



# PARIS WATCH

## HONG KONG REPORT CARD

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### 2021

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Student:

**Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**

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Subject:

**Paris Climate Agreement -  
Mitigation and Adaptation**

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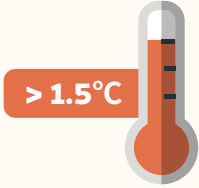

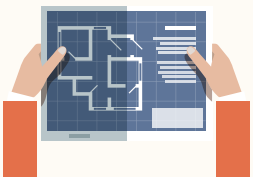
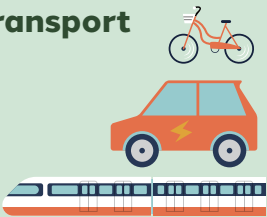

Average Climate Score:

**C-**







Although HKSAR have a clearer target of energy saving and carbon reduction,  
poor planning without sound methodology and robust sub-targets  
will fail the action plan and frustrate the people residing in it.

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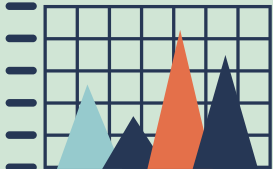



# Paris Climate Agreement - Mitigation and Adaptation

Mitigation – Cutting Hong Kong's Carbon Emissions		
Subject	Comments	Mark
<b>Greenhouse Gas Emissions</b> 	<p><b>Is Hong Kong cutting greenhouse gas emissions fast enough to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement?</b></p> <p>The ultimate emissions reduction target is important, but so is the trajectory of change as this determines how fast we use up the world's carbon budget between now and mid-century.</p> <p><b>Remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a developed city, Hong Kong could do much better than the IPCC recommendation for an average greenhouse gas emission reduction of at least 45% by 2030. Its commitment to cut 50% carbon emissions by 2035 is not backed up by robust plans. We predict that 50% carbon emission reduction by 2035 will be at least 5 years behind the 1.5°C carbon budget.</li> </ul>	C
<b>Renewable Energy Generation</b> 	<p><b>Is Hong Kong transitioning to a low carbon economy by developing renewable energy supplies in the right way and at a suitable rate?</b></p> <p>Renewable generation of electricity lies at the heart of global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p><b>Remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hong Kong's commitment to increase renewable energy to 7.5-10% of the city's energy portfolio by 2035 is a dismay target. It makes little effort to implement local renewable energy including offshore wind farms and community solar farms. In addition, C40 launched a declaration on scaling up renewable energy and Hong Kong's target is far behind the three pathways as stipulated in the declaration.</li> <li>Hong Kong's Feed-In-Tariff scheme helps increase the number of roof-top solar PV installations but the overall increase in renewable energy in the fuel mix is rather low.</li> </ul>	D
<b>Energy Efficiency in Buildings</b> 	<p><b>Are plans and policies in place to enable high enough levels of energy efficiency in buildings to meet climate targets?</b></p> <p>Buildings consume nearly 90% of Hong Kong's electricity usage.</p> <p><b>Remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hong Kong makes little effort to improve its building energy code so that a mandatory energy certification can be required. Moreover, the city has no plan to retrofit energy efficiency requirements for existing buildings with mandatory measures, which will only mean the problem of energy inefficiency will worsen over future decades.</li> </ul>	C-
<b>Low-emission Transport</b> 	<p><b>How is Hong Kong doing in ensuring a low-carbon future when it comes to transportation?</b></p> <p>Local transport is the second-biggest user of energy and emitter of greenhouse gasses in Hong Kong.</p> <p><b>Remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantified targets are not set for 2030. All new actions are on trial basis with no plan for upscaling.</li> </ul>	C-
<b>Waste Management and other Energy Use</b> 	<p><b>Are waste management and waste disposal initiatives keeping up with Hong Kong's plans for a low-carbon future?</b></p> <p>A third important area for energy efficiency concerns the way we dispose of waste, both in terms of reducing the waste we produce and treating our remaining waste.</p> <p><b>Remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The delay and uncertainty in the start date of waste charge scheme was a serious blow to achieving goals of waste recovery.</li> </ul>	C-

## Adaptation – Building a Safe and Sustainable Future for Hong Kong

Subject	Comments	Mark
<b>Protecting Health</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hot weather</li> <li>• New diseases</li> </ul> 	<p><b>Are we on top of the problem of new and more widespread diseases resulting from higher average temperatures?</b></p> <p><b>Are the right policies and health systems in place to protect people vulnerable to higher average temperatures?</b></p> <p><b>Remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No solid plan nor action for the underprivileged communities on extreme heat and diseases are proposed. Present occupational safety policies are not adequate enough to protect the frontline, outdoor workers under hot weather.</li> </ul>	C-
<b>Safe and Secure Water Supply</b> 	<p><b>Is water security an issue in Hong Kong and are we doing enough to prepare for it?</b></p> <p>Disruption and safety of water supply is seen as one of the challenges posed by climate change.</p> <p><b>Remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hong Kong's water security issue is masked by its water supply agreement with Guangdong Province, which is however a fragile arrangement when drought conditions will become more severe under climate change. Over-reliance on the trans-boundary water supply is therefore one of top risks for Hong Kong. More reclaimed water and desalinate water should serve as other sources to diversify the Hong Kong's water supply.</li> </ul>	C
<b>Reducing Fire Risk</b> 	<p><b>Are larger wildfires a risk for Hong Kong and are we adequately prepared?</b></p> <p><b>Remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	B-
<b>Floods &amp; Landslips</b> 	<p><b>Is Hong Kong ready for the impact of heavier rainfall?</b></p> <p>Extreme weather brings periods of heavier rainfall raising the risks of floods and landslips.</p> <p><b>Remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hong Kong has a world class system to handle landslides but the lack of public information of flood maps is a handicap for both public and private sectors to develop climate adaptation measures.</li> </ul>	C
<b>Typhoons &amp; Sea Level Rise</b> 	<p><b>Are there adequate policies and plans in place to protect Hong Kong from super typhoons, heavier rainfall and rising seas, particularly when they occur in combination?</b></p> <p><b>Remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hong Kong has ever been studying but not started planning for coastal defence structure, where coastal erosion is a threat to some of the most valuable properties and infrastructure.</li> </ul>	C-
<b>Natural Coastlines and Biodiversity</b> 	<p><b>How is Hong Kong doing in protecting nature for all?</b></p> <p>Protecting biodiversity and ecosystems is not only an end in itself, but also a good indicator of the social and psychological health of a community. Good policies on biodiversity also indicate that a territory is showing responsibility and playing its part to protect the common good of earth as a whole.</p> <p><b>Is Hong Kong acting to stamp out trade in endangered species?</b></p> <p>In addition to protecting our indigenous flora and fauna, protection of diversity includes reducing the risk to life forms through the illegal consumption and trade in endangered species.</p> <p><b>Remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hong Kong has not yet upgraded its biodiversity protection plan in line with increased threats. Nature-based climate solutions (including carbon removal) are missing in the action plan.</li> </ul>	C

## Systems – Enabling Institutions, Knowledge and Finance

Subject	Comments	Mark
<b>Governance</b> 	<b>Has Hong Kong established the right leadership with the power to drive climate action?</b> <p>Essential to the achievement of any climate plans will be effective governance. This includes competent climate leadership with the right level of authority and the mandate to drive change, backed up with support from the very top, along with effective institutions and adequate funding</p> <p><b>Remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is little transparency in its operations and inadequate public participation in decision-making process. “There is a lack of “multilevel governance, showing that advancing governance of climate change across all levels of government and relevant stakeholders is crucial to avoid policy gaps between local action plans and national policy frameworks (vertical integration) and to encourage cross-scale learning between relevant departments or institutions in local and regional governments (horizontal dimension).” (OECD 2009)</li> </ul>	
<b>Finance</b> 	<b>As a global financial centre, is Hong Kong positioning itself to play an adequate role in financing climate action, both locally and internationally?</b> <p>The Paris Climate Agreement highlights the importance of financing to achieve the climate goals.</p> <p><b>Remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate change is one of the six topics based on EU taxonomy of sustainable finance. While EU is mandating Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR), Hong Kong is probably waiting for China's common-ground taxonomy. As a central bank, Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) is lagging behind on capacity building for the whole banking sector, which could be seen from the pilot on climate stress test.</li> </ul>	
<b>Technology</b> 	<b>Is Hong Kong playing its part developing and applying the technology and science for renewable energy, energy efficiency and carbon removal?</b> <p><b>Remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial support for applied research in renewable energy and carbon removal are far from being sufficient. Therefore, a lot of viable technologies are developed but the commercialization fails. Incentives should be provided to promote the implementation of green technologies.</li> </ul>	
<b>MRV – Monitoring, Reporting and Verification</b> 	<b>Is Hong Kong producing and distributing the information and analysis necessary for driving and further developing our climate action policies?</b> <p>Measuring the impact of climate change, measuring the effectiveness of mitigation and adaptation initiatives and reporting these measurements in a transparent and accountable way is an essential part of effective climate action.</p> <p><b>Remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hong Kong SAR government has not opened up climate-related database for the public, nor put Monitoring, Reporting and Verification system in place.</li> </ul>	

## Head Teacher's Summary



The recent release of the “Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050”, as an updated version of “Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2030+”, does not gain an average higher scores than last year from our expert panel. That said, setting an interim 50% reduction target of carbon emissions by 2035, and positioning Hong Kong as a regional green finance hub are positive steps forward.

But the rest of the Plan leaves more questions than answers to how it can help Hong Kong SAR achieve the carbon neutrality by 2050.

Without much deeper pathways towards decarbonisation in immediate future, we are afraid that Hong Kong's action plan will be behind the 1.5°C carbon budget as set out by the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

In addition, government has not discussed how they could move beyond 2035 and to next zero by 2050.



The scores in the report result from averaged marks provided by a panel of experts comprising\*:

- Ir. Albert Lai -- CEO, Carbon Care Asia Ltd; Founding Chair of The Professional Commons and HK People's Council for Sustainable Development
- Prof. Dennis Leung -- Head, Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Hong Kong; Board Member, HK Institution of Science
- Prof. Michael Leung -- Professor, School of Energy and Environment; Director, Ability R&D Energy Research Centre, City University of Hong Kong
- Mr. Ringo Mak -- Co-founder, 350HK
- Prof. Ng Mee Kam -- Vice Chair, Department of Geography and Resource Management; Director, Urban Studies Programme; Associate Director, Institute of Future Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong
- Prof. Shelley Zhou -- Adjunct Associate Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

\*in alphabetical order of panelists' surname