

## Definition of Conservation NPOs

We began the study by defining and locating the CG population for data collection. First, we adapted the definition in the Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-Profit Sector Project (CNSP) to our study series. In CNSP, NPOs are defined as entities that are *organized, private, non-profit-distributing, self-governing* and *voluntary*.<sup>1</sup> In our research exercise, we define a Hong Kong CG under the following criteria:

- The group is non-profit making, non-governmental, self-governing, and voluntary; and
- The primary purpose of the groups is related to conservation of either the natural or built environment, or both; and
- The group is organized either formally or informally, and may or may not be legally registered. Informal organizations include those having no legal identity, no office, no management structure, etc.

In our research exercise on the Social Services Sector, we explicitly excluded ad hoc alliances or networks formed primarily to tackle single social issues in single instances. In this research exercise, however, we have slightly relaxed the definition of CGs owing to the very different operational characteristics of the natural and built environment Conservation Sector. We included CGs that are formally organized as well as those informally organized through networks or set up to tackle specific environment or urban planning issues. Nonetheless, we have excluded ad hoc “groups” that are set up for single events (single protest, signature campaign or movement) in an impromptu manner. For example, if certain individuals organize a single protest through social media such as Facebook or Twitter, such a “group” is not included in our definition.<sup>2</sup>

The second step was to categorize the groups with reference to an international classification scheme. We adapted the International Classification of Non-profit Organizations (ICNPO) scheme to identify relevant NPO categories. Under the ICNPO, NPOs in the Environment sector are divided into

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<sup>1</sup> Salamon, L.M. and Anheier H.K. (1997), p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> We recognize the possibility that such single events or movements may have a significant impact on policy outcomes or social awareness; however, this survey is ‘organization’ based. The criteria adopted in international surveys on organizations are taken as reference in our study and thus such single-events are not included in our definitions. We think that research on single events should be better done by way of case studies.

- “environment protection groups” with three sub-categories, namely, (a) pollution abatement and control, (b) natural resources, conservation, and protection, and (c) environmental beautification and open spaces; and
- “animal protection groups.”

In this research exercise, we group the first two sub-categories of “environment protection” and “animal protection” as **natural environment conservation groups (NECGs)**. Groups under the sub-category of “environmental beautification and open spaces” are known as **built environment conservation groups (BECGs)**. In this research exercise, BECGs are those concerned with heritage conservation, and the impacts of town planning or urban renewal on the environment and ways of life.

The third step was to locate the CGs under these definitions and categories in the following ways:

- We first consulted the List of Charitable Institutions and Trusts from the Inland Revenue Department (as at 31 August 2009)<sup>3</sup> and identified potential candidates (by their names) that are likely to fall under our definitions and categories. We confirmed their status by checking the webpages of the organizations or groups where available. For groups that did not have a webpage, we conducted Internet searches to obtain further information on them. As a result, 93 CGs were identified.
- Second, while all charitable organizations are put on the List according to Hong Kong’s tax exemption laws, not all non-profit organizations are charities. We then looked to other government policy documents, attendance lists of relevant Legislative Council panel meetings, and commercial directories (such as Timway) to manually identify any other non-charitable and non-profit candidates that are not listed in the List of Charitable Institutions and Trust.<sup>4</sup> In this way, 17 CGs were located.

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<sup>3</sup> List of Charitable Institutions and Trust of a Public Character, which are Except From Tax Under Section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance as at 31 August 2009.

<sup>4</sup> We consulted the attendance lists of the Urban Renewal Strategy Review Focus Group Discussions where 20 of these discussions took place. The information is available on the Urban Renewal Strategy Review Website [http://www.ursreview.gov.hk/eng/public\\_envision.html](http://www.ursreview.gov.hk/eng/public_envision.html). We also conducted a search in the press release on the Urban Renewal Authority Website for names of potential civil society groups.

- Third, after we compiled our initial population, we conducted snowball sampling. This technique is often used for populations that are hard to identify. We also consulted people in the relevant field to suggest candidate groups and provide contact details, where possible. This method revealed 32 CGs.
- Through the above methods, we were able to obtain a final population of 142 groups<sup>5</sup> of which 72 fall under the natural environment conservation category, 32 under the animal protection category, and 38 under the built environment conservation category.

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<sup>5</sup> This number includes 12 groups which were identified after the survey had started.