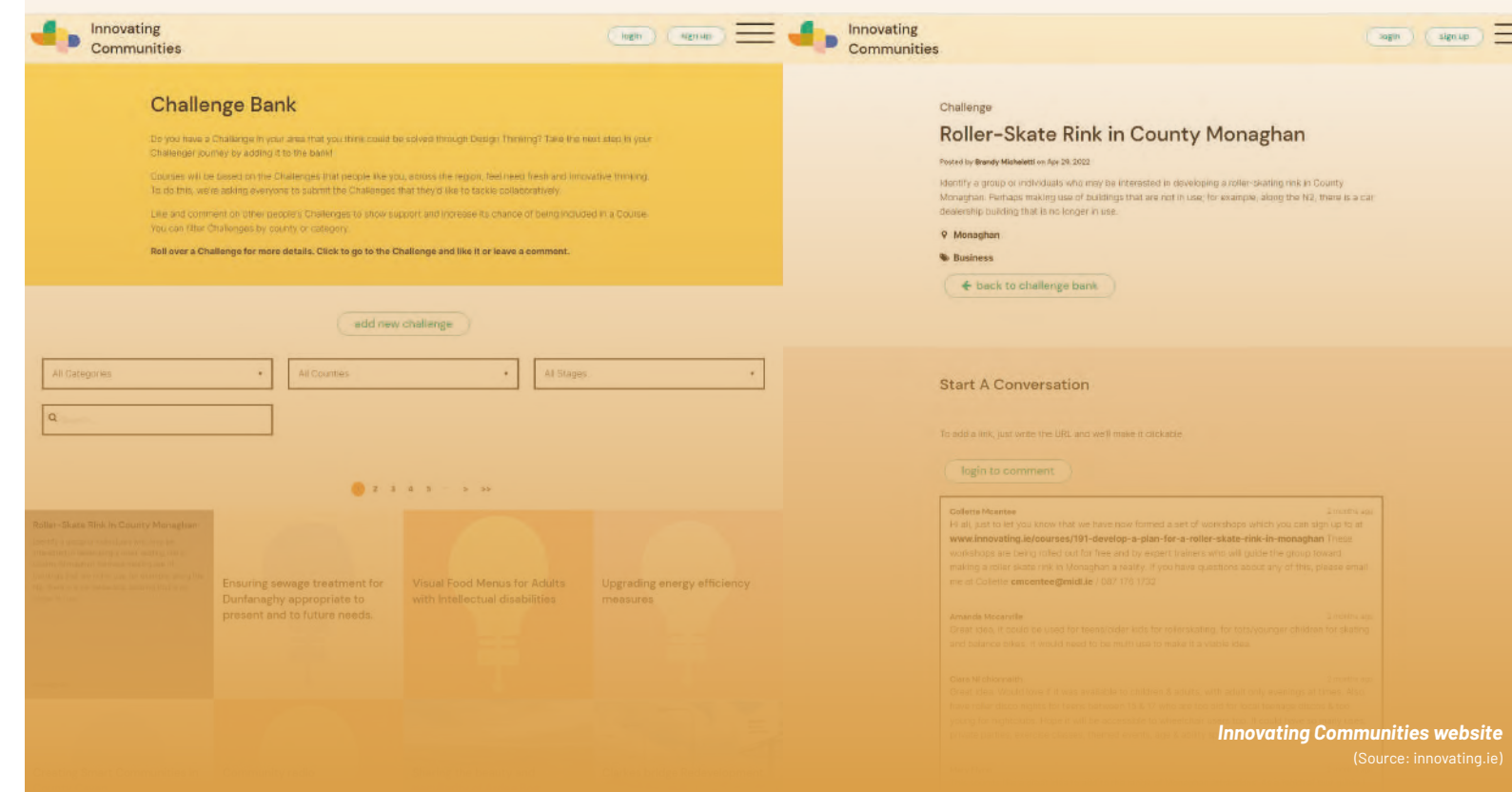
Digital interfaces can provide accurate up-to-date information on village and regional developments, provide access to new resources, and facilitate collaboration between villagers and external stakeholders on new or ongoing projects. Meanwhile, physical platforms can be designed as in-person meetings, events or long-term forums where information sharing, consensus building, and project implementation can take place.

Alignment with Objectives

- 01** Structured communication and co-implementation enable capable governance
- 03** Improved resource access helps achieve the pursuit of sustainable local village economies
- 04** Collaboration and partnership bridging support the pursuit of community building



Mui Tsz Lam



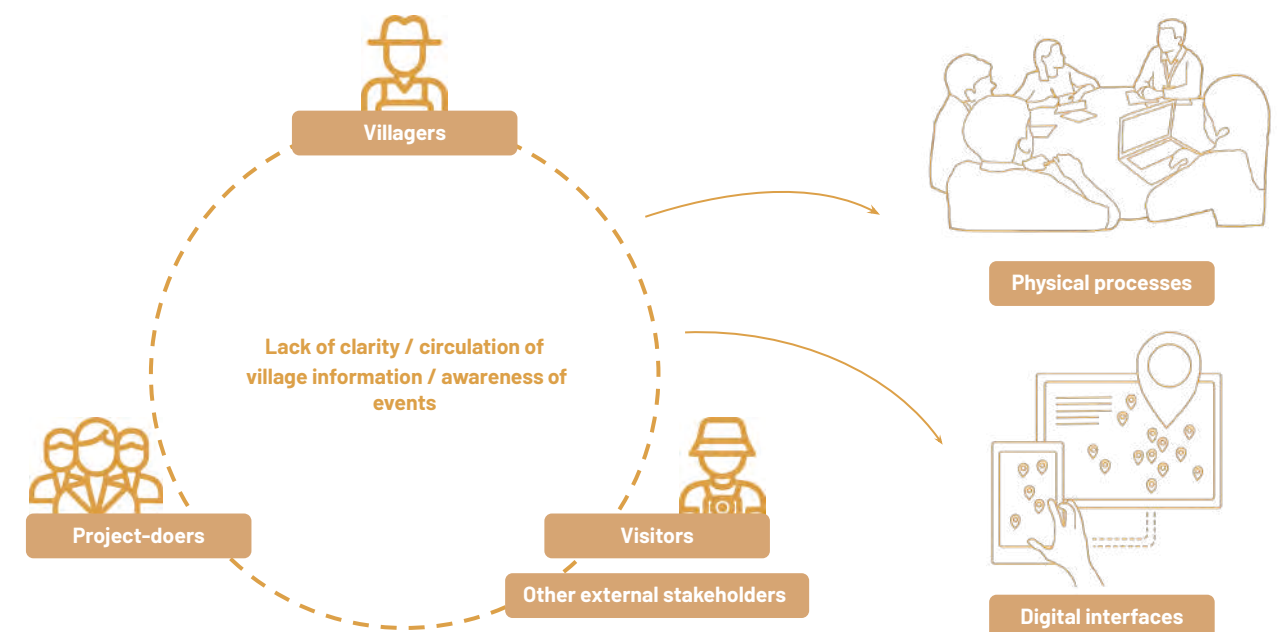
Innovating Communities website
(Source: innovating.ie)

Visitor-focused platforms, Dillsboro, USA

- The university assisted the town in launching an app to make it easy for tourists to get in touch with businesses and see what they had to offer
- They also launched a website which listed local events as well as those in surrounding counties, and linked visitors to other towns as a way of encouraging extended stays in the region

Villager-focused platforms, Ireland

- The national government created a portal to provide a funding roadmap on the range of programmes and schemes available to rural citizens
- They also hosted a regular series of Rural Ideas Forums to enable local government to respond to emerging needs in rural areas



S2 Dynamise rural heritage values

Description

The region is home to an exemplary landscape of Hakka villages with significant tangible and intangible elements. The heritage value of these villages lie in their significance as characteristic benchmarks for Hakka rural life in Hong Kong.

The strategy will aim to preserve and enhance local heritage as means of activating it. By promoting its reuse to enhance village landscapes, heritage can be valorized as part of a broader revitalisation approach.

Rural heritage here refers both to those standard elements (e.g. buildings) already recognized by policy but so far ungraded as well as rural-specific categories (e.g. agriculture infrastructure) whose cultural value has yet to be recognized by the heritage office.

Alignment with Objectives

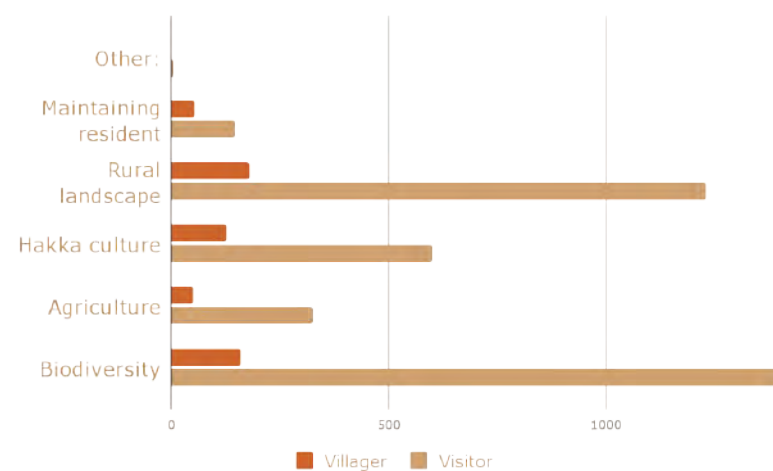
02 Rehabilitating the area's 300-year history of eco-cultural heritage will showcase the human-nature approach

04 Valorizing traditional practices and fostering intergenerational cultural exchange will support long-term healthy communities

05 Showcasing rural values and deepening the heritage qualities of landscapes will enhance ecotourism outcomes



What is most essential to preserve in the area?



S3 Reintroduce active ecosystem management

Description

Under current planning, the Yan Chau Tong region is designated as a site for conservation and ecological protection. The area is home to the largest remaining freshwater wetlands in Hong Kong and to a rich diversity of threatened flora and fauna.

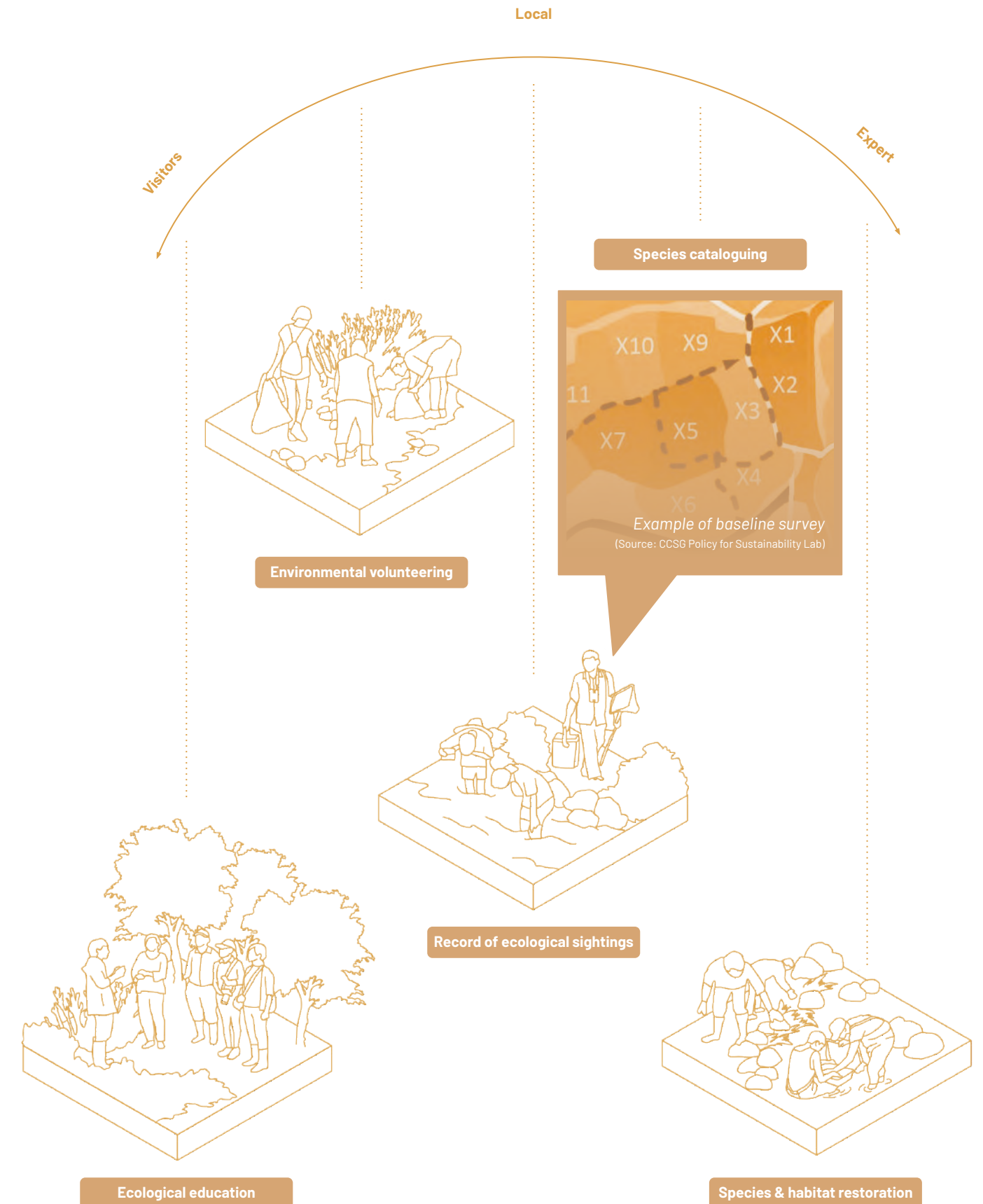
Experts have noted how the distinctiveness of regional landscape were the product of long-term active management by villagers which have increasingly faltered due to outmigration. The resulting drying up and intrusion of seawater into wetlands, proliferation of mangroves, and decline in agriculture-related biodiversity has affected the health of the ecosystem and the viability of agriculture.

The strategy to redress this will involve comprehensive cataloguing of existing ecosystem services, designing immersive ecological experiences and resuming active management of vulnerable human-nature landscapes.

Alignment with Objectives

- 02** Active landscape management will sustain the Hakka human-nature approach
- 03** Hiring villagers for habitat rehabilitation will provide new sustainable livelihoods
- 04** Restoring well-functioning ecosystem services will support long-term healthy communities

Examples of endangered flora and fauna species in the area



S4 Develop sustainable agricultural opportunities

Description

Agriculture forms the cultural and economic backbone of the region and defines the Hakka communities which inhabit it. Over time, adjustments of Hong Kong's agricultural and trade policies have made it difficult for local farmers to earn a living through market production.

A sustainable agriculture strategy can take advantage of the lack of urban expansion and real estate pressure on regional farmlands to enable farmers to plan long term. This will enable the research and experimentation necessary to find a feasible small-scale approaches for producing high quality local fresh produce.

Emerging potentials also exist to expand the economic opportunities available to local farmers. For example, experiential agriculture products can help make farms economically viable by integrating them into tourism strategies. Similarly, the development of farmland can be justified by both its productive and aesthetic value as a rural landscape.

Alignment with Objectives

02 Developing the Hakka form of agriculture showcases a human-nature development approach

03 Modern small-scale agriculture supports self-sustaining livelihoods

05 Experiential agricultural activities will enhance ecotourism outcomes

Excerpt taken from our project's "Case Studies Booklet" publication

Japan Case Study - "One Village One Product" Model

- Cooperatives provide technical support for marketing, farm supporting services, and member credit services for access to capital. This helps to stabilise product prices by creating economies of scale and tools for small operators
- Through the programme, rural areas are able to find and develop leading products and leading industries with local characteristics
- The community optimizes the market opportunity by offering an integrated product development approach involving harvesting, packaging and branding services



S5 Facilitate local entrepreneurship

Description

Current development in the area has been mostly implemented and operated by external stakeholders. As a result, villager involvement has been limited in the ramp-up of revitalisation with some expressing scepticism as to the practical benefits of these projects.

The lack of villager-led initiative or collaborative project involvement has limited the operation and continuity of revitalisation work. Given the funding available and short project timelines available, villagers will need to be involved to guarantee long-term outcomes and local resilience.

Entrepreneurship refers to a wide diversity of activities geared towards provisioning the services or products demanded by local residents and visitors and for which a market exists. Entrepreneurial activities can be related to tourism, agriculture, digital economy, ecosystem, or services to meet other aspects of local livelihood demand. Entrepreneurship works as a bottom up approach for stimulating revitalisation action.

Alignment with Objectives

03 Local private sector activity supports self-sustaining livelihoods

04 New activities and service offerings enable vibrant community life

05 Increased service provision and villager inclusion enhance the benefits of tourism

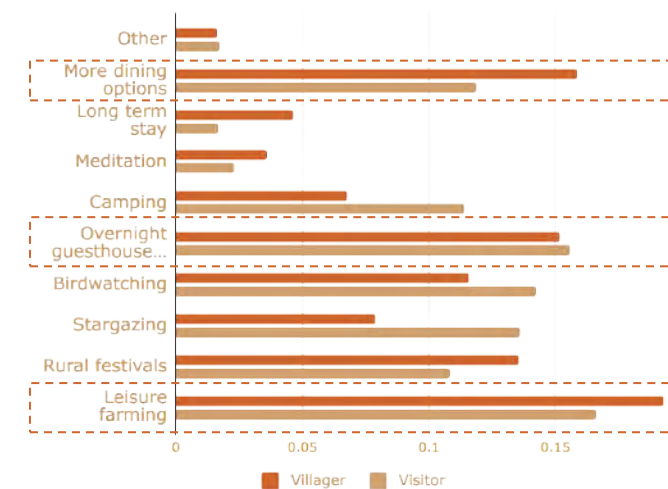
Excerpt taken from our project's "Case Studies Booklet" publication

Yi O Case Study - Rural Entrepreneurship Strategy

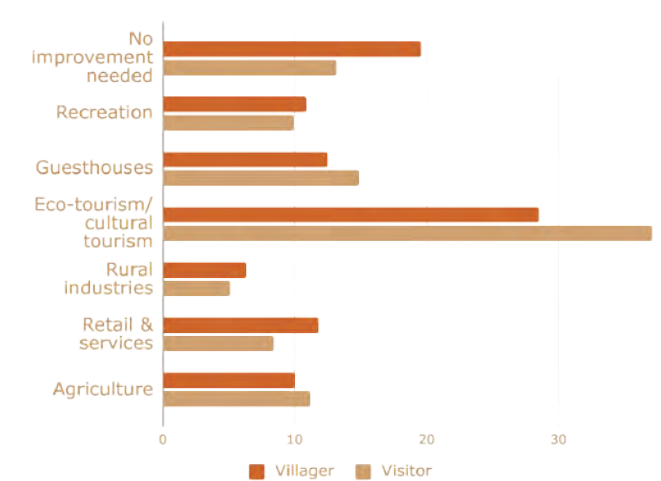
- Development takes place through an agricultural cooperative in which villagers remain the prime decision makers in business decisions and service provision
- Profits from selling products grown on the land go to the company and are split with the villagers
- Profit from other activities is for working capital used to generate new economic activities (guided tours, etc)



What activities would motivate you to visit the area more frequently?



What industries would you like to see expanded in the area?



Distribution of local stores in the villages



S6 Foster village high-tech opportunities

Description

A diversity of livelihood opportunities will need to be nurtured to foster a self-sustaining and resilient region.

Enabling digital connectivity is a precondition to fostering new socio-economic opportunities in rural areas. This involves advocating for digital equity, enhancing connectivity and deploying leapfrogging technologies in villages. Such investments will enable rural areas to attract remote workers, facilitate new rural business models and support higher quality social services.

The opening of the Frontier Closed Area, the expansion of broadband coverage in the region and the renovation of buildings for residence are all enabling factors for fostering new opportunities. Meanwhile, smart technology will provide more convenient service provision to support residence and tourism in the area.

Alignment with Objectives

- 02** The adoption of green technology will allow villages to protect their environmental resources
- 03** New business development will enable a self-sustaining local economy
- 04** Digital connectivity and long distance communication will support community building

Excerpt taken from our project's "Case Studies Booklet" publication

Ireland Case Study - Remote Work Strategy

- Government grants enable property owners to restore houses and farm buildings, owners then turn them into rentals for remote workers
- Municipalities issue local subsidy vouchers for remote workers wanting to stay in the village
- Public-private partnerships help promote and facilitate remote working in the village or region
- Regional organizations map out locations with access to high-speed internet and workspaces



34% of workers around the world are now permanently remote.



More than **60%** of Chinese people report wanting to be digital nomads

(Mafengwo, 2022)

Potential digital opportunities in villages

S7 Facilitate the resumption of village residence

Description

Resettlement will need to be prioritised if long-term revitalisation is to be achieved. Without village repopulation a landscape of lively and vibrant villages cannot be attained.

An opportunity exists to support newly retired former residents who have expressed hope and interest in re-establishing themselves in their native villages to do so. Similarly, a growing community of non indigenous stakeholders interested in agriculture or rural lifestyles are eager to settle as new villagers in the region.

This can be done in a flexible way, enabling those who wish to go back part-time (weekends, overnight, summer) and those who wish to test a full-time return to their villages.

Facilitating resettlement will have significant benefits for building local consumer demand and as a labour force which can contribute to service provision, tourism programming, agricultural rehabilitation, and other livelihood opportunities.

Alignment with Objectives

02 A full-time population enables the resumption of active management as part of the human-nature approach

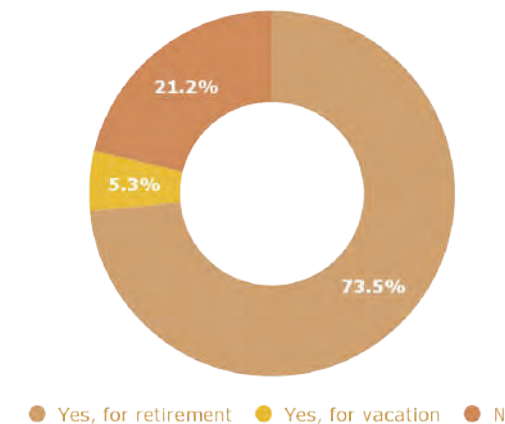
03 Resettlement of the villages ensures local capacity and labour for long-term self-sustaining revitalisation

04 A residential base makes possible the provision of long-term healthy communities

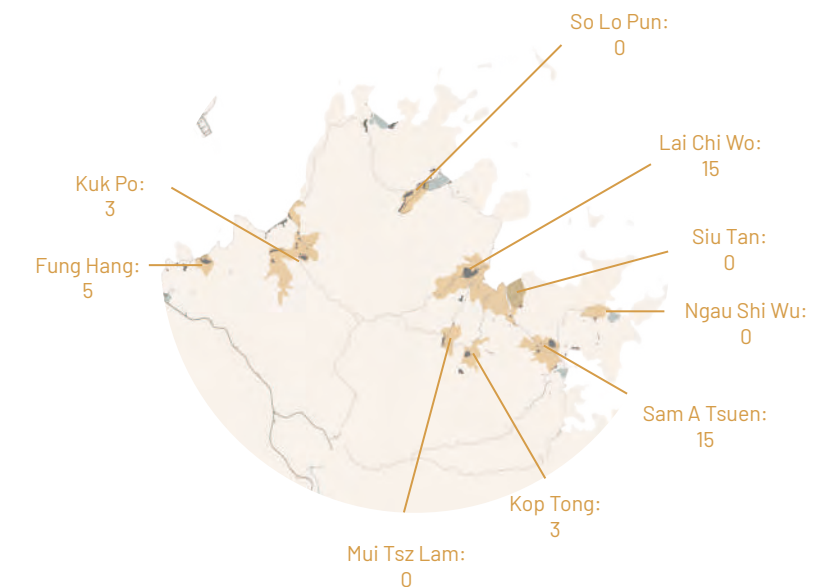
Japan Case Study - Village Recruitment Model

- Villages launch a campaign to recruit returning residents and newcomers, in which promotions are made using a slogan to focus and target specific recruits
- For example, communities use branding and promotion to target newcomers with children for long-term repopulation and an agricultural campaign to attract urban residents who had difficulty finding city jobs
- The successful recruitment model here is built upon a base of integrated service delivery for new residents including revitalising local industries to create employment, improving transportation, helping with childcare services and providing assimilation services (community events and integration support)

Will you consider moving back into this area in the future?



Current approximate permanent resident population in the villages (people)



Indigenous villager

New villager

Remote worker

Retiree

S8 Improve local accessibility

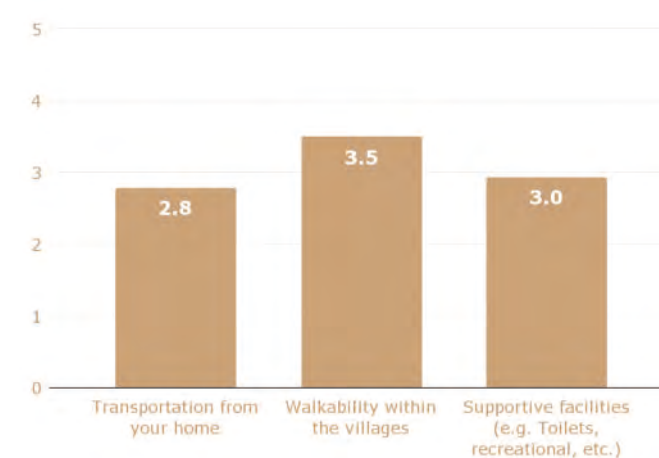
Description

Yan Chau Tong's secluded location from the rest of Hong Kong presents a challenge to accessibility. Meanwhile, hilly terrain and lack of connection between villages further hamper local mobility. Eight of the nine villages have piers with no public ferry service, meaning villagers rely on private water transport for travel.

Accessibility improvements will need to balance between enhancing mobility for regional and protecting the area's fragile carrying capacity. Mapping, increased access to information, upgraded local trails and more transport offerings will all support accessibility in a sustainable way, without enabling overcrowding.

Improvements will also provide corollary benefits to other strategies by enabling easier resource transport and increasing the ease of movement for village project doers.

How would you rate the accessibility of the following items?



Alignment with Objectives

03 Improved movement of resources for revitalisation will promote sustainable livelihoods

04 Better inter and intra village walkability will help support healthy local communities

05 Improved visitor transport options will enhance ecotourism outcomes

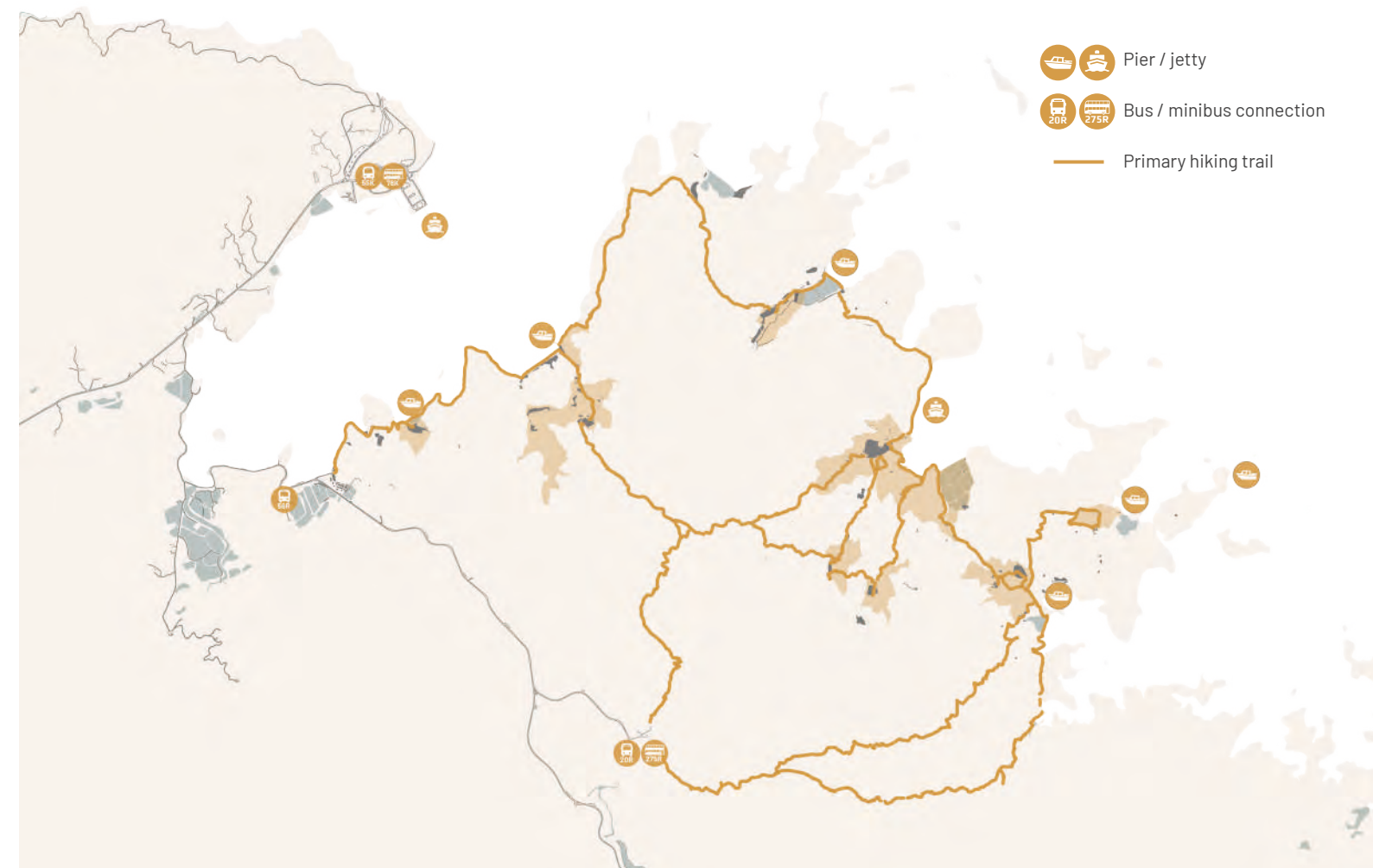
Excerpt taken from our project's "Case Studies Booklet" publication

Sai Kung Case Study - Hub-and-Spoke Transport Network



- The region uses Sai Kung Town as a hub to cluster transport services to outlying islands and more remote areas
- The town pier has booths selling passage to villages across the region
- This facilitates regional transport, providing a reliable and efficient way for visitors and villagers to move between the region's diverse communities

Existing access points and primary hiking trails



S9 Create a high quality, low impact ecotourism network

Description

The last decade has seen a growing influx of weekend visitors and hikers from other areas of Hong Kong to the area. But facilities and programmes have developed in a piecemeal manner while failing to take advantage of local assets. The aim of this strategy is to better support and coordinate existing tourism while enabling a shift towards a higher quality ecotourism model.

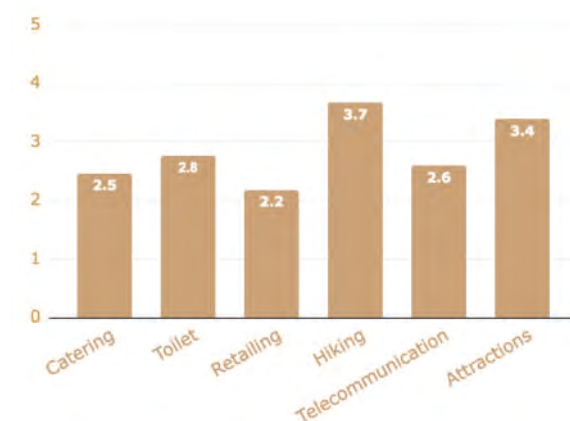
Ecotourism refers to “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education” (TIES, 2015). Shifting to such a model will involve upgrading infrastructure and product offerings to offer a higher quality of service to visitors while expanding benefits to the villagers.

Furthermore, by better planning tourism at the regional scale the gains from tourism can be better distributed to all villages and enable benefit sharing among businesses in the area. A networked model will also enhance the visitors’ ability to experience the diversity of village life and landscape amenities across the region. New programming will help showcase local culture and involve villagers providing a more holistic and educational tourism experience.

Alignment with Objectives

- 02** Programming which promotes eco-cultural heritages will showcase the Hakka human-nature approach to development
- 03** Tourism which complements and integrates into village life will support long-term healthy communities
- 05** An ecotourism designed to distribute profit and aid villagers will enhance the benefits of tourism

How would you rate the quality of these specific facilities?



“

Ecotourism refers to “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education”.

(TIES, 2015)

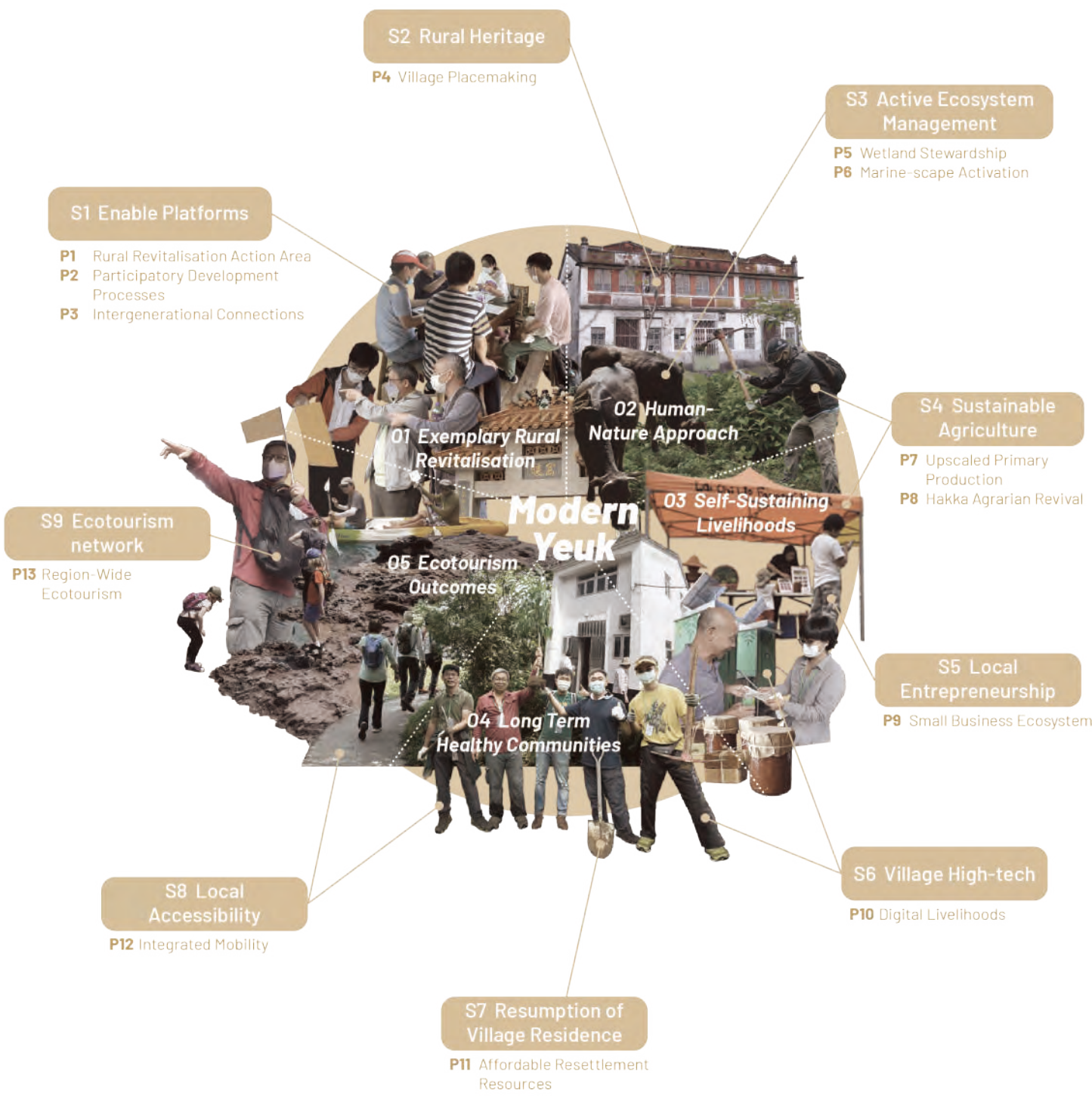
Excerpt taken from our project's “Case Studies Booklet” publication

Australia Case Study - Rural Tourism Strategy

- A successful rural tourism strategy can focus on destination planning and product development to optimise benefits
- Factors to consider include the use of low impact facilities, curated heritage experiences, multi day walking trails, sustainability assessments, and an ecotourism guide accreditation system



Conceptual linkage between vision, objectives, strategies & programmes



Programmes



SWOT Analysis

Strength

Diversity of Ongoing Programmes

Strong stakeholder investment has helped created a wide variety of initiatives in some villages in the area.

Rich Landscape Resources

Surrounding country parks and natural landscapes offer a scenic environment for tourists, longer-term visitors and residents.

Motivated Stakeholder Segment

Ageing overseas residents and local indigenous villagers are eager to revitalise their villages as part of their retirement plans.

Existing Tourist Flows

The area’s popularity with hikers and cultural visitors has helped establish a base for efforts aimed at expanding ecotourism in the area.

Unique Cultural Heritage Resources

The area benefits from its rich stock of existing tangible and intangible Hakka heritage features.

Weakness

Limited Transportation Linkages

Weekend-only ferries and no direct vehicle access have had a hampering effect on village life.

Fragmented Property Rights

Land ownership among stakeholders in the area is fragmented and unclear, making it difficult to consolidate land resources for revitalisation.

Population Decline

Out-migration from villages has affected the provision of basic services and lessened the bargaining power of the remaining residents.

Disinterested Future Generation

Descendants do not express great interest in their native villages which threatens the long-term conservation of the villages.

Uncoordinated Governance

Management and distribution of development across villages remains uneven, affecting the efficiency and optimization of revitalisation efforts.

Opportunity

Reusable Building Stock

Existing local buildings and structures have the potential to be renovated and adaptively reused.

Increased Investment and Tourism

The recent announcement of the Northern Metropolis plan and the opening of the Frontier Closed Area mean increased opportunities for local businesses.

Vibrant Agricultural Opportunities

Increasing interest in agriculture within Hong Kong society means the area has the potential to grow a niche but sustainable agricultural model.

Unique Rural Character

The area’s relative seclusion and lack of linkage to urban systems offers an opportunity to implement an alternative approach to rural development.

Strong Diaspora Connections

Former residents who resettled elsewhere are a strong potential source for repopulating the area or guiding future revitalisation efforts.

Threat

Unsustainable Financing

Short-term project-based funding means revitalisation proceeds in a stop-and-start fashion making it difficult to pursue long-term development.

Intra-Resident Distrust

Minor tensions between newcomers and native residents have led to disagreement on objectives and a lack of unified vision for revitalisation.

Lack of participatory planning

The lack of serious, continued engagement with residents has resulted in a lack of follow through and community buy-in.

Tourism Overcrowding

The opening of the Frontier Closed Area will bring new flows of tourists to the area which could pose a challenge to existing infrastructure and amenities.

Development Scepticism

Villagers and green groups have resisted development-intensive efforts, thereby challenging the emergence of more ambitious revitalisation projects.

1/

Rural Revitalisation Action Area

Designate an conceptual framework to indicate government's commitment towards investing in regional rural revitalisation

Objective



Description

The Yan Chau Tong region’s ongoing development has been financed and implemented on a piecemeal basis through small-scale village projects. This approach has been uncoordinated and unaligned with wider government goals, leading to limited investment towards rejuvenating the region. The designation of a Rural Revitalisation Action Area (RRAA) will help to pioneer a Hong Kong-specific approach to countryside development characterised by its "community-led" approach. It will achieve this by indicating the government's commitment to investment, by attracting additional private sector commitments to rural development, and by providing a regional framework for implementation.

Potential Location(s)

Institutional programme (regional)



2/

Participatory Development Processes

[Empower villagers with resources for self-initiated projects and co-planning, co-creating, and co-implementing activities]

Objective

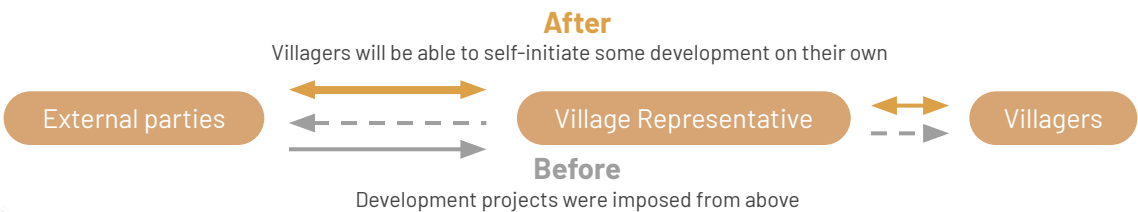


Description

Villagers of the region have lamented the lack of resources available to them to participate in ongoing revitalisation or self-initiate their own efforts. Creating a platform which provides villagers with access to funding, opportunities and up-to-date information will improve the situation. It will reduce dependency on government investment for development, create a collaborative approach aligned with local needs, and enable revitalisation outcomes which increase community benefits.

Potential Location(s)

Process programme (Fung Hang, Kop Tong, Kuk Po, Lai Chi Wo, Mui Tsz Lam, Ngau Shi Wu, Sam A Tsuen, Siu Tan and So Lo Pun)



3/

Intergenerational Connections

Provide opportunities and incentives for the new generations to cherish their culture and build local youth leadership

Objective



Description

Existing village communities are characterised by an older residential population with many of the younger generation living and working in more urban environments domestically or abroad. Village heritage and local capacity are endangered by these demographics challenges, creating a threat to community health. Designing new opportunities for descendants to get involved in village life, strengthen local bonds and generate leadership will help to bridge this discrepancy and create the possibility for long-term communities.

Potential Location(s)

Spatial and activity programme (Lai Chi Wo and Sam A Tsuen, with regional components)



Chinese new year

Summer

Double Ninth Festival

Christmas

Birthright Programme

Online Diaspora Competitions

Descendant Festival

Summer Camp for Children of Ex-villagers & Descendants

Interlinked initiatives to foster a multi-generational cultural community and future leadership cohort

4/

Village Placemaking

Using a five-senses framework to preserve village atmospheres, convert heritage and enhance landscapes

Objective



Description

Rural heritage in general and intangible village heritage in particular benefit from few supports under existing policy. This is in spite of the fact that visitors and residents commonly report village atmospheres as a major draw for them. Deploying a dynamic approach to preservation and placemaking which highlighting immersive five-senses village qualities will serve to fulfil multiple stakeholder interests: paying homage to villager’s roots and memories, enhancing visitors’ experiences, and enabling long-term village remigration.

Potential Location(s)

Spatial and policy programme (Fung Hang, Kop Tong, Kuk Po, Lai Chi Wo, Mui Tsz Lam, Ngau Shi Wu, Sam A Tsuen, Siu Tan and So Lo Pun)



5/

Wetland Stewardship

Identify key regional wetlands and employ a stewardship approach to incentivise local management

Objective



Description

Hong Kong’s freshwater wetlands provide vital services to the ecosystem and local human communities. But in the last 20 years they have shrunk by nearly half due to a lack of active management. Conserving Yan Chau Tong’s freshwater wetlands, the largest remaining regional network, by moving beyond passive protection towards more intensive interventions will regenerate these landscapes and increase their production of beneficial functions. As human-dominant habitats, existing within enclave areas, management will need to factor in local communities and engage them in conservation.

Potential Location(s)

Spatial programme (Kuk Po, Sam A Tsuen and So Lo Pun)



Regional wetland model which incentivizes active management and promotes enclave-tailored conservation

6/

Marine-scape Activation

Activate the coastline through investment and positioning to showcase ecological richness and promote citizen conservation

Objective



Description

Yan Chau Tong’s coastal habitat has been officially designated as a Hong Kong marine park but remains undervalued and under-showcased as part of the region’s ecological amenities. Creating a conceptual cluster will help target investments and projects into the region’s richest marine habitat for participants to immerse themselves in the coastal landscape.

Potential Location(s)

Spatial programme (Ngau Shi Wu, Sam A Tsuen, Siu Tan and additionally Sai Lau Kong)



7/

Upscaled Primary Production

Position local production to better leverage its market niche and supply it to citywide consumers who value it most

Objective



Description

The ongoing revival of agriculture in Lai Chi Wo and some adjoining villages has relied on external financing or else stayed small-scale to support village level demand. Sales have depended on flows of visitors to the area or regional produce markets. Integrating agri-production with place branding and using digital tools to promote and sell local goods to a wider set of customers at a higher price can enhance viability. A new set of modern agricultural livelihoods can be made possible through these value-added extensions.

Potential Location(s)

Spatial and narrative programme
(Kuk Po and Lai Chi Wo)



8/

Hakka Agrarian Revival

Showcase the region's agrarian traditions through interactive programming and promote this approach as an example of sustainable development

Objective



Description

The region's vernacular approach to agro-ecology and its related cultural traditions are quickly disappearing due to disuse and disinterest. The local approach however retains its value as a locally-conceived form of sustainable development. Introducing its concepts to the wider public as an example of green development and highlighting its cultural value will offer a way to preserve and continue this unique human-nature approach.

Potential Location(s)

Spatial programme (Kop Tong, Kuk Po, Mui Tsz Lam, Siu Tan and So Lo Pun)



9/

Small Business Ecosystem

Create an entrepreneurial environment for residents to self-initiate sustainable livelihoods rooted in village conditions

Objective

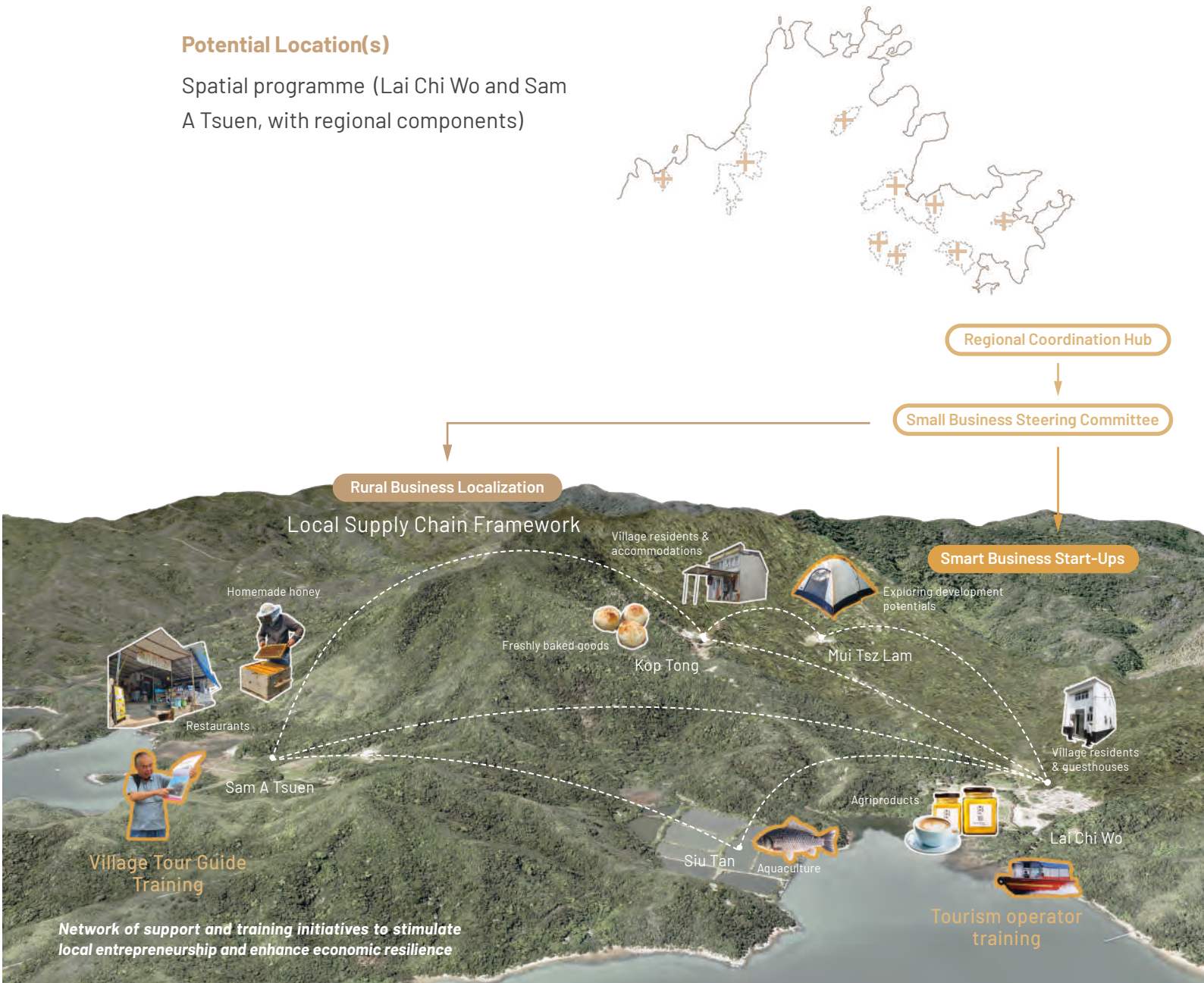


Description

Returning villagers and newcomers have developed local enterprises to take advantage of ongoing tourism flows but have been constrained by an unfavourable regulatory regime and a lack of policy support. This has resulted in an unstable business environment characterised by underleveraged commercial potentials and unsustainable financial opportunities. Applying an ecosystem approach to entrepreneurial development will help create greater regional resilience, diversify business types and approaches and enable the incubation of new businesses related to emerging and ongoing industries.

Potential Location(s)

Spatial programme (Lai Chi Wo and Sam A Tsuen, with regional components)



10/

Digital Livelihoods

Foster high-quality, long-term village livelihoods through 'smart' service extensions and digital economy linkages

Objective

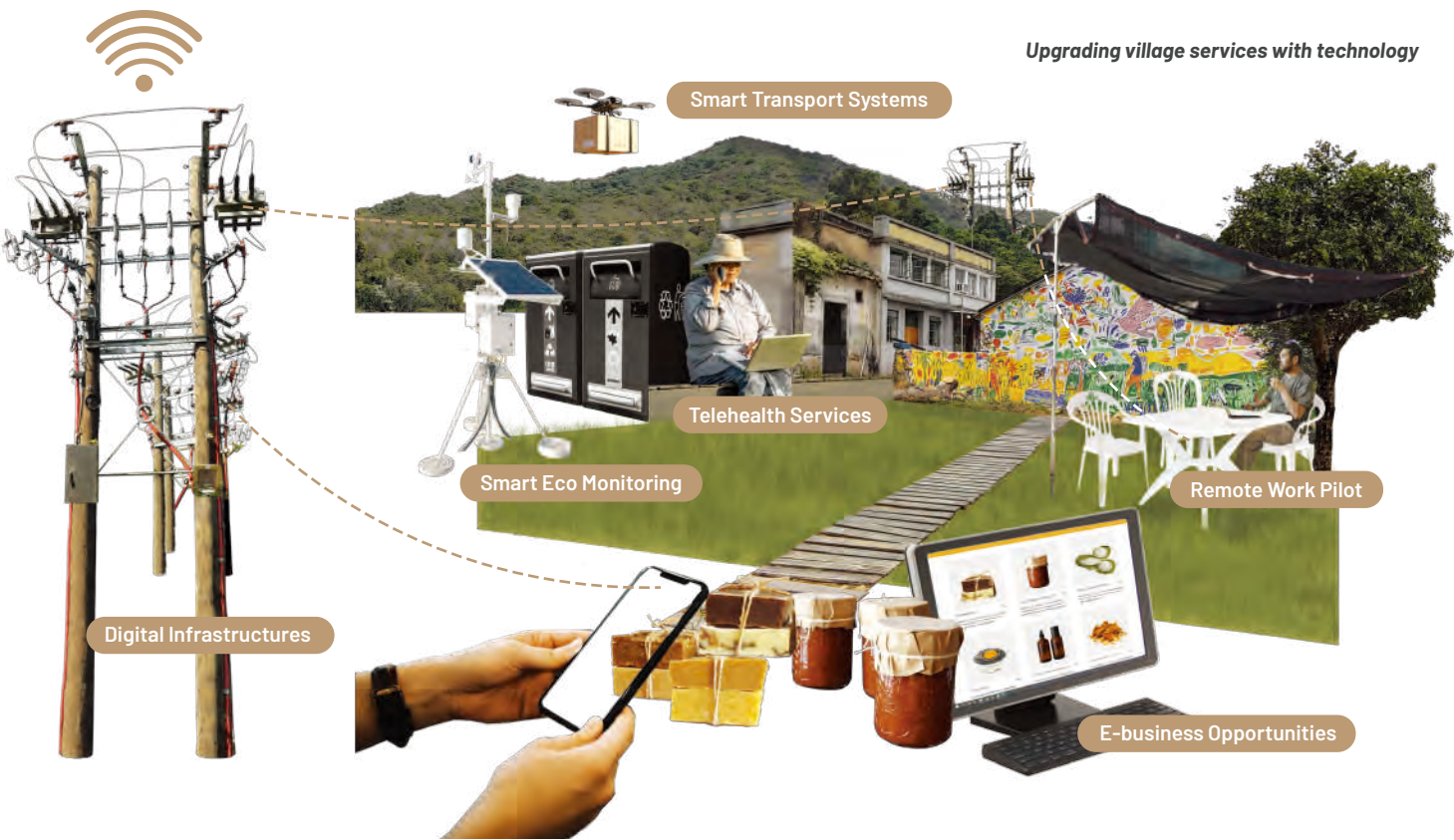


Description

Hong Kong villages have often been locked out of economic and social service innovations due to a lack of urban-rural symbiosis. The ongoing extension of broadband coverage to the area and the Smart City blueprint have made it viable for the region's villages to pursue new forms of digital livelihoods. Digital economy alignments and remote work can help reduce over-reliance on precarious tourism flows. Meanwhile, smart technologies will provide enhanced social infrastructure to villagers by overcoming traditional delivery bottlenecks.

Potential Location(s)

Spatial programme (regional with pilot site at Kop Tong)



11/

Affordable Resettlement Resources

Re-establish living communities by improving full-time service in inhabited villages and part-time stays in secluded ones

Objective

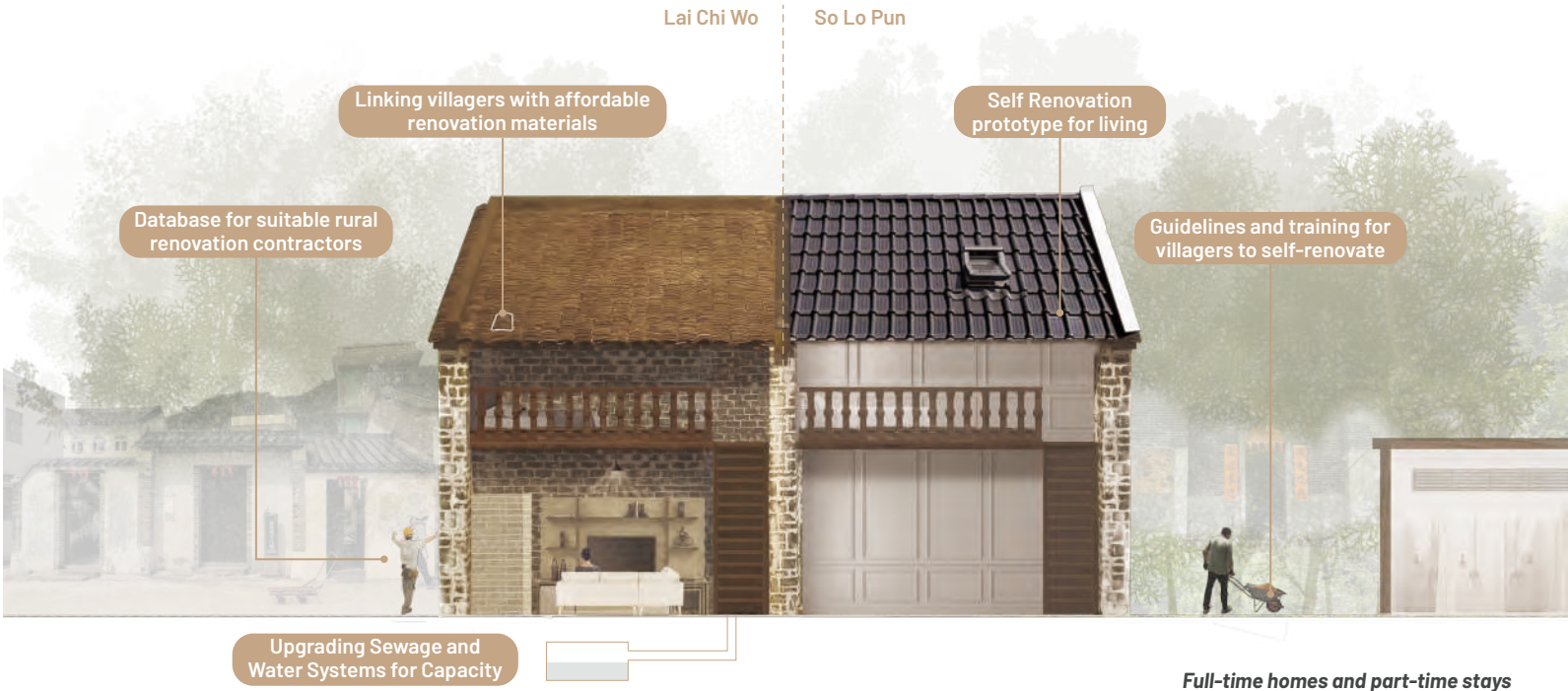


Description

Making villages habitable again is a prerequisite for the comprehensive revitalisation of the region. Housing renovation projects have begun to emerge but the associated costs are too high for housing rehabilitation at scale. Meanwhile, the provision of essential services (toilets, portable water, sewage and electricity) is too limited for interested parties to consider settlement. A low-cost self-renovation approach to housing and incremental infrastructure improvement will make it possible for villagers to resume full-time residence in larger accessible villages and undertake part-time overnight stays in more secluded, less viable ones.

Potential Location(s)

Spatial programme (regional with pilot site at So Lo Pun)



12/

Integrated Mobility

Using regionally scaled transport planning to distribute access across the region, link the north and south clusters, and activate abandoned villages

Objective

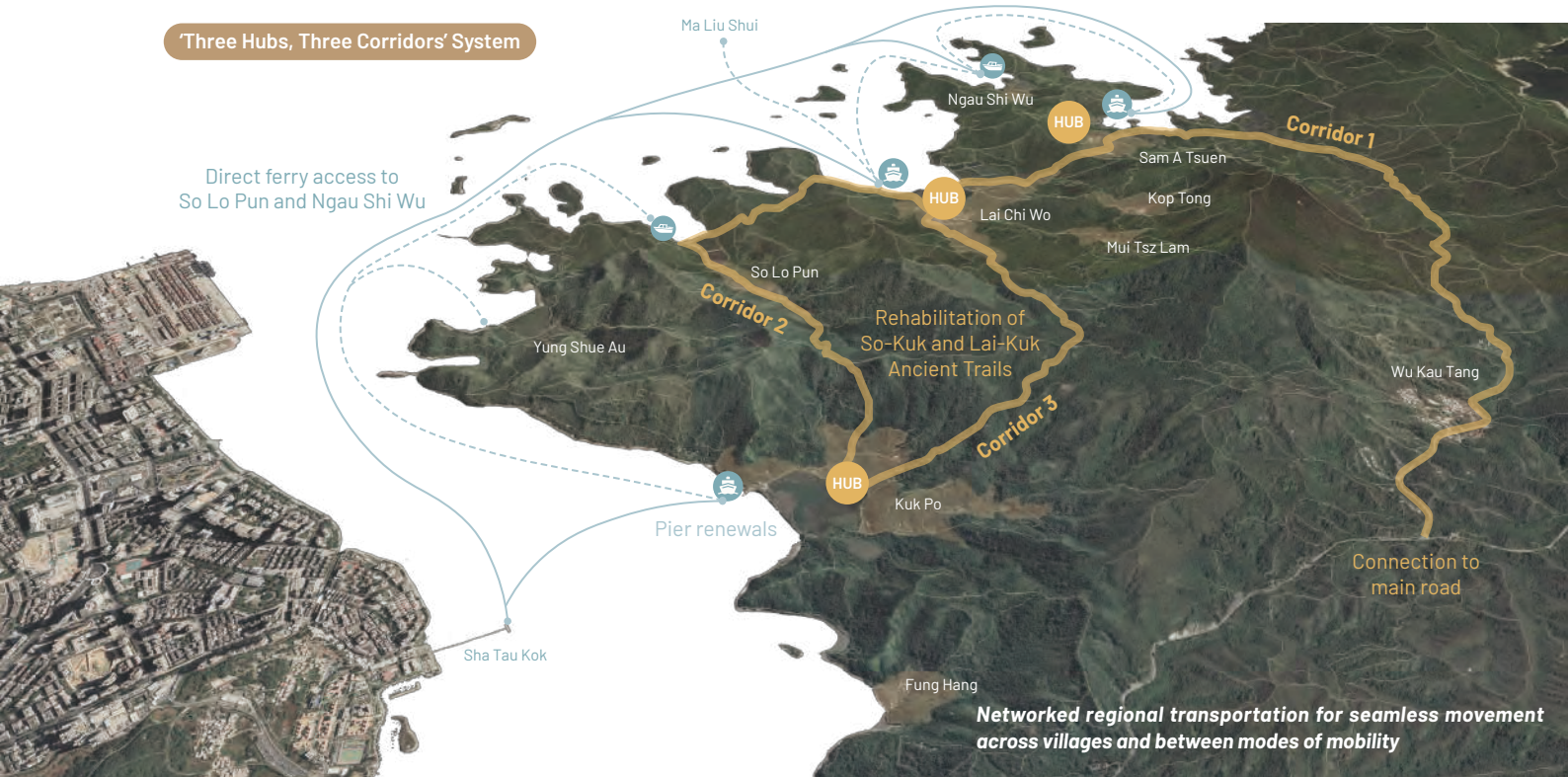


Description

Accessibility to and within the area is currently disjointed and ad hoc due to a lack of overall planning. This has created bottlenecks at the few existing access points, separated north and south nodes, and led to the abandonment of several villages. Regional transport planning will better integrate different mobility modes, help distribute flows and link route types to make movement more convenient. The use of a hub-and-spoke model will leverage Sha Tau Kok's opening to increase access through new village entry points and make smaller secluded villages more connected via a cost-effective networked system.

Potential Location(s)

Spatial and planning programme
(Kuk Po, Lai Chi Wo, Mui Tsz Lam, Ngau Shi Wu, Sam A Tsuen, Siu Tan and So Lo Pun)



13/

Region-Wide Ecotourism

Use regional scaling to better manage ongoing visitor flows and distribute benefits to a wider set of local communities

Objective



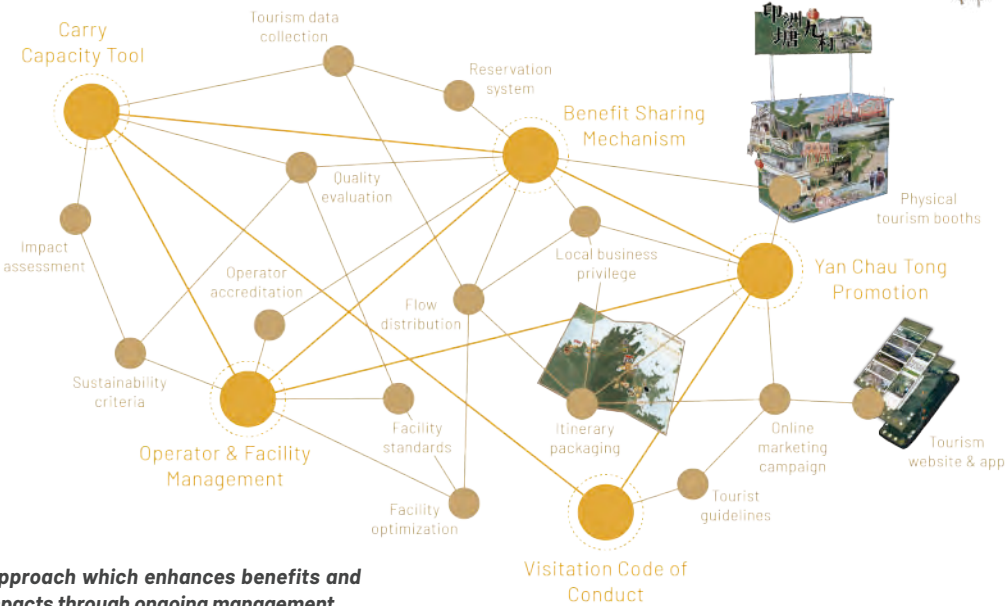
Description

The benefits from ongoing area visitation have been limited by piecemeal non-planned tourism development. With a visitor surge expected following the opening of Sha Tau Kok there is further risk that tourism will lead to negative impacts on local communities and ecologies. Moreover, recognition of the area as a tourism site has been limited to a few well-publicised villages and established hiking destinations. This has narrowed the distribution of benefits. Regional coordination which actively monitors flows and impacts and positions the region as a whole will lead to the development of sustainable, balanced and socially beneficial tourism.

Over time, the boundary of the programme will need to incorporate villages beyond the nine villages identified. A truly regional scale of tourism planning will link Wu Kau Tang, Ap Chau, Kat O, Yung Shue Au and other popular nearby villages to this tourism management framework. This will enable comprehensive responses at the appropriate scale.

Potential Location(s)

Spatial programme (regional, with additional sites at Sha Tau Kok and Ma Liu Shui)



Regional approach which enhances benefits and controls impacts through ongoing management

Annex

Region & Village Profiles

Yan Chau Tong Region

“It’s like a family... All the people you meet here are either classmates or extended family. They grew up in the same villages and most went to the same primary school.”

— Mui Tsz Lam villager

Non-resident
population*

3888

Full-time
residents

41

Potentials / Challenges

Social / community

- Existing social ties between the nine villages (e.g. ancestry, intermarriage, supply of resources) → Serve as basis for inter-village collaboration in areas of **mutual self-interest** (e.g. intangible heritage)
- Overseas villagers have expressed an interest in engaging with revitalisation work and even returning to live → Potential of **integrating and involving this community** into different elements of revitalisation (e.g. fundraising, knowledge, labour)
- Weakened or inactive traditional regional institutions and cross-village committees → **Weakened connection** among villages and a corresponding **decrease in mutual benefits**
- The VRs work independently on most issues except for Da Chiu festival and the geopark project → Current governance approach **relies on village representative negotiation rather than a regional body**

Landscape / ecological assets

- The region has the largest network of freshwater wetlands in Hong Kong → Opportunity to better protect and showcase this **unique and vulnerable landscape as a key area attraction**
- Lack of up-to-date baseline data for the region due to a lack of comprehensive ecological surveys → **Incomplete information** to identify key environmental challenges and conservation priorities

Potentials / Challenges

Accessibility / village environment

- The nine villages are connected by a regional ancient trail system → **Ancient trail rehabilitation** would improve accessibility for villagers

Tourism

- The nine villages will be incorporated into the Northern Metropolis plan (Mirs Bay/Yan Chau Tong Ecological Recreation and Tourism Circle) → **Plan enables greater regional integration** with a focus on protecting and promoting **sensitive ecological and cultural assets**
- Currently no licensed food businesses and only one guesthouse in the area due to ordinance level restrictions → **Impedes emergence of bottom-up entrepreneurship** to meet visitor demand

Revitalisation efforts

- Concentration of revitalisation efforts in a single village (e.g. Lai Chi Wo) and projects designed around single categories (e.g. cultural, tourism) at the expense of integrated and/or regional scale revitalisation → **Status quo leads to investment and outcome inequalities** among villages
- Prevents emergence of holistic development** for most of the villages

VRs Visions

- They envision a future model premised on the Sai Kung approach. Sha Tau Kok would act as a hub and provide a major interchange point for visiting the nine Yan Chau Tong villages
- Generally agree that bringing in more people to the area would enable greater potentials for wider revitalisation (e.g. rebuilding houses for villagers to live in)



Projects

Regional online promotions

- 慶春約記 Facebook page *Stories South & North*
- Back To Our Countryside campaign *CCO*

Village festivals

- Hong Kong Geopark 10th anniversary celebration activities *AFCD*
- Da Chiu Festival 2019 (with “Hing Chun Yeuk” in Sha Tau Kok — A journey of cultural conservation) *STK HCY Da Chiu Committee, CCO*
- Mui Tsz Lam - Kop Tong forest life festival (under Forest Village Programme) # *HKU CCSG, ASTKCE*

Crafts & Souvenirs

- Geopark anniversary souvenirs *AFCD*

Funding schemes

- Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund * *AFCD*
- AFCD loan schemes (e.g. Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Loan Fund, J.E. Joseph Trust Fund, Vegetable Marketing Organization Loan Fund) * *AFCD*

Licensing and connectivity studies

- Feasibility Study and Pilot Scheme of Water Bus for Inter-village and Coastal Eco-tour Service for Lai Chi Wo and Nearby Villages *HKCF*
- Feasibility Study of Licensed Food Business in Remote Old Villages *HKCF*

Village-specific platforms

- Stakeholders’ whatsapp groups *Villagers, project-doers*

Project information sharing

- Ongoing project websites and social media platforms *Project-doers*

Regional network

- APAC Initiative for Regional Impact (AIRI)(under HSBC Rural Sustainability Programme) * *HKU CCSG*

Knowledge exchanges

- Knowledge exchange events (under Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme) * *HKU CCSG*

Educational partnerships

- Academy for Sustainable Communities (under Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme) * *HKU CCSG*

Telecommunication improvement

- Subsidy Scheme to Extend Fibre-based Networks to Villages in Remote Areas (under Smart Countryside) *^ *OFCA*

Rural technology studies

- Smart Village Pilots (under Smart City Blueprint 2.0) * *ITB*

Path improvements and additions

- Double Haven Country Trail *AFCD, TC*

Trail information platforms

- Hong Kong hiking trails mobile apps * *GOV / Private*

Trail restoration training

- Ancient Road Conservation Ambassador Program ~ *ASTKCE*

Village tours

- Ecotours led by private companies *Private tourism companies*
- Monthly Mui Tsz Lam and Kop Tong cultural ecological tours (under Forest Village Programme) # *ASTKCE*

Heritage policy supports

- Site of Archaeological Interest in Hong Kong * *AMO*
- Assessment of Historic Buildings in Hong Kong * *AMO, AAB*
- Register of Old and Valuable Trees * *DB GLTMS*

Online cultural cataloguing

- The Common Map — A mapping database of village stories (under 3Cs Scheme of HSBC Rural Sustainability Programme) *Zoey Chan Tsz Yiu, Christopher Choi Man Lok*
- Rural Common for Countryside Revitalisation (developed from The Common Map project) *MaD*
- “Hing Chun Yeuk” in Sha Tau Kok — A journey of cultural conservation *CCO*

Cultural documentation

- Conservation and Revitalisation Strategies for Architecture and Landscape of Hakka Village Spaces + *HKU CCAU*

Heritage training

- Friends of Heritage; Young Friends of Heritage * *AMO*
- Yan Chau Tong Ambassador Scheme *ASTKCE*

Residential support system improvements

- Regional garbage collection *FEHD*

Project-specific community funds

- Da Chiu fundraising *HCY Villagers*

Community capacity building

- “Co-creation of the Community”(3Cs) Scheme (under HSBC Rural Sustainability Programme) * *HKU CCSG*
- Village volunteer training programme (under Forest Village Programme) # *HKU CCSG, ASTKCE*

Eco-activities

- Citizen scientist programme (under Forest Village Programme) # *HKU CCSG, ASTKCE*

Landscape restoration

- Forest Village Ecosystem Project (under Forest Village Programme) # *HKU CCSG, ASTKCE*

Habitat protection and management

- Habitat protection and conservation project (under Forest Village Programme) # *HKU CCSG, ASTKCE*

* Project not specific to this region
^ Project only carried out in Fung Hang, Kop Tong, Kuk Po, Lai Chi Wo, Mui Tsz Lam and Sam A Tsuen
Project only carried out in Kop Tong and Mui Tsz Lam
~ Project only carried out in the areas surrounding Lai Chi Wo and Mui Tsz Lam
+ Project only carried out in Fung Hang, Kuk Po and other nearby villages

Fung Hang



Potentials / Challenges

Non-resident
population
500

Full-time
residents
5

Potentials / Challenges

Social / community

- Fung Hang's OZP presumes a small resident population
- Less consideration and limited space is given for village activities

Landscape / ecological assets

- Unique village landscape and great views of a traditional village layout offered to hikers passing through
- Pre-established Fung Hang Family Walk draws visiting families interested in easy hiking
- Village well-served by existing tourism flows from Luk Keng and no further enhancement is needed

Accessibility / village environment

- Fung Hang is very accessible to visitors due to its proximity to a road network at Luk Keng
- Further utilization of this proximity for the pursuit of self-led revitalisation

Tourism

- Tourism facilities at the outer edge of the village enable benefits from existing tourism flows
- Upscale facilities to achieve a higher sales point without infringing upon the villagers' autonomy and lifestyle

Revitalisation efforts

- No interest in collaboration or external support for development and reluctant to open the village environment to outsiders and visitors
- Currently visitors are not welcomed into the village and villagers express no interest in expanding or changing current position

Projects

Local entrepreneurship

- 2 Restaurants

Villagers

Status of the project: Ongoing

VR's Vision

- Village will pursue its own self-managed development
- No interest in government cooperation or external collaboration
- Main priority is for the village to be recognized by government departments and ensure villagers' property rights are protected



Kop Tong



Non-resident population

86

Full-time residents

3

Potentials / Challenges

Social / community

- Kop Tong is mistakenly considered an abandoned village under the OZP → Limited investment and interest from government for revitalisation
- Currently small amount of permanent residents → Challenge to local capacity and limits revitalisation work to small scale weekend efforts

Landscape / ecological assets

- Village has the highest concentration of butterflies in the region → Harness resource into a programme that adds on to the village brand

Accessibility / village environment

- Kop Tong is located uphill and is somewhat hard to reach → Revitalisation ambition limited to less resource-intensive efforts
- Prevents the return of retirees for Full-time residence

Agriculture

- Presence of tangerine and fruit trees provides annual harvests → Harness resource into a programme that adds on to the village brand
- Hydrological conditions prevent the resumption of small scale agriculture → Limits local production for the village restaurant and the emergence of farming livelihoods

Tourism

- Kop Tong Store offers unique setting and renowned Hakka food which it successfully promotes across the area → Existing brand recognition acts as pull factor with potential as a value-added strategy through creation of complementary activities

"I planted (the whole village with fruit trees) all by myself, it's pretty ok ... (We were) born and raised here, we can't give this place up."

— Kop Tong villager



Potentials / Challenges

Revitalisation efforts

- Community-based conservation management approach enabled by ongoing Forest Village Programme → Enables coordination of additional projects to realize Kop Tong's revitalisation vision
- Ongoing renovation of a few village houses for rent to outsiders → Formalization of model and addition of complementary activities can achieve higher price point

Projects

Place-based engagements

- Art murals (under Forest Village Programme) HKU CCSG, ASTKCE

Local entrepreneurship and food branding

- Kop Tong Store and baked goods branding Fat Goh, volunteers

Path improvements

- Road repair and paving improvement HAD

Self-renovation

- Renovation of village houses and ancestral hall Villagers

Residential support system improvements

- Reconnection of electricity supply CLP

Status of the project: Ongoing Completed

New governance arrangements

- Management Strategies (under Forest Village Programme) HKU CCSG

Agricultural activities

- Small scale farming Villagers
- Use of traditional farming methods (under Forest Village Programme) HKU CCSG, ASTKCE
- Fruit tree replanting Villagers

Agricultural system restorations

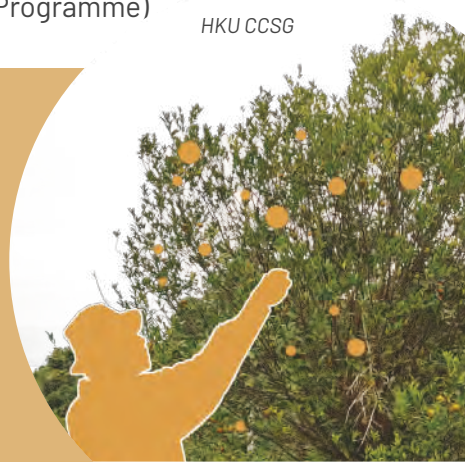
- Reconstruction of catchment area Villagers
- Opening of abandoned farmland (under Forest Village Programme) HKU CCSG, ASTKCE

Baseline survey

- Ecological baseline survey (under Forest Village Programme) HKU CCSG

VR's Vision

- Vision is to resume the old village landscape to make the village environment prettier
- Aims for a project to replant some fruit trees and sees the tangerine harvest as a possible attraction
- Believes that creation of more projects in the future will incentivize more ex-residents to come back



Kuk Po



Non-resident
population

1500

Full-time
residents

3

Potentials / Challenges

Social / community

- Non resident population comes back often to partake in village life → • Creates **part-time capacity** and potential for flexible revitalisation
- Younger generation is engaged with ongoing activities in the village → • Pass down **heritage values** and foster next generation of **leadership**

Landscape / ecological assets

- Unique village landscape that offers great coastal views and inland pastoral elements combining built heritage and a reed field landscape → • Increase investment to **fully rehabilitate the village environment** and use it to **position the village**

Accessibility / village environment

- Unused So-Kuk and Lai-Kuk ancient trails due to overgrowth and lack of village activities → • Revival of the trail to enable **connectivity at a regional scale** in an efficient manner
- Villagers' desire to return is hindered by derelict houses and lack of functional drainage and sewage → • **Lack of policies and funding** to assist renovation and infrastructure provision
- Shallow waters during low tide prevent bigger boats from anchoring at the pier → • **Limited capacity** for greater resource transport and direct visitor access

Agriculture

- Presence of a vast previously-used reedfield which surrounds the housing clusters → • **Rehabilitation of wet agriculture** and **revival of traditional landscape practices** (e.g. rearing cows, farming, environmental stewardship)

“Villagers want to come back to live but the houses are all broken, and there is no toilet. If the village is rebuilt, I think villagers will go back.”

— Kuk Po villager



Potentials / Challenges

Tourism

- Disturbance of outsiders (e.g. fruit-picking without permission, trampling on open areas) due to lack of tourism facilities → • Led to **distrust** and **reduced opportunity for interactive exchanges** between villagers and outsiders

Revitalisation efforts

- Lack of a village-level programme to coordinate ongoing projects → • **Revitalisation ambition limited** due to a lack of financing capacity

Projects

Status of the project: ● Ongoing ● Completed

Cultural performances

- Exhibitions on Kuk Po (under Conservation and Revitalisation Strategies for Architecture and Landscape of Hakka Village Spaces)

HKU CCAU

Cultural documentation

- Oral History Documentary, Illustration and Design for Kuk Po: “Reconnect Kuk Po: The Past, Present and Future Sustainability”

PolyU

Built heritage restoration

- From Valley to Plain: Conservation and Revitalisation from ‘Ng To’ to Kuk Po River and Plain via Multi-disciplinary, Educational and Action Research
- A Catalyst Project for Kuk Po Village: Restoration of Architecture and Built-Environment for the Annex Block of Kai Choi School

CUHK SoA

HKU CCAU

Project-specific community funds

- Fundraising for Restoration of Ancestral Hall of the Sungs

Villagers

Local entrepreneurship

- 2 Restaurants

Villagers

Agricultural activities

- Small scale farming

Villagers

VR's Vision

- Welcomes visitors because it will bring vitality to the village
- Sees an opportunity to promote the history of Kuk Po to tourists
- Points out that a public toilet and other infrastructure would help to expand tourism in the village
- Highlights that agriculture without roads and waterways cannot work, right now farming there is just for fun



Lai Chi Wo

Non-resident
population

822

Full-time
residents

15

Potentials / Challenges

Social / community

- Existing housing stock offered at affordable rates for prevention of termites
- Recruitment of **suitable newcomers** to scale up repopulation and **increase local capacity**

Landscape / ecological assets

- Presence of a special Shui Kou Fung Shui woodland and iconic trees near the village entrance
- Using **human-nature elements** to centre **local knowledge and heritage** in Lai Chi Wo's **positioning**

Accessibility / village environment

- Missing infrastructure (e.g. septic system) and difficulty of scaling up backend systems
- Insufficient capacity** of drains, water supply and infrastructure for larger residential population

Agriculture

- Local agribusinesses target niche markets through media, tourism and a farmer's market
- Partner with new marketing and sales channels** to increase sales and enable business expansions

Tourism

- Direct tourist access from village pier
- Promotion through domestic and international channels
- Tourism and information flows can draw **long-term funding** and **push attention to the regional scale**

Revitalisation efforts

- Currently the village's robust set of projects and activities are reliant on short term funding
- Projects lack financial resilience**, once funding dries up projects end

"Most villagers who care about Lai Chi Wo were born and raised here. This place carries fond memories from their youth. Even if they have moved overseas, their hearts are still with their home village."

— Lai Chi Wo VRs



Projects

Village festivals

- Village Fest (under 3Cs Scheme of HSBC Rural Sustainability Programme)

HKU CCSG, villagers

Place-based engagements

- Xiu Jing Experience @Lai Chi Wo
- Lai Chi Wo promotion on Discover Hong Kong website

Jing Xin Yuan

HKTB

One-off art installations

- On Earth (under 3Cs Scheme of HSBC Rural Sustainability Programme)
- Murmur of the Brick – Rurally Engaged Art (under 3Cs Scheme of HSBC Rural Sustainability Programme)

Rachel Cheung, Suzanne Au, Dexter Lee, Yiu Chun Wa

Art for All, CLYT CDS

Food and eco-product branding

- Eco-production branding (under Management Agreement Scheme at Lai Chi Wo Enclave)
- Monthly Lai Chi Wo Farmers' Market (under Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme)

HKCF, CA

HKU CCSG

Start up support

- "3 Dous" Community Building Scheme (under Sustainable Lai Chi Wo programme)
- Hakka Life Experience Village @Lai Chi Wo (under Sustainable Lai Chi Wo programme)

HKU CCSG

HKCF

Entrepreneurship training

- LoCoKitchen pilot (under Sustainable Lai Chi Wo programme)

HKU CCSG

Local entrepreneurship

- 4 Restaurants, 9 agri-product stores

Villagers

Knowledge exchanges and partnerships

- Villager Case Study Site Visit
- Education Programmes for schools (under Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme)
- Public education for families (under Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme)

HKCF, HKU CCSG

HKU CCSG

HKU CCSG

Tourism facility additions and upgrades

- Lai Chi Wo enhancement project (under Signature Project Scheme (North District) - Improvement of Trails and Provision of Facilities in Sha Tau Kok)
- Lai Chi Wo Nature Trail & Geo heritage Centre (under Geopark project)
- Lai Chi Wo Cultural Hub (under Restored Village Complex pilot of Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme)
- Chinachem Lai Chi Wo Story Room (under Same Roots, Same Origins Project)
- Siu Ying Story Room

HAD

HKUGGp

HKU CCSG, CUHK CAHR, villagers

HKU CCSG

AFCD, LNEF, LCW PST

Status of the project: ● Ongoing ● Completed

Projects

Licensing study

- Review guesthouse ordinance (under Hakka Life Experience Village @Lai Chi Wo of Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme)
HKCF, CCO

Green infrastructure

- Smart portable toilets (under Smart Countryside)
CCO

Village tours

- Ecotours around Lai Chi Wo
GOV / Private

Cultural experiential tours and workshops

- JC WISE Water Initiative on Sustainability + Engagement (under sustainable Lai Chi Wo programme)
HKU Faculty of Social Science
- Hakka dumpling class
HakkaHome-LCW Limited

Agritourism

- Agricultural tourism activities (under Management Agreement Scheme at Lai Chi Wo Enclave)
HKCF, CA
- Agriculture Volunteer Holiday (under HSBC Rural Sustainability Programme)
HKU CCSG

Path improvements

- Road repair and paving improvement
HAD

Public transport services

- Weekend Ferry Service to Lai Chi Wo from Ma Liu Shui
Best Sonic Industrial Limited

Infrastructure improvement

- Lai Chi Wo Pier improvement (Under Study for pier improvement at Lai Chi Wo and Tung Ping Chau - Investigation)
CEDD

Agricultural skill training

- Ecological education programmes (under Management Agreement Scheme at Lai Chi Wo Enclave)
HKCF, CA

Farmer recruitment

- Lai Chi Wo Farming Apprenticeship (under HSBC Rural Sustainability Programme)
HKU CCSG
- Recruitment of Agricultural Products Processing Team Members (under HSBC Rural Sustainability Programme)
HKU CCSG

Agricultural system restorations

- River & Farmland Flood Mitigation Engineering Project (under Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme)
HKU CCSG
- Hydrology monitoring programme (under Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme)
HKU CCSG

Agricultural activities

- Explore alternative farming methods and crops (under Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme)
HKU CCSG, Produce Green
- Rice planting (under Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme)
HKU CCSG, Produce Green

Agriculture support schemes

- Lai Chi Wo Roselle Adoption Scheme (under Management Agreement Scheme at Lai Chi Wo Enclave)
HKCF, CA

Baseline survey

- Biodiversity monitoring programme (under Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme)
HKU CCSG, HKU SBS

Intangible heritage workshops

- Traditional Craftsmanship and Cultural Inheritance
HKCF
- Lai Chi Wo Children Play Theatre 【Children Theatre Workshop + Art Tech Performance】
Zuni Icosahedron

Cultural documentation

- Same Roots, Same Origin
HKUGGp
- Oral history documentation (under Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme)
ASTKCE

Heritage training

- Lai Chi Wo and Surrounding Village Docent Training Course (under Hakka Life Experience Village@Lai Chi Wo of sustainable Lai Chi Wo programme)
HKCF

Residential support system improvements

- Villagers' Management Agreement Project with Hygiene Theme
HakkaHome-LCW Limited
- Trial Project on Municipal Solid Waste Charging at Rural Areas
EPD
- Project LIGHTUP
Border District

Newcomer rental

- Newcomer rental contracts (under Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme)
HKU CCSG, LCW PST

Co-design processes

- Lai Chi Wo revitalisation forum
HKCF, Produce Green

Adaptive and new rural governance

- Lai Chi Wo Pui Shing Tong Committee
Villagers, HKU CCSG
- HakkaHome-LCW Limited
Villagers, HKCF
- Management Agreement Scheme at Lai Chi Wo Enclave
HKCF, CA

Social spaces

- Prevention of Deterioration of Built Environment and Landscape Improvement in Lai Chi Wo Village
HakkaHome-LCW Limited
- Restored Village Complex pilot (under 3Cs Scheme of HSBC Rural Sustainability Programme)
HKU CCSG, CUHK CAHR, villagers

Community capacity building

- Rural Community Development Leadership training programmes (under Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme)
HKU CCSG
- Annual village cleaning (under Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Programme)
LCW PST, HKU CCSG, HKCF, CA

VR's Vision

- Sees management as a key tool to achieve a balanced tourism model
- Thinks there is an opportunity to use heritage elements which are now in disuse (e.g. 'Keeping the Fa Pao' 養炮) as a way to educate, rehabilitate, and create higher quality programming
- Says that villagers are still uneasy about granting or renting village land to revitalisation project-doers



Mui Tsz Lam



“My favorite view to look at the village is from the Bah Goong altar at the entrance, especially when the setting sun shines on the trees and houses, it’s too beautiful!”

— Volunteer at Mui Tsz Lam



Non-resident population

266

Full-time residents

0

Potentials / Challenges

Social / community

- Lack of full or part-time residents limits the scope of projects and service provision → • **Vicious cycle created for residential resumption** (no residents means minimal services & vice versa)
- Mui Tsz Lam is considered an abandoned village under the OZP → • **Limited investment and interest** from government for revitalisation

Landscape / ecological assets

- Compact forest village setting blends visuals (cows), soundscapes (frogs, crickets) and aromas (wood) → • **Make use of the exemplary village landscape to design activities which preserve the atmosphere**

Agriculture

- Village has ongoing agriculture through its orchards and plantations → • **Existing agricultural assets and practice** could be used to create agriculture related programming
- Small hilly village area with challenging hydrological conditions → • **Lack of flatness and water shortage** prevents the emergence of greater agricultural production

Revitalisation efforts

- Forest Village programme assists the transformation of underlying existing assets into revitalisation projects → • **Coordination of additional projects** to realize Mui Tsz Lam’s revitalisation vision
- Lack of major economic activity limits the scope of revitalisation and creates reliance on external funding → • Creates vulnerability by limiting revitalisation to **short term project horizons** and **temporary funding**

Projects

Status of the project: ● Ongoing ● Completed

Place-based engagements

- Nature, Earth and Human - Mui Tsz Lam Art revitalisation Project (under 3Cs Scheme of HSBC Rural Sustainability Programme)
HKTraveler, ASTKCE

Tourism facility additions

- Mui Tsz Lam Story Room (under Forest Village Programme)
ASTKCE

Tourism strategy design

- Sustainability Design Hackathon for Rural Camping Experience (under Forest Village Programme)
HKU CCSG, ASTKCE, HKU DLA

Keystone attractions

- Campsite pilot (under Forest Village Programme)
HKU CCSG, ASTKCE

Ecocultural workshops

- Seminar on eco-art (under Forest Village Programme)
HKU CCSG, ASTKCE

Agricultural activities

- Use of traditional farming methods (under Forest Village Programme)
HKU CCSG, ASTKCE
- Fruit tree replanting
Villagers

Agricultural system restorations

- Opening of abandoned farmland (under Forest Village Programme)
HKU CCSG, ASTKCE

Path improvements

- Road repair and paving improvement
HAD

Cultural documentation & practice

- Participatory Action Research*
HakkaHome-LCW Limited

Village house restorations

- Project Plum Grove: Revitalising Mui Tsz Lam with Experimental Restorations
CUHK SoA

Residential support system improvements

- Reconnection of electricity supply
CLP

Community infrastructure building

- Wu Zhi Qiao Local Volunteer Service
WZQ

Social programming

- Homey Mui Tsz Lam
The Common Map

New governance arrangements

- Management Strategies (under Forest Village Programme)
HKU CCSG, ASTKCE

Baseline survey

- Ecological baseline survey (under Forest Village Programme)
HKU CCSG

Habitat protection & management

- Butterfly garden (under Forest Village Programme)
HKU CCSG

* Former organizer: Stories South & North

VR’s Vision

- Supports ecotourism but hopes more cultural elements can be integrated into tourism development
- Wants the village to be suitable for visiting, even if not for residence
- Welcomes universities but notes that villagers would like to see projects which achieve more practical results



Ngau Shi Wu



Non-resident
population

Full-time
residents

89

0

Potentials / Challenges

Social / community

- Village is entirely abandoned and has no residents
-
- Difficulty of carrying out basic revitalisation work due to **lack of labour and stakeholder motivation**

Landscape / ecological assets

- Distinct views of its own bay and special high altitude area viewpoint at the peak of Ngau Shi Wu Shan
-
- Better promotion and design of these assets to **draw visitors and generate income for investment** in wider revitalisation
- The plant-covered (especially Derris climbers) ruins create a unique attraction and atmospheric effect
-
- **Showcase habitation history** and incorporate it with recreational opportunities
- Ngau Shi Wu is promoted through AFCD's Double Haven Country Trail
-
- **Leverage existing promotion** for building village brand and new attractions

Accessibility / village environment

- The village is hard to get to and its short jetty means bigger boats cannot bring in visitors
-
- **Obstacle of enhancing tourist flows** to the village and **dependence on its difficult terrestrial access** from Sam A Tsuen

“If you sell the ancestral land for money you will spend all of it quickly, but you can never buy the meaning back.”

— Ngau Shi Wu VR



Potentials / Challenges

Revitalisation efforts

- Limited recognition (no OZP) of Ngau Shi Wu at the government level
-
- **Limits planning potential** and **bars some land-use activities** from being carried out

Projects

No ongoing physical projects in Ngau Shi Wu.

Feasibility study

- Feasibility study on restoring and improving village environments
Private firm
- Feasibility study of fish ponds for research purposes
University researchers
- Consultations for revitalisation potentials
CCO / EPD / Private

Status of the project: ● Ongoing ● Completed

VR's Vision

- Supports ecotourism overall as a justification for further village development
- After funding is sourced, there can be a full rebuilding project for the village
- Would prefer to keep the village more natural as opposed to commercial or industrial overdevelopment
- Suggested a hybrid tourist-resident mode of building as a way to make a renovation programme viable – lower part is a tourist zone and the upper part is rebuilt for residents



Sam A Tsuen



Non-resident
population

237

Full-time
residents

15

Potentials / Challenges

Social / community

- Community has self-initiated projects to restore the village collectively → Growing social capital enables **more ambitious collective initiatives**
- Ongoing restoration of houses has and continues to bring back residents → Enables village to support **long-term vibrant living communities**

Landscape / ecological assets

- Unique views of bay and river with standout coastal features → Use these assets to **better promote Sam A Tsuen's ecological values**
- Sam A Tsuen is promoted through AFCD's Double Haven Country Trail → Incorporate **villager-involved programming** to existing positioning

Accessibility / village environment

- Condition of existing pier prevents mooring of bigger boats → **Non-direct access** hinders transport of people and resources

Agriculture

- Drying up of wetlands due to lack of active management → Challenges efforts to resume **active agriculture** within the village
- Wild boar intrusion of farmlands

Tourism

- Insufficient local raw material production means relying on regional markets → Rising tourism demand enables **supply-side production opportunities**

“If I bring my daughter back to our hometown and she sees the houses are broken, why would she want to come back? ... We don't need awards we just need infrastructure and sustainable development...”

— Sam A Tsuen villager



Potentials / Challenges

Revitalisation efforts

- Lack of coordination of ongoing projects and villager-led activities → Reduces **synergistic collaborations** and limits scope of revitalisation
- Fragmented property rights because of complicated family inheritance → **Obstacle to consolidate land assets** for more ambitious projects

Projects

Status of the project: ● Ongoing ● Completed

Itinerary mapping

- Lai Sam Ancient Trail promotion on the Enjoy Hiking Website AFCD

Tourist facility enhancements

- Improvement to village square at Sam A (under the district minor works) HAD
- Public toilet construction HAD

Path improvements

- Road repair and paving improvement HAD
- Road repair from the Lai Sam Ancient Trail AFCD

Agricultural start-up

- Small scale farming Villagers

Crop replanting

- Fruit tree replanting Villagers

Self-renovation

- Renovation of village houses Villagers

Local entrepreneurship and value added agriculture

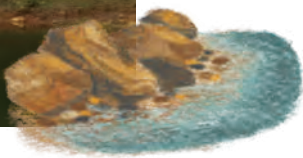
- 3 Restaurants, 1 agri-product store Villagers

VR's Vision

- Welcomes anything good for the village development as long as the villagers have some profit in return
- Wants to resume the original scenery of the village through the planting of some crops and other landscape features
- Envisions starting a Sam A Tsuen committee, then applying for a village office on government land
- Sees an opportunity to grant unused land for university students as a low-cost way of expanding revitalisation



Siu Tan



Non-resident
population

Full-time
residents

32

0

Potentials / Challenges

Social / community

- Siu Tan has no residents and is not recognized as a village by planning authorities → • **Lack of motivation from government** to provide resources for revitalisation
- Indigenous villagers have lived abroad for many years and do not intend to return for full-time residence → • **Limits the scale and scope** of revitalisation possible

Landscape / ecological assets

- The large scale and moderately preserved fish ponds provide a unique landscape attraction to the adjoining villages → • **Rehabilitation of fish ponds** in order to valorise, protect and promote them
- Siu Tan is promoted through AFCD's Double Haven Country Trail → • Siu Tan's membership in the trail is an opportunity to **add value and draw tourists** to the renovated fishponds

Accessibility / village environment

- The village's area of unforested flat land is a substantial portion of its overall landmass → • Area could be used for **creating attractions or activities** to renew revitalisation efforts and enable village level renovation
- A series of derelict, overgrown but still usable building stock → • **Possibility of renovating and reusing** for individuals to live or organisations to undertake activities

Potentials / Challenges

Revitalisation efforts

- No ongoing projects in Siu Tan and past projects related to aquaculture ended in failure → • **Lack of confidence in revitalisation prospects** and **lack of vision** for the village

Projects

Reuse of fish ponds

- Lai Chi Wo Hatchery Development for Sustainable Fishery in Hong Kong Waters
- Renting of fish ponds for seagrass research

NT FFA

PolyU

Status of the project: ● Discontinued

VR's Vision

- Goal is to remove the overgrown vegetation cover to reveal the houses again, and eventually to renovate them
- Hopes development of nearby villages will stimulate the interest of local villagers and lead to the revitalisation of Siu Tan
- Believes renting out the ponds and letting external parties organise activities or even ecotourism could be a way of revitalising the village



So Lo Pun



“I want every visitor to see the original landscape of our village – terraces everywhere, village houses in rows”

— So Lo Pun VR



Non-resident population
356

Full-time residents
0

Potentials / Challenges

Social / community

- So Lo Pun's OZP presumes no resident population → Villagers express interest in returning but little chance of being assisted by policies for house renovation
- Prevents full-scaled revitalisation and resettlement of village

Landscape / ecological assets

- Unique open valley views of the adjoining territory and its hilltop highlands offer expansive vistas of the surrounding forested hills → Small scale infrastructure highlighting views and active attractions to enhance the hiking experience
- The overgrown ruins with contrasting red couplets provide a distinct mystique to the village atmosphere → Refurbishment of village layout and provision of complementary facilities to leverage these assets

Accessibility / village environment

- Ancient So-Kuk trail connects So Lo Pun and Kuk Po → Renovate and reopen to increase village accessibility and enhance interaction with Kuk Po
- Presence of a pier with the potential of opening up for public use

Agriculture

- Citrus orchard produces annual harvest of tangerines → Harness resource into tangible programmes that draw people in, create livelihood opportunities
- Villagers have begun restoring the local wetland to use as a fishpond → Aquaculture can be used as an attraction to draw paying visitors or as a commercial enterprise

Potentials / Challenges

Tourism

- Isolated from major existing tourism flows (at Luk Keng and Lai Chi Wo) and difficult to reach via footpath → Experiences minimal benefit from ongoing tourism development

Revitalisation efforts

- Two previous revitalisation attempts failed due to a lack of sustainable long-term funding → Lack of long-term permanent resources hinders both revival and maintenance of the village landscape

Projects

Tourist facility additions

- Rain shelter construction
- LCS

Path improvements

- Road repair and paving improvement *
- HAD

Crop replanting

- Fruit tree replanting
- Villagers

Village space improvements

- Clearing of village overgrowth *
 - Dam and floodgate renovation
- SLP FFAH Group
Villagers, volunteers

Revitalisation consultations

- Field trip for revitalisation potential
- Villagers

Project-specific community funds

- So Lo Pun Village revitalisation Foundation
- Villagers

New rural governance

- So Lo Pun Fishery, Farming and Animal Husbandry Group (SLP FFAH) *
- Villagers

Institutional design

- Village Commoning: Developing a Community-led Model in Countryside Revitalisation
- HKU DLA

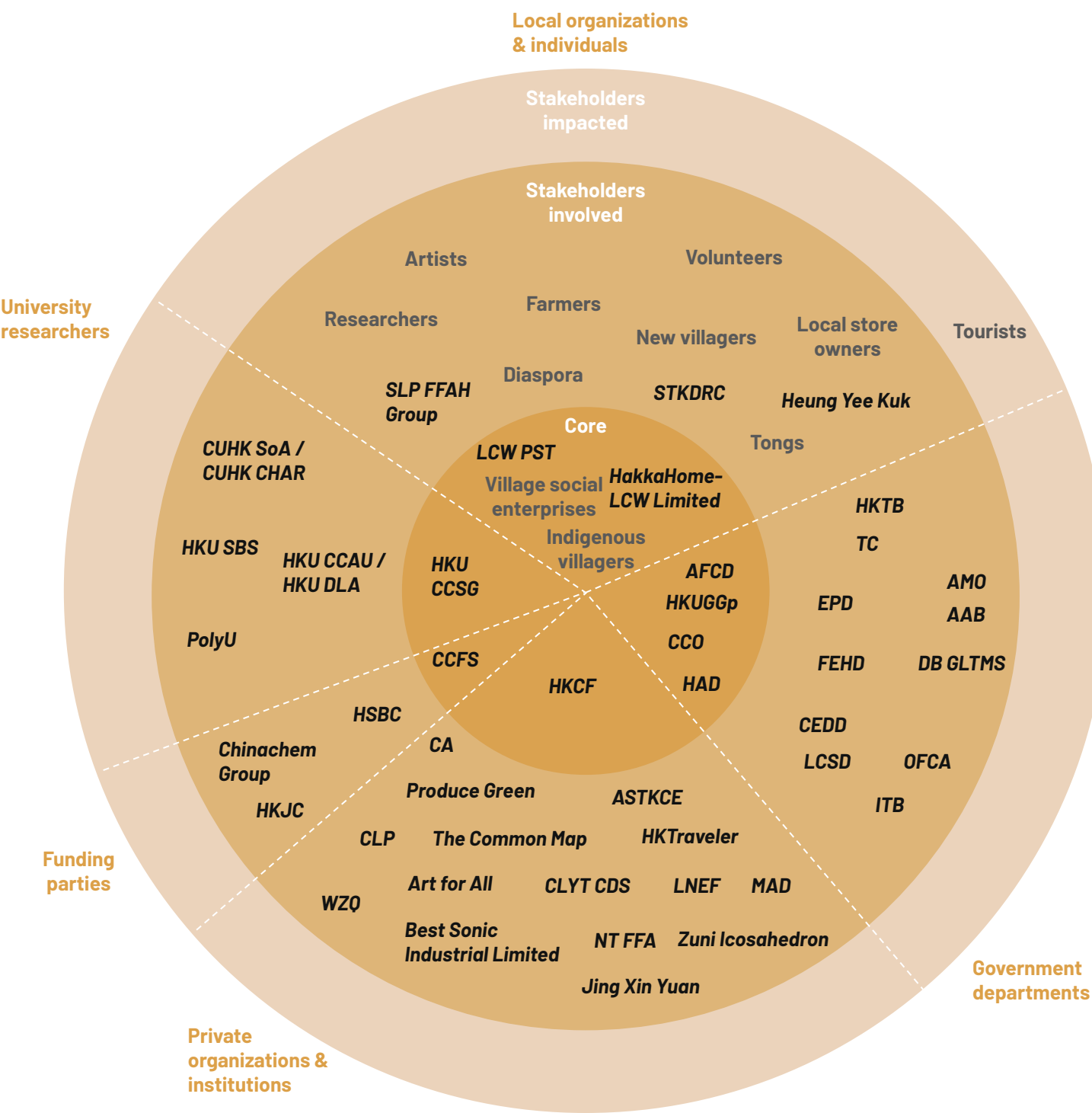
Status of the project: ● Ongoing ● Completed (* Project discontinued)

VR's Vision

- Vision for the village is to leverage its positioning between more popular villages and act as a 'midway supply station' offering simple refreshments
- Wants to reproduce the silhouette of the old village, restore terraced fields in front of the houses and remove the visitor myth of being a ghost village
- His modest ambition: to rebuild one or two houses good enough for people to live in and keep the original feel of the village



Institutional context - stakeholder diagram



List of abbreviations & acronyms

AAB	Antiques Advisory Board
AFCD	Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
AMO	Antiquities and Monuments Office
ASTKCE	Association for Sha Tau Kok Cultural and Ecology
CA	Conservancy Association
CCO	Countryside Conservation Office
CEDD	Civil Engineering and Development Department
CLP	China Light and Power Company
CLYT CDS	Caritas Lung Yeuk Tau Community Development Scheme
CUHK CAHR	Chinese University of Hong Kong's Centre for Architectural Heritage Research
CUHK SoA	Chinese University of Hong Kong's School of Architecture
DB GLTMS	Development Bureau's Greening, Landscape & Tree Management Section
EPD	Environmental Protection Department
FEHD	Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
GOV	Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
HAD	Home Affairs Department
HCY	Hing Chun Yeuk
HKCF	The Hong Kong Countryside Foundation
HKJC	Hong Kong Jockey Club
HKTb	Hong Kong Tourism Board
HKUGGp	Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark
HKU CCSG	The University of Hong Kong's Centre for Civil Society & Governance
HKU DLA	The University of Hong Kong's Department of Landscape Architecture
HKU CCAU	The University of Hong Kong's Centre for Chinese Architecture and Urbanism
HKU SBS	The University of Hong Kong's School of Biological Sciences
HSBC	Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited
ITB	Innovation and Technology Bureau
LCSD	Leisure and Cultural Services Department
LCW PST	Lai Chi Wo Pui Shing Tong
LNEF	Lions Nature Education Foundation
MaD	Make a Difference Institute Ltd
NT FFA	New Territories Fishermen Fraternity Association Limited
OFCA	Office of Communications Authority
OZP	Outline Zoning Plan
PolyU	The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
SLP FFAH Group	So Lo Pun Fishery, Farming and Animal Husbandry Group
STK	Sha Tau Kok
STKDRC	Sha Tau Kok District Rural Committee
TC	Tourism Commission
VR	Village Representative
WZQ	Wu Zhi Qlao (Bridge to China) Charitable Foundation
3Cs	"Co-creation of the Community" Scheme under HKU CCSG

Forest Village Programme refers to the "Forest village - Mui Tsz Lam and Kop Tong sustainable village programme"

