

Hong Kong as an International Conservation Centre

US-based international environmental organisation sees Hong Kong as an ideal centre for conservation works.



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Charles Bedford
Asia Pacific Regional
Managing Director
The Nature Conservancy

Set up by a group of ecologists in 1951 in Arlington, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is an international charitable organisation focusing on providing pragmatic, scientific based solutions to the most pressing conservation threats around the world. Currently with more than a million members and branches in over 70 countries, TNC has partnered with a wide range of institutions worldwide, from enterprises to governments, and also different social organisations.

To strengthen its network in the APAC region, TNC opened an office in Hong Kong and eventually set up a headquarters in 2012. “We consider Hong Kong as our regional hub because many world-known corporations are based here,” said Charles Bedford, Asia Pacific Regional Managing Director, “it is convenient for us to engage with businesses and gain support from these corporations for our further development and projects.”

According to Bedford, Hong Kong has a strong consciousness of philanthropy. “People here are generous and corporations carry strong social responsibilities. They are very interested in supporting our preservation works in Hong Kong. We would love to reach more individuals and foundations for financial support,” he said.

In the long run, TNC is working on growing its Hong Kong headquarters into an international conservation centre. “Hong Kong is strongly committed to conservation works as 50 percent of land is countryside, which is rare in Asia. It opens up a lot of opportunities to bring more professionals here and we would love to further expand our scope of work,” Bedford said.

Currently there are approximately 15 staff members in the Hong Kong office, half of which focuses on researching for regional climate, water, and food sustainability. One of their major projects is reforestation

programme in Mainland China that involves implementing more than 27,000 acres of forest carbon-offset projects and planting over 20 million tree seedlings. In Hong Kong, the expert team conducted the city’s first oysters research, exploring the ecological and aquacultural impacts of oysters and restoring oyster reefs in Lau Fau Shan.

The Hong Kong team also focuses on marketing, fundraising and project operations, such as launching student programmes every year. The Citizen Science in Action, one of their major education programmes, offers local students the opportunities to gain deep understanding in conservation and sustainability by collecting and analysing data in field work.

The Nature Conservancy has been working closely with InvestHK for years. “InvestHK has been offering help to us in facilitating the networks of the organisation and giving publicity support. We believe it can play a crucial role in connecting different non-governmental organisations with local enterprises,” he concluded.

The Nature Conservancy

- Founded in 1951 in Arlington, currently has branches in 72 countries
- Focus on providing pragmatic, scientific based solutions to the most pressing conservation threats around the world.
- Set up Asia Pacific Headquarters in Hong Kong in 2012

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