

CHAPTER 2

THE DEMARCATION EXERCISE

Before Public Consultation

Section 1 : Statutory Criteria for Demarcation

2.1 The Commission adopted a set of criteria, as stipulated under section 20 of the EACO, as the basis for making its recommendations.

These criteria are –

- (a) The EAC shall ensure that the population in each proposed DCCA is as near the population quota as practicable.
“Population quota” means the figure arrived at by dividing the total population of Hong Kong by the total number of elected members to be returned in the DC ordinary election.
- (b) Where it is not practicable to comply with (a) in a certain proposed DCCA, the EAC shall ensure that the population in that DCCA does not exceed or fall short of the population quota by more than 25%.
- (c) The EAC shall have regard to the community identities, preservation of local ties, and the physical features (such as the size, shape, accessibility and development) of the area.

- (d) The EAC must follow the existing boundaries of the districts and the number of elected members to be returned to a DC as specified in Schedules 1 and 3 of the District Councils Ordinance.
- (e) The EAC may depart from strict adherence to (a) and (b) only where it appears that considerations referred to in (c) justify such departure.

2.2 After the addition of five elected seats for the third term DC, the number of constituencies to be delineated for the 2007 DC ordinary election is 405. A list of DCCAs after the addition is at **Appendix I**.

2.3 For this demarcation exercise, the population quota was 17,275 (6,996,222, being the projected population of Hong Kong as at 30 June 2007 provided by the Administration (see paragraph 2.6), divided by 405 (the total number of elected members to be returned to DCs in the 2007 ordinary election)). Consequently, the permissible range of deviation (referred to in paragraph 2.1 (b) above) of the population of a DCCA from the population quota is 12,956 to 21,594.

Section 2 : Working Principles

2.4 The Commission also adopted a set of working principles for the demarcation exercise –

- (a) For existing DCCAs where the population falls within the permissible range of 12,956 to 21,594, their boundaries will not be changed.
- (b) For existing DCCAs where the population falls outside the permissible range, but the situation was allowed for the 2003 ordinary election and the justifications have remained valid, their boundaries will not be changed.
- (c) For existing DCCAs other than those in (b) where the population falls outside the permissible range, their boundaries will be adjusted to comply with the population quota requirement. This may necessitate revising the boundaries of the adjoining DCCAs. Where there is more than one way to adjust the boundaries of the DCCAs concerned, the one which affects the least number of existing DCCAs, or the one with the least departure from the population quota, will be adopted.
- (d) Factors with political implications will not be taken into consideration.
- (e) The names of the new DCCAs to be formed are proposed by reference to major landmarks, roads or residential settlements in the DCCAs after consultation with the relevant District Officers (“DOs”).

- (f) The Commission's provisional recommendations on the code references of districts and constituency areas were that the districts should be given the alphabetical reference from "A" onwards, with the omission of "I" and "O" to prevent confusion, starting from Central and Western district and other districts on Hong Kong Island, followed by the districts in Kowloon and the New Territories. The numbering of constituency areas in a district was to be prefixed by the alphabet reference for the district and started from the first numeral. "01" should be allocated to the most densely populated area, or the area traditionally considered most important or prominent or the centre of the district, and the number proceeded consecutively in a clockwise direction so that as far as possible two consecutive numbers should be found in two areas contiguous to each other. The Commission hoped that by adopting this system, any one who consults the maps would find it easier to understand them and locate the constituency areas. These methods have been employed since 1994 and the public should be generally familiar with them.
- (g) Where constituency boundaries have to continue into the sea, the DCCA boundary lines are, as far as possible, drawn perpendicular to the district boundary lines on the sea.
- (h) Suggestions and comments from members of the public

received since the last demarcation exercise will be taken into consideration and, where appropriate, accepted.

The criteria and working principles mentioned above were also adopted for the demarcation exercise for the 1999 and 2003 DC Elections.

Section 3 : Working Partners

2.5 The Registration and Electoral Office (“REO”) provided the manpower required for carrying out the exercise.

2.6 An Ad Hoc Subgroup (“AHSG”), formed under the Working Group on Population Distribution Projections set up in the Planning Department (“PlanD”), took up the primary task of providing the Commission with the necessary population forecasts, the most essential information required for the conduct of the exercise. The AHSG was chaired by an Assistant Director of the PlanD and comprised representatives from Constitutional Affairs Bureau (“CAB”), Census and Statistics Department, Home Affairs Department (“HAD”), Housing Department (“HD”), Lands Department (“LandsD”), Rating and Valuation Department and the REO. To enhance the accuracy of the result produced, the AHSG was requested to project the population distribution figures as at a date as close to the election date as practicable. The AHSG provided a population forecast as at 30 June 2007, assuming that the DC ordinary election would be held in late 2007.

2.7 The LandsD rendered assistance in producing maps for the Commission, including the base maps (maps with street blocks, population figure in each block, existing DCCA boundaries and district boundaries), maps with the proposed DCCA boundaries, and boundary descriptions.

2.8 The District Offices of the HAD provided strong support in the demarcation exercise. Using their local knowledge about community identities, local ties, and physical features and developments in the DCCAs of their districts, the DOs contributed valuable advice to the EAC's delineation work

2.9 The Information Services Department ("ISD") contributed expert advice for mapping out the publicity strategy and ideas for designing the publicity programmes and materials for the consultation exercise.

Section 4 : The Work Process

Start of work

2.10 The AHSG held its first meeting in September 2005 to work out the method to be adopted for compiling the data and the work schedule. In late March 2006 the forecast population figures were made available, on the basis of which the LandsD prepared the base maps.

When these base maps were ready, the REO staff proceeded to work on the preliminary proposed delineation of the boundaries.

Site visits

2.11 Since physical features such as the size, shape, accessibility and development of an area were important considerations in the delineation work, in order to gain first-hand information on areas where the geographical situations might impact on the delineation of constituency boundaries, the REO staff conducted site visits to various districts to identify the unique physical features, transport facilities and accessibility in the DCCAs where the population had exceeded the permissible limits and significant developments had taken place since the last demarcation exercise. The relevant information and topographical facts so gathered were analysed and taken into account in drawing up the preliminary proposals.

EAC meetings with the DOs

2.12 When the REO staff had finalised their preliminary recommendations on the boundaries and names of the DCCAs, the proposals were presented to the Commission for consideration with the aid of base maps and satellite maps, as appropriate. The Commission invited all the DOs to attend a series of meetings in June 2006 to discuss the proposals relating to their districts. Photographs taken from the site

visits were presented at the meetings to facilitate better understanding of the local features and the environment of the DCCAs affected by the delineation.

Provisional proposal

2.13 In the EAC's provisional recommendations, the boundaries of 142 DCCAs had to be changed and 29 DCCAs were renamed. The EAC allowed the permissible limits of the population quota to be exceeded in 14 DCCAs for one reason or the other. The names of these DCCAs, the percentages of deviation and the reasons for allowing the permissible limits to be exceeded, are shown in **Appendix II**.

2.14 After the EAC had come up with the provisional recommendations on the boundaries of the DCCAs, the REO started to prepare for the launch of public consultation exercise on the EAC's provisional proposal for a period of 30 days, from 27 July to 25 August 2006. Details of the provisional recommendations were contained in two volumes published for the public consultation exercise.