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## Cross-Boundary Study on Polluted Pearl River Estuary

A 3-year study by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) and its Chinese Mainland partners on pollution in the Pearl River Estuary has been completed, laying a solid foundation for continuing cross-border environmental investigation.

The findings of the Pearl River Estuary Pollution Project (PREPP) were presented at the 3-day Symposium on Estuary Research, opened at HKUST today. Guest speakers from the Chinese Mainland, Europe, the United States, and Vietnam are also sharing their experience in estuary research, and a panel discussion on the future clean-up of the Pearl River Estuary will be held on 25 April 2002.

PREPP is the most comprehensive cross-boundary study on the Pearl River Estuary to date. Co-Principal Investigator, Prof Gary Heinke, said: "Compared with other major estuaries in the world, Asian estuaries have only recently been investigated. One major objective of PREPP is to provide the scientific basis for Hong Kong and the Guangdong Province to refine their pollution monitoring and control strategies."

The PREPP team has built up a large database of scientific data on the Pearl River Estuary, which is easily accessible to all interested parties in the Chinese Mainland, Hong Kong and elsewhere. PREPP has also developed a numerical model for hydrodynamics, sediment transport and water quality of the Pearl River Estuary and coastal waters, which has been of great use in examining a variety of related environmental issues.

"The Pearl River ecosystem is being threatened by inflow from its tributaries, several of which are heavily polluted. During the summer months, polluted estuary waters also enter Hong Kong, adding to the pollution caused by the SAR's own waste discharges," Prof Heinke said.

Enhancing cross-boundary collaboration is another major objective. "We felt strongly that collaborating with institutes in the Chinese Mainland, particularly in Guangdong, was required not only for the success of PREPP, but also to ensure that the personal and institutional cooperation achieved through PREPP would be long-lasting," said Prof Jay-Chung Chen, Co-Principal Investigator and Director of HKUST's Center for Coastal and Atmospheric Research.

One of the PREPP team's recommendations is for further long-term and comprehensive studies on the Pearl River Estuary, to provide solutions for clean-up.

PREPP was funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust as a Chief Executive's Community Project. The study was carried out by HKUST's Center for Coastal and Atmospheric Research, the Institute for Environment and Sustainable Development, and the Department of Biology. Collaborating institutes in the Chinese Mainland include the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Zhongshan University, and the Second Institute and Oceanography and South China Seas Monitoring Center of the State Oceanic Administration.