

DUTCHCHAM MAGAZINE

INTERVIEW WITH A CHIEF

6

Recycling valuable waste materials

- Tom Uiterwaal, Reconergy

LEAD STORY

16

ESG and sustainable finance best practices brought to you from the Boardroom of MTR

- Gill Meller & Jessica Chan

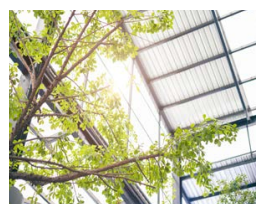


We would like to present one of our new committees to you:

THE SOURCING & TRADE COMMITTEE

- The ninth committee at the Dutch Chamber of Commerce, consisting of members active in the field of trade, logistics and sourcing.
- The committee aims to put trading on the map at the Chamber, organizing events and activities relevant for businesses, entrepreneurs and stakeholders active in this ecosystem.
- Potential topics identified by the committee are: shipping, quality, diversification, sustainability, talent & recruitment and customs/warehousing.
- It has the ambition to serve as a platform for both members in the industry and players outside the chamber & related fields.
- Expect more information on a launch event soon.
- Interested in joining this committee? **Contact us!**





PR & Pub Committee

Annemarelle van Schayik (Chair)

Monique de Raaij

Zuba Adham-Bos

Annemarijn de Boer

Emily Tunderman

Iris Barzilay

Editor

Zuba Adham-Bos

Graphic Design

Musch Agency

www.musch-agency.com

General Manager

Tom Bakker

Advertisers

Philips Electronics Hong Kong

Rabobank

The magazine for members of the Dutch
Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong

Suite 3002, 30/F, Central Plaza
18 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong
info@dutchchamber.hk
www.dutchchamber.hk



Special thanks to APC for their generosity in kindly distributing
the DutchCham Magazine in Hong Kong, China, Asia and the
Netherlands



CONTENTS

5	Chairman's Note
6	Interview with a Chief Recycling valuable waste materials
8	News & Views
15	Passing the Pen
16	Lead Story ESG and sustainable finance best practices brought to you from the Boardroom of MTR
18	Tax focus
19	China focus
20	Go Green
21	Legal focus
22	Passport to Hong Kong
24	New members
25	New board members
25	Lifestyle
27	DutchCham Information

Banking for Food

Connecting our global network

We envision a food system that meets rising demand for affordable, nutritious food. One that respects producer livelihoods and the planet.

*Growing a better
world together*

Rabobank 

DutchCham Board of Directors



Ms. Frery Winkel
Chairman
Director, ERM and Capital at Prudential



Mr. Michiel Mak
Vice-Chairman and Chair of the China Committee
CEO at EMCS Limited Hong Kong



Mr. Erik Bleekrode
Treasurer
Partner and Head of Insurance at KPMG China & Asia Pacific



Ms. Annemarelle van Schayik
Chair of the PR & Pub Committee
Group Head of Clients at Telum Media



Mr. Jeffrey Broer
Chair of the SME Committee
Venture Advisor at Kohpy Ventures

DutchCham Advisory Board

Mr. Arjen van den Berg
Chairman
Consul-General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Mr. Paul Zimmerman
Founding member of Designing Hong Kong &
Southern District Councillor

Mr. Daniël de Blocq van Scheltinga
Managing Partner of Polarwide Ltd.

Ms. Jennifer Chan
Director at DT Capital Ltd.

DutchCham Office



Mr. Tom Bakker
General Manager



Ms. Emily Tunderman
Marketing & Events Manager



Ms. Michelle Chan
Office & Administration Manager

SUSTAINABILITY



Welcome back to everyone who travelled abroad to visit families and friends overseas and/or to take a well-deserved holiday during the summer months. Luckily, the mandatory hotel quarantine requirements have been reduced from 7 days to 3 days and 4 days' amber code. And based on several news sources, Hong Kong officials seem to target an end to hotel quarantine in November.

I am happy with this prospect, and it is essential for both Hong Kong and the international business community to be back in global business. With a successful Belt and Road Summit 2022 on 31 August and 1 September, there will be new business opportunities. Hong Kong still aspires to live up to its slogan Asia's World City and will still be a fantastic place where not alone 'East meets West', but of course also the rest of the world.

Besides happy travelling, geo-political unrest and high inflation, another common news theme during the summer months was the consequences of climate change. The Netherlands and several other countries all over the world observed extreme drought. The Global Drought Observatory reported that Europe suffered the worst drought ever. Also, in other countries, for example in China – especially in Chongqing, they observed alarming drought and the longest heat wave of the century. In Pakistan, intense heatwaves, with melting glaciers in the northern mountainous region and a long monsoon caused extreme floods resulting in a catastrophe disaster of one-third of the country under water and around 33 million people displaced.

The theme of this magazine is Sustainability. How sustainable is our world? A lot needs to be done to ensure a pleasant world for our future generations. I am very pleased that many companies have sustainability high on the agenda and with a lot of brainpower and collaboration, we are together taking up the great challenge of tackling our global issues.

In this issue's Interview with a Chief, our member Tom Uiterwaal of Reconergy (winner of our Business Sustainability Award 2021) tells about the positive impacts the waste-to-energy industry can bring. Furthermore, several of our members share their efforts on the matter of sustainability. Have a great read!

Frery Winkel

RECYCLING VALUABLE WASTE MATERIALS

We speak with the winner of our Business Gala Sustainability Award, **Tom Uiterwaal**. Tom is the **Founder and CEO of Reconergy**, a waste-to-energy business moving valuable waste materials from Asia to Europe.

■ By Zuba Adham-Bos

Please tell us a bit about yourself

My name is Tom Uiterwaal. I came to Hong Kong in 2008 with my wife and three young children. I initially came here to build a biodiesel factory. Biodiesel is a green alternative for regular diesel, made from renewable materials. Working in this industry, I started to investigate more about biodiesel and the more I learned, the more passionate I became about the environment and sustainability. We need to do something to reduce the negative impact we have on the environment around us. That is when I started my own company Reconergy.



Flexibag loading

What does Reconergy do?

We are in the waste-to-energy business. Our main activity is sourcing waste materials for biofuel producers in Europe. In Europe, there is strong support for changing our fuel and energy mix to make it more sustainable. In that respect, Europe is ahead of the rest of the world.

Biofuels are produced from renewable sources. In our case, we provide used cooking oil, a waste

material. There is a preference for using waste materials for producing biofuels as it solves two problems: the growing amount of waste and producing sustainable fuels.

People often don't know that a landfill also produces carbon emissions. For example, in Hong Kong, waste handling is, after energy production and transport, the third biggest sector in carbon emission. So by reducing waste going to the landfill, we also reduce the carbon emissions. By using that waste for a sustainable and low-carbon fuel, you get a second positive impact.

The waste material we focus on is used cooking oil, which is collected mainly from restaurants and food factories. We work with collectors of used cooking oil in several Asian countries and ship it to Europe where it is turned into biodiesel. Every energy source has some carbon emissions of course, but the carbon emission of biodiesel produced from used cooking oil is 90% less than regular diesel, so it has a huge positive impact on the carbon emission of the transport sector.

Why is waste-to-energy important?

First of all, waste going to landfills also create carbon emissions. So by recycling the waste to energy, we reduce the carbon emitted from landfills. Secondly, it creates a green energy flow which is low in carbon emission compared to traditional ways of energy production.

A third important positive impact is that it cleans up the food chain. To give a concrete example, when I arrived in Hong Kong in 2008, the used cooking oil collected in Hong Kong was still transported illegally to China, where it would be cleaned up a bit, repackaged and then sold to small restaurants in China. Used cooking oil would come back into the Chinese food chain. That doesn't happen anymore because of the biodiesel industry. We can pay good prices for used cooking oil to be shipped to Europe, so there is no need for illegal activities to get rid of these kinds of waste materials. Used cooking oil is not free nor cheap. When we find good alternative uses for waste materials, they can actually become quite valuable and more efforts will be made to collect them properly.



How can individuals play their part in reducing carbon emissions?

Up until now we have been able to reduce carbon emissions without the need to change our behaviour, for example by replacing or mixing diesel with biodiesel. Further reductions of our carbon footprint will require changes in behaviour, which I expect will be a rising trend in the next five years.



We will have to start changing our behaviour as consumers. It is easy to say that you're pro-climate and finger-point at countries and companies to reduce their carbon emissions. Many countries and businesses are now indeed working on reducing their carbon emissions, but it is complicated to switch from one energy source to the other on a large scale. We still have some time to go to 2050, when many countries, including the EU and Hong Kong, aim to be carbon-neutral. I think an important step we may need to do is to start making visible how much carbon we personally emit, so we can make more conscious and informed decisions about it. Most of the carbon emissions are actually from us, filling up our gas tank at the fuel pump, buying the latest shoes, clothes and gadgets, etc. This can have a big positive impact on the environment.



Additionally, we need to start thinking about creating more environmental-friendly alternatives for what we do today. I think one of the ways to support this is that we will have to start pricing in carbon emissions. For everything you buy or use, there will be a carbon price in the product, which is something we have not done before. Most products and services we use are actually too cheap because we have not priced in their negative impact on the environment.

Any upcoming projects for Reconergy?

China is by far the biggest producer of used cooking oil in the world. At the moment, there is still a lot of untapped volume there which is not being used for biofuels. So the focus will be a lot on China, growing the volumes there and ensuring that these waste materials are being used for a good purpose, meaning biofuel production.



Sample of used cooking oil

On the other hand, I'm also looking at a smaller-scale project in Hong Kong. I'm based here, but all my trades are in the rest of Asia. Used cooking oil in Hong Kong restaurants and hotels etc., is collected quite well. However, the volumes of private households are still largely being wasted. I'm looking at collecting those volumes and perhaps turning it into bio soap or bio candles. A project like this would be more about creating awareness and showing that used cooking oil can be recycled into new products in a relatively simple way.

Anything else you'd like to share with our readers?

I would like to ask everybody to start thinking about your actions and the impact it has on the environment. Think twice when buying something new, whether you really need it. And can it be recycled? There are more and more points in Hong Kong where you can bring your discarded products for recycling, and sometimes you even get a small reward in return. As I mentioned, the whole change starts with us. Stop pointing fingers at other people, companies and countries and start looking at yourself. We are responsible for the demand – and the demand creates carbon emissions.

PROSPERITY BEYOND PROFIT IDENTIFIED AS KEY TREND AMONG SUSTAINABLE CITIES

Arcadis' 2022 Sustainable Cities Index, evaluates overall prosperity in 100 global cities. Oslo led the index, followed by many European cities. Tokyo, Seattle and San Francisco were also recognised among the top ten most sustainable cities.

Global top 20 city ranking in Arcadis' 2022 Sustainable Cities Index:

1. Oslo	11. Zurich
2. Stockholm	12. Rotterdam
3. Tokyo	13. Glasgow
4. Copenhagen	14. Los Angeles
5. Berlin	15. New York
6. London	16. Frankfurt
7. Seattle	17. Vancouver
8. Paris	18. Edinburgh
9. San Francisco	19. Munich
10. Amsterdam	20. Washington D.C.

The Sustainable Cities Index ranks cities on three pillars of sustainability: people, planet and profit. Together the three pillars signal overall prosperity and reflect the many intertwined services and outcomes cities need to consider in pursuing their sustainability goals. The research also features the various strengths and weaknesses of cities across the globe, to simplify the complex factors that contribute to the overall urban experience.

While the top ten had the highest combined scores, no city ranked in the top ten across all three pillars of the report. This indicates that excellence in one category alone is not enough for long-term prosperity. As cities race to meet Paris Agreement commitments by 2030, placing equal value on all three pillars will yield the greatest results.

"Every city is unique with its own blend of strengths and weaknesses," said Arcadis Global Cities Director, John Batten. "There is no single solution that can propel a city to be sustainable. Having a chief sustainability officer and an electric vehicle charging network clearly helps, but there are other interconnected challenges, such as housing affordability and income equality, that cities need to address to make lasting progress."

The 2022 report highlights the evolving challenges facing cities, considering the climate emergency, the COVID-19 pandemic, rapid inflation and the cost-of-living crisis. Environmental exposure to natural disasters, housing affordability, work-life balance and 25 other indicators were identified as key data points when considering the cities' overall ranking.

"Rising costs have affected cities around the globe, and it's important to note that many cities are already at a tipping point," said Batten. "Our research found that many cities are quickly becoming, or already are, unaffordable. A profitable city alone is not sustainable if its citizens are being priced out."

The report cautions cities against profitability that yields prohibitive cost-of-living increases without considering its larger needs. Exacerbated wealth gaps can increase income inequality, homelessness, and unemployment, as seen in cities like San Francisco, Miami and Sao Paulo. In contrast, those cities that reinvest their profit into social amenities, policies and environmental actions that improve the quality of life for citizens, including Stockholm, Tokyo and Amsterdam, may find themselves on a more successful path toward long-term sustainability.

The cities included were chosen to provide an overview of the world's urban environment, geographical coverage, levels of economic development, future growth expectations and sustainability challenges. Arcadis reviewed 26 indicators comprising 51 different metrics across all three pillars to determine the rankings. The indicators were evaluated by Arcadis subject matter experts and the metrics were selected based on information available across all cities and source credibility.



■ By John Batten
Global Cities Director
at Arcadis
www.arcadis.com

SUSTAINABILITY – HOW WE PLAN TO BE PART OF THE SOLUTION AT AHLERS

Sustainability is a concept that is getting increasing attention in the supply chain and logistics industry. Most think of the climate aspect only, however it is a much broader subject.

Our key aim at Ahlers is to provide high-quality services for a better world, enabling customers to focus on their core businesses. We offer innovative and, more importantly, tailor-made solutions beyond logistics whilst promoting sustainable technologies and behaviours. How do we do it?

People

I believe the key differentiator for any company is its people. At Ahlers, we create an environment where they feel free to share their ideas, use their creativity and develop an entrepreneurial spirit. We continuously improve our operations and do so with a bottom-up approach. Our people know most of what happens in our processes, so we listen carefully to what they say.

Some of the best ideas for improvements have come from the shop floor; multidisciplinary teams working together to launch and implement these new initiatives, leveraging knowledge and experience from different departments.

More so, we strive to employ a diverse workforce, so we also support local initiatives to help people with poor job prospects. They have proved to be valuable additions to our operations.

Planet

When we look at the climate aspect of sustainability, we look internally and externally. How can we improve our own carbon footprint, and how can we work with our customers to improve theirs?

Internally, we aim to minimise our carbon footprint by separating waste, minimising the use of paper, using LED lighting in our warehouses, and lithium-ion batteries in our material handling equipment. One of the sustainability initiatives we launched last year enabled us to collect more than 18 kg of batteries, 3 containers of clothing for a charity organisation, 17.5 tons of film stretch, and 33.5 tons of wastepaper - in just one of our locations.

Corporate Social Responsibility also falls in the planet category. CSR initiatives often focus on the world directly surrounding our locations. Many of these are initiated by our employees. Examples are World Cleanup Day, where

we participated across different locations worldwide. Other local initiatives include sailing the Charity Regatta Race for children in need suffering from cancer and encouraging blood donation to save lives.

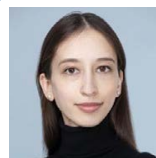
We believe in enabling our customers to lower their footprint, as we work closely together with them to look for more sustainable solutions for their supply chain challenges. We support our customers with sustainability projects ranging from redesigning their supply chain to optimising routes to helping them shift their transportation needs towards more sustainable modes of transport. Our data analytics team is a key differentiator in many of these projects.

Profit

Companies need to make a profit, of course. We help many by raising their profit margins by increasing the efficiency of their supply chain and logistics flows, for example by developing route optimisation algorithms.

The CO2 calculator we have developed provides a clear picture of supply chain operations' carbon footprint. The tool goes further than the simple add-up of estimated data that can be found online. Furthermore, we have created a system that is based on the guidelines dictated by the European standard CEN-EN16258 on what such a calculation should entail. By examining this data, we can start working on scenarios for reduction, enabling our customers to make the right decisions based on the correct data and the correct analysis. We strongly believe that in the long run, choosing the sustainable option will increase profitability.

We only have one planet, and we need to take good care of it. There is no Planet B. But there is a profitable and sustainable Plan B.



■ By Elena Robakidze
Business Development Manager Ahlers
Trade Facilitation
www.ahlers.com

CHINA'S BRI AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is often understood as infrastructure projects such as building high-speed railways and modern ports. This perception does not fully take into account of the potential economic prospects between China and BRI participating countries.

This article attempts to discuss how China's BRI can shed light on urbanisation and sustainable agricultural development in Southeast Asia.



Agriculture is one of the key areas. Apart from Singapore and Brunei, most Southeast Asian countries rely on agriculture and have an abundant supply of natural fruits, food crops and livestock products. For instance, Myanmar has a long tradition of producing rice and Pearl Paw San rice has been acclaimed as the world's best rice. The Philippines enjoys a reputation for exporting sweet bananas and mangos. Thailand and Malaysia are famous for a wide variety of delicious durians and tropical fruits; Indonesia is rich in countless fragrant spices and sugar. Nevertheless, most adopt traditional farming methods and a considerable amount of edible fruits and vegetables is wasted due to insufficient infrastructure to support the mass transportation and storage of food. Meanwhile, urbanisation has been increasing since the 20th century but not many farmers are willing to abandon their original lifestyle and indigenous villages.

Despite China's rapid economic development in the past 30 years, industrialisation has not fully taken over its rural population and there are still a large number of people employed in the primary sector. According to Chinese economists Hu Biliang and Zhang Kunling, the urbanisation rate in China (excluding Hong Kong and Macau SARs) was about 54.8% in 2014. Under the domestic economic reforms, a large amount of abandoned agricultural land has been improved in China and more modernised farming methods have been implemented. Hence, the market value

of agricultural products can now be sold at a higher market price and the agricultural products can be diversified and more sustainable.

Perhaps different stakeholders may learn from China's experiences to promote modernisation and an agricultural revolution in Southeast Asia. Urbanisation is certainly not the only route to bringing economic prosperity and improving people's living standards. In the past, urbanisation has often resulted in higher levels of air pollution, increased crime rate and more traffic jams. The existing development approach may not favour adopting green and sustainable strategies in the 21st century.

Nowadays, we need more 'healthy crops' rather than 'cash crops'. It is also possible for Southeast Asian countries to improve their agricultural products and retain their indigenous cuisine to develop an international brand for organic food. Development does not mean homogenisation. For example, a famous type of cuisine in Indonesia is called Rendang cuisine. The food is originally from an indigenous tribe who live in the province of West Sumatra. In this cuisine, coconut milk, pepper, turmeric, lemongrass, fragrant leaves and curry are usually used. In both theory and practice, technologies and research can be introduced to develop a new type of coconut milk with better nutrition and flavour. Original research projects can also further investigate how coconut oil could help someone with Alzheimer's disease. In his classic *the Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith emphasised that it is natural and profitable for a nation to invest in agriculture, despite agriculture being discouraged due to various reasons. Now, the majority of the population in Southeast Asia still lives in rural areas. Advancements in agricultural development in Southeast Asia will not only improve the threat of food shortages all over the world, but will also improve the livelihood of rural farmers and ecosystems to keep our next generation healthier and happier.



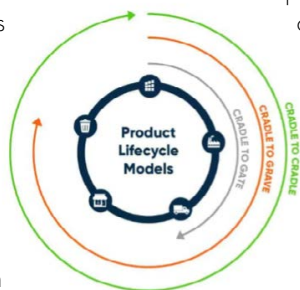
■ By Wing Lok Hung
Assistant Research Development and Project
Management Manager at Lingnan University
www.ln.edu.hk/serp/en/

LIFE CYCLE ASSESSMENT (LCA)

The word 'sustainability' is frequently used to promote a product. It can indicate a small component, process or part of the energy consumption it took to make it. However, what do we compare it to? What was our alternative?

Consumers are easy to fool. Yes, *you are easy to fool*. When buying a product or service, we wish to be served fast and without any hurdles along the way. If a brand tells us it is 'green', 'sustainable' or 'eco-friendly' it is often sufficient to trigger a guilt-free purchase and feel like we did the planet a small favour in buying it.

The term LCA is something we could get more familiar with when it comes to understanding the science behind a product. Why is one plastic more polluting than the other? How can some recycled materials still be better or worse to use in terms of greenhouse gas emissions?



All these factors are measured by taking into account water depletion, energy consumption and many more aspects. The final overview will offer a kilogram of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, CO₂) that is emitted in the atmosphere per KG of product or per product you use.

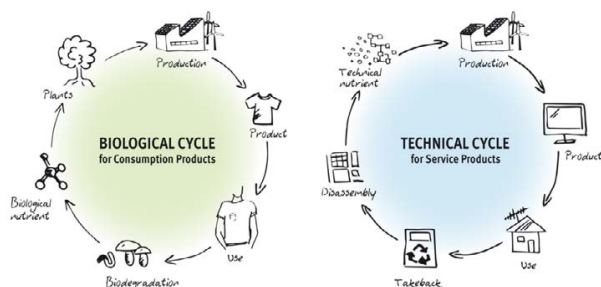
Any LCA is to document and improve the overall environmental profile of any product or service. To measure procedures along the cradle-to-grave process, there are recognised standards, such as the 'International Organization for Standardization' (ISO), more specifically their 14000 series. The 14000 series are the Environmental Standards.

We all hold power as consumers to demand LCA information that will (hopefully one day) be mandatory, like a nutrition label on a packed food item.

I'll do my best to describe the basic aspects of an LCA. This is what you can and should look for in the 'sustainability' of products.

The Life Cycle Assessment is a methodology for assessing environmental impacts at all stages of a life cycle in any commercial product, process or service.

In the case of a product, it is the raw material extraction and processing (cradle), through the products manufacturing, distribution and use, to the recycling or final disposal of materials composing it (grave). Cradle-to-grave. When going circular and recycling at the end of life you can state cradle-to-cradle. Cradle-to-gate would indicate the mere linear line until transportation of the final product.



When you buy your next 'sustainable' product, see if you can find information on the exact Greenhouse gas emission of that product, is there an LCA available? Challenge the maker or brand to put one out – if not you, then who? We all hold power as consumers to demand LCA information that will (hopefully one day) be mandatory, like a nutrition label on a packed food item.



A recycled item, bio-based item or crude oil item have each their own LCA value. Comparing them is the only way to understand what could be your best purchase to minimise your carbon footprint.



■ By Rosien Grasveld
Business Development & Marketing Manager,
High Performance Polymers at Arkema
www.arkema.com

TAXATION OF SEVERANCE PAYMENTS IN CROSS-BORDER SITUATIONS

An (updated) Dutch perspective

Generally, employees who have performed cross-border employment activities may be confronted with multiple jurisdictions that wish to tax their severance payment. Tax treaties often prevent legal double taxation, but not always, due to differences in policies between countries. In order to minimise the risk of international mismatches, the Dutch government amended the tax policy with regard to severance payments of cross-border employees. This change might have an impact on the employer's Dutch wage tax withholding obligations and the employee's Dutch income tax liability on severance payments.



Under former Dutch policy, taxation rights in respect of severance payments for cross-border employees were, as a rule, allocated to countries based on where the employee's salary was taxable in the last twelve months of employment. Since the amendment of the policy on 5 February 2022, this is no longer evident in all situations. Instead, the taxation rights over a severance payment will be allocated, in principle, in accordance with the work pattern of the employee during the total period of the employment on which the amount of the total severance payment is based.

The policy change follows from the amendment of the earlier Decree from the State Secretary of Finance dated April 23, 2015, no. DGB 2015/584M (Stcrt. 2015, 12171), as published on 5 February 2022. The new policy is driven by the observation that many tax treaty countries do not apply the (strict interpretation of the) 'twelve months' rule mentioned in art. 2.14 of the OECD Commentaries on Article 15 of the OECD Model Tax Convention and interpret this article differently than the Netherlands.

The new policy does not replace the 'twelve months' rule in its entirety with a strict 'entire period of service' rule. Instead,

the Dutch State Secretary of Finance leaves room for the application of the practical 'twelve months' rule in certain situations. In DGB 2015/584M, it is stated that the allocation for tax purposes of the severance payment to countries is based on the total period of service the severance payment relates to. If not all the data are available and a reasonable estimate of the total period of service is not possible, then one should revert to the 'twelve months' rule that was applied by the Netherlands in the past.

This flexible approach does create uncertainty for parties – from the perspective of the employee, employer and Dutch Tax Authorities – but at the same time it leaves an opportunity to prevent double taxation (or double non-taxation) of severance payments of cross-border employees. A 'one size fits all' approach would not fit in with the objective of avoiding double taxation and double non-taxation, because allocation differences could still occur, depending on the allocation rule applied by the other treaty country.



Finally, it should be noted that this amended policy has entered into effect from 5 February 2022, but that it is permitted to apply the new starting point in the Dutch income tax return(s) for severance payments paid before 1 January 2022, provided that Dutch income tax return(s) have not been finalised and that the application will not result in (partial) double non-taxation.



■ By Jan Bart Schober
Tax partner

Chaima Chaoui,
Associate – tax adviser ■
Loyens & Loeff
www.loyensloeff.com



OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE WELLBEING

The Dutch company and leading wellbeing beauty brand Rituals Cosmetics founded by Raymond Cloosterman in 2019 has set foot on the ground in Hong Kong in 2019. Hong Kong is being the first market in the APAC region and Rituals currently operates 8 stores in Hong Kong. In September and October 2022, we opened two additional stores in Tuen Mun Town Plaza in the New Territories and Telford Plaza in Kowloon Bay. The company has big ambitions to grow further in Asian markets in 2023.

Rituals has been on a mission to support the wellbeing of our customers since our founding 22 years ago. Our passion is to turn everyday routines into more meaningful moments; to help people slow down and rediscover happiness in the smallest of things. Our philosophy extends to both personal and sustainable wellbeing as we believe that our emotional wellbeing and sense of harmony comes from taking care of ourselves as well as the planet.

Achieving B Corp status marked an important milestone on our path to sustainable wellbeing, but we realize that this is just the beginning. We are committed to taking the next steps needed to move closer towards the goals we have set ourselves. Our journey to sustainable wellbeing is a journey in collaboration with our employees, our consumers, and our partners.

As we recently announced, we are further accelerating our sustainability efforts and joining the race to Net-Zero by reducing our greenhouse gas emissions by 50% per product by 2030, reaching Net-Zero by 2050. In doing so, the company sets concrete goals in line with the ScienceBased Targets initiative (SBTi) and the Paris Agreement. After becoming a Certified B Corporation earlier this year, this commitment marks another important step in our continuous journey to sustainable wellbeing.

When it comes to our vision on sustainable wellbeing, we focus on three key pillars: Clean, Conscious & Caring.

"Clean" is about trusted quality products that are carefully formulated with ingredients of natural origin. 70% of all Rituals products contain more than 90% natural-origin ingredients for instance. One of our goals is that all personal care products formulated over 90% natural origin by 2023.

"Conscious" focuses on making sustainable choices for our packaging and our business. We offer refill options for a broad selection of our products and using our body cream refill for example, saves up to 70% carbon emissions, 65% energy and 45% water versus traditional formats. One of our goals in the Conscious category is achieving Zero Waste by 2025 by making every product either refillable, recyclable or made from recycled material.

"Caring" is about supporting and developing programmes that contribute to soulful societies. Since 2011, Rituals has

supported Tiny Miracles, a pioneering foundation and for-purpose company that has found a way to enable people who are excluded from society to seize a life full of new opportunities. In addition, we co-founded SuperChill, an organisation that focuses on the mental wellbeing of children. It is our goal to inspire our customers to help navigate their journey of wellbeing, but also develop and support wellbeing programs in society and the youngest generation.

Next to reduction, Rituals also wants to support decarbonization outside its business. For instance, we support initiatives that preserve and restore natural ecosystems while aiming to improve people's livelihoods. In doing so we have committed to grow a tree for every refill sold, aiming for 5 million trees by the end of this year. Together with trusted environmental partners it supports planting, protecting and restoring mangroves in India and Kenya.

The need for improved wellbeing of both people and planet is universal and more relevant than ever before. We all want to leave the world a better and happier place, compared to how we found it. To accomplish this mission, we all need to take our own responsibility. And more than anything, we all need to make conscious choices that will have a positive societal and environmental impact for the years to come. At Rituals, we like to provoke others to think differently and to encourage the beauty industry as a whole to become more sustainable.



■ By Marjet de Vlieger
Country Director & Travel Retail
www.rituals.com

BUSINESSES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

We live in incredible times, with massive tech and financial developments benefiting businesses greatly. However, with great power comes great responsibility, and in this case, that's the responsibility for climate change.

Until recently, many organisations and industries have gone about everyday processes without considering their carbon emissions. However, these emissions will increasingly come at a high financial and social cost.

We might be unsure about exactly how climate change will alter the planet, but the examples we see worldwide right now don't look promising. Negative environmental impact will also have a domino effect on business and society.

Business leaders are well aware of the need to act. The trouble comes when deciding how to act, and the route often chosen ends up forgoing long-term benefits for short-term compliance.

Why businesses should tackle climate change

Climate change will harm economies, decimate communities, and increase resource scarcity in the near future. All that will have a significant impact on business costs and profit margins. Over the next few years, we'll see increasingly aggressive climate policies and regulations being set into motion — and retrofitting systems to comply with these could rack up some crazy costs. Being climate-forward before all this happens means that your business is already compliant and seeing the benefits by the time these regulations roll out.

Climate action isn't something we can sit out any longer; it needs to be baked into the DNA and daily workings of every business in the world. So why not start right away?

Invest in nature-based solutions

Nature-based solutions aim to improve carbon storage and reduce greenhouse gas emissions — and have a high potential to achieve that.

According to research, nature-based solutions can account for 37% of the reductions in emissions that we need to achieve by 2030. Simultaneously, they can boost jobs in countries across the world and protect vulnerable communities and habitats.

Planting trees is perhaps one of the most effective solutions in this category because trees are natural carbon sinks. By

partnering with EcoMatcher, businesses can contribute to reforestation in areas that sorely need it without changing their organisation. EcoMatcher plants trees with foundations specialised in tree planting. Through technologies, we know everything about every tree, offering full transparency and engagement. Companies can use trees for meaningful corporate gifting, loyalty programs, rewards, employee engagement, events, and transparent carbon offsetting programs.

Add UN SDGs to business goals

Business goals are traditionally reflective of financial bottom lines. However, tweaking them to reflect the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can help businesses achieve climate action alongside high productivity and profits. It also helps that private firms have all the right ingredients to help further SDGs: people, resources, capital, and—potentially—the right leadership.

Take action from within

Today's workforce is well aware of where they stand on climate issues. Many individuals are already fighting for climate justice outside of work. Businesses can leverage their knowledge and expertise at an organisational level. Employees hold tremendous power as they are instrumental in influencing innovation, functioning, and resilience as a team. Doing this will mean that every job description should link to the business' climate goals. Every job should be looked at like a climate job.

The final word

Today's consumers and employees are looking to work for companies that dare to care: about the climate, the environment, the society. They hold businesses to higher standards than before, meaning they're more likely to work for or buy from a company that aligns with their values. For all these reasons and more, businesses must take on the challenge of climate change in their day-to-day and long-term functioning.



■ By Bas Fransen
CEO and Founder at EcoMatcher
www.ecomatcher.com

PASSING THE PEN

Name: Boris Colruyt

Organisation: HABA Family Group

Who am I?

I'm a Belgian, married in Jakarta to a Dutch woman who is a French speaker. Together we have three lovely daughters who were born in Mokum, Xiamen and Hong Kong.

I'm a transformational business leader who enjoys solving your most business-critical value creation challenges in Asia Pacific. It is my mission to support organisations in exploring new ways of improving business performance and facilitating leadership to shape predictable roadmaps for their transformational journeys.

My professional background is:

I started my career with Arthur Andersen in Rotterdam in the international Audit Practice, have been involved in M&A both with Deloitte and GE Capital, and have done over 10 years of complex international SAP implementations in Asia.

I have over 10 years of experience as a Board member in China. In Asia, I have been a member of steering committees for delivering global and complex strategic business initiatives in agile market-entry projects, innovative business intelligence solutions, large-scale process automations, greenfield e-commerce market entries in China, Japan and Singapore and business turnarounds in China, Indonesia and Thailand.

Furthermore, I'm an accredited executive coach, advisor to start-ups and an INSEAD alum, where I am also an active member of INSEAD's Digital Transformation Club and am committed to lifelong learning.

I moved to Hong Kong because:

I moved to Hong Kong in 2017 for Birkenstock. As CFO for Asia Pacific, I have supported agile market-entry projects and been driving business model transformations leveraging e-commerce, technology and data for market entries in China, Japan and Singapore.



The Birkenstock family successfully sold its business for €4,5bn in May 2021. It was an intense

but very rewarding journey to create shareholder value.

I work for:

Earlier this year, I started working for HABA Family Group, a German family-owned group, as their APAC COO. I totally subscribe to the brand's mission of acting cross-generationally and sustainably creating happy childhoods. HABA toys & learning solutions allow children to explore, learn and play with sustainably crafted wooden toys. If all children would have a happy childhood, the world would be a much better place.

My most remarkable work story is:

In November 2010, we were all advised to leave Thailand as unrest was mounting. We returned back to Thailand on Sinterklaas' eve. In the evening, after one too many beers, I asked a good Thai friend whom he was supporting. He said that one could not ask those questions in Thailand and replied that he supported his King. Ever since, if people ask me whether I'm a French or Flemish-speaking Belgian, I answer that I'm the last real Belgian as I support my King. Thank you, Khun Gitsada Booncherit, for a valuable lesson in life. We all have more in common than we think.

I find most of my business contacts through:

Network contacts and LinkedIn, where I offer a good breakfast or coffee around a simple question: What is your biggest value creation challenge now?

One day I will be:

I will live life by giving back to the next generation of conscious business leaders as a board member, leadership coach and 'value creation guru', travelling back and forth between Europe and Asia.



ESG AND SUSTAINABLE FINANCE BEST PRACTICES BROUGHT TO YOU FROM THE BOARDROOM OF MTR

This interview with **Gill Meller, Legal and Governance Director**, and **Jessica Chan, Head of Sustainability**, is part of Prof. Lee's series of in-depth and in-person ESG discussions with leading Hong Kong-listed companies with the objective of identifying best practices in Hong Kong and internationally.

■ By Prof. Lapman Lee, Professor of Practice (ESG, FinTech, Governance), Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Managing Director, Triniton Advisors.

It was in 1967 that the story of the MTR began with a feasibility study carried out as a result of Hong Kong's increasingly unsustainable traffic congestion situation. The fragrant harbour city was enjoying rapid export-led economic growth and became known as one of the Four Asian Tigers, which further spurred the growth of its relatively young population, half under the age of twenty-five, from three million at the start to four million by the end of the decade.

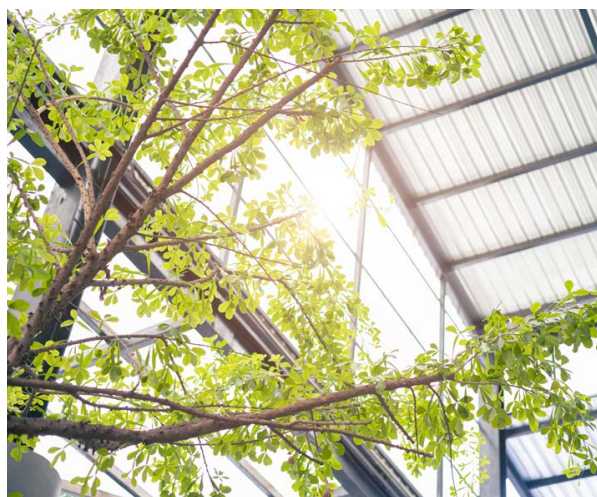
The MTR was "born" twelve years later with the opening of the first MTR line in 1979 and has kept growing since, together with many generations of Hongkongers on their individual journeys, providing safe and sustainable transportation for all. MTR's purpose is to keep cities moving, but how does MTR keep cities moving sustainably?

What does MTR's purpose of keeping cities moving sustainably mean in practice and how are you working to achieve it?

"The MTR is one of the most sustainable modes of transportation in Hong Kong. Did you know, for example, that one MTR train at full capacity can carry up to 2,500 passengers, which is the equivalent of 25 buses, 150 minibuses, or 1,500 passenger cars?" Gill said. "Keeping cities moving refers to two types of mobility. Firstly, physical mobility in relation to which we provide a safe, accessible and sustainable transport system for all, including the elderly and persons with disabilities, as well as people travelling with infants or toddlers, and ensuring our fares are affordable and concessions target those who need them the most.

Secondly, MTR aspires to contribute to social mobility and the advancement and creation of opportunities for our workforce, customers, the communities in which we operate, and our business partners."

"We have set ourselves three social and environmental objectives to achieve our purpose of "Keeping Cities



Moving" in a sustainable way: fostering social inclusion, providing opportunities to empower people and communities and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

What's get measured, gets managed. What are the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure progress against the three social and environmental objectives?

"We have set ourselves 35 KPIs across the three social and environmental objectives, with some of the key ones being as follows:

- Fostering social inclusion, where we have set ourselves the following KPIs 1) for 100% of our new stations to be accessible, including barrier-free entrances, wide gates, accessible toilets, and baby care rooms, 2) 25% of our Board of Directors to be women by 2025, and 3) HK\$100 million to be spent on direct local and community investment and donations from 2022 to 2025.
- Providing opportunities to empower people and communities, in relation to which our key KPIs are as follows 1) at least five learning days to be provided to employees on average every year, 2) HK\$250 million to be spent on green procurement in 2025, rising to HK\$350 million in 2030, and 3) more than HK\$300 million will be invested in start-ups from 2022 to 2025.

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions, where we have set ourselves the following KPIs 1) set 2030 science-based carbon reduction targets for our railway and property businesses in Hong Kong with a longer-term goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, 2) generate one million kWh of renewable energy by 2023, 3) have 25% of our shopping mall food and beverage tenants join our food waste reduction programme in 2022, and 4) 100% of our future new stations and new residential development projects aiming to attain Building Environmental Assessment Method ("BEAM") Plus Gold or above certification (i.e. a comprehensive environmental assessment tool for buildings which is carried out voluntarily with Platinum, Gold, Silver or Bronze grade)."

What are your thoughts on the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) in Hong Kong as part of the future of transportation?

"Hong Kong targets to become carbon neutral by 2050 and has formulated a roadmap on the popularisation of electric vehicles to foster the adoption of electric vehicles for Hong Kong to improve its air quality and become a smart city," Jessica said. "The roadmap will form part of Hong Kong's broader climate action initiatives, such as the Clean Air Plan for Hong Kong 2035, and Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050."

"The comprehensive roadmap covers six areas, i.e.

1. Green and decarbonisation innovation and cooperation, including a HK\$200 million Green Tech Fund to fund R&D of green technologies, Smart City initiatives to leverage artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and the Internet of Things, promoting the adoption of autonomous driving, and Greater Bay Area EV technological collaboration.
2. Electric private cars with no new registration of fuel-propelled private cars, including hybrid vehicles, in 2035 or earlier.
3. Electric commercial vehicles promoting trials for electric public transportation and commercial vehicles.



Left to right: Jessica Chan, Gill Meller and Lapman Lee

4. Charging network consisting of a combination of private and public charging facilities, taking into consideration commercialisation and marketisation and how to facilitate EV charging for travel to mainland China.
5. Maintenance services to support the use of EV through communication with the trade, education, and training.
6. Battery recycling through legislating a Producer Responsibility Scheme for retired EV batteries and covering second-life applications of EV batteries in the priority themes of the Green Tech Fund.

"It goes without saying that a full-fledged charging network is key to supporting the adoption of EVs. To help the government, MTR targets to install 200+ additional EV charging stations across office buildings, malls and station carparks by 2025," Gill shared.

Where sustainability meets technology, we get GreenTech. Where sustainability meets finance, we get sustainable finance. What is the role of sustainable finance at the MTR?

"As a pioneer in green finance, we have raised HK\$30 billion through sustainable finance arrangements since 2016, the year we set up our Green Bond Framework, the proceeds of which can be used for projects related to low carbon transportation, energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable real estate, sustainable transit stations, adaptation to climate change, waste management, water management, biodiversity and conservation, and pollution prevention.

"In 2021 for example, we arranged HK\$4.8 billion of green finance to fund projects to conserve energy, protect the environment, and enhance and expand low-carbon railway services, including the replacement of rail power lines, battery locomotives acquisition, regenerative station energy saving inverter systems and biodiversity preservation for the Lok Ma Chau Wetland."

TAX COMPLIANCE AND TAX RISK MANAGEMENT

An entity has corporate income tax reporting and payment obligations in general – in other words, tax compliance. Infringement of the tax obligations will potentially result in penal or even prosecution actions taken by tax authorities.

Apart from the jurisdiction in which it is incorporated, a multi-national corporation may have corporate income tax exposures (and accordingly, income reporting and tax payment obligations) in other tax jurisdictions where it carries out business functions.

Tax compliance requirements

During the past years, to combat tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance and to enhance the transparency of tax information, most tax jurisdictions have introduced several new tax policies or actions, which are in accordance with the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) project and Common Reporting Standard (CRS) initiated by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

In Hong Kong, apart from filing profits tax returns and employer's returns in which a number of the prescribed information is required to be disclosed, an entity is required to prepare transfer pricing documentation, such as master files, local files and country-by-country reports/notifications, if the exemption conditions cannot be met. Moreover, an entity is required to determine its tax residency based on the relevant tax rules for the purpose of the CRS.

Tax risk management and exposure

An entity's management is advised to have a good understanding of and periodically review the entity's tax position and risks in the relevant tax jurisdiction, in light of tax compliance. This is in order to mitigate the chance of sudden and unexpected tax investigations or tax payments conducted or demanded by tax authorities.

For example, Company A incorporated in Country A may have corporate income tax exposures or permanent establishment risks in Country B if it has certain management, control and/or business functions carried out in Country B.

The earlier such tax risks can be identified, the earlier Company A can take the appropriate actions to mitigate or eliminate those risks accordingly.

Tax planning, tax avoidance and tax evasion

Some entities have tax planning conducted with a view to

reducing their income tax liabilities and consequently avoid paying tax (tax avoidance).

It has to be noted that if tax planning or tax avoidance consists of trying to explore the loopholes of the tax laws and then arranging a series of transactions or schemes accordingly to reduce or avoid tax liabilities, these may be regarded by tax authorities as too aggressive.

While one may argue that the 'aggressive' tax planning is done within the limits of the laws, it is usually not accepted by the tax authorities. In particular, most tax jurisdictions, including Hong Kong, have specific and general anti-tax avoidance provisions in place to tackle too aggressive tax avoidance arrangements.

Unlike tax planning and tax avoidance, tax evasion is an illegal act for the purpose of reducing or avoiding tax liabilities. Specifically, tax evasion may be achieved through various means, such as making false statements, non- or under-reporting of income, over-claiming expenses and hiding facts and documents.

Knowing the potential tax exposures and risks in advance and how to mitigate them are essential when running a business. Poor tax management and tax compliance may result into burdensome tax enquiries, tax audits and investigations by the tax authorities, which have to be handled with significant time and costs.

The worst scenario may be that the entity is ultimately required to pay a huge sum of unexpected tax plus interests and penalties due to non-compliance with certain tax obligations.

An entity may consider engaging a professional tax lawyer or advisor to closely monitor its tax compliance obligations and tax position.



■ By Willem Jan Hoogland

David Lo ■
HKWJ Tax Law & Partners Limited
www.hkwj-taxlaw.hk



SOUTH LANTAU – QUO VADIS ?

The quality of merc(ur)y is not strain'd, It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven.

Willam Shakespeare – The Merchant of Venice

It has been nine years since my first contribution to these columns, on the same theme of sustainability. This August, due to renovations in Discovery Bay, we plan to stay at our South Lantau house for a week or two after clearing hotel quarantine. It has been some months since we were there, so I am curious to see if the view now includes a 30+-meter chimney.

Back in August 2013, I ranted against the mind-numbingly inane decisions by the Hong Kong Environmental Protection (sic!) Department to build the Shek Kwu Chau incinerator. To recap, a 30m-chimney, to be part of a so-called “state-of-the-art” facility, on land to be reclaimed right in front of some of Hong Kong’s last pristine and unspoilt beaches at Pui O and Cheung Sha. Any toddler could have come up with a better location - but alas, not our learned government.

The more recent direction our learned government has taken in the realm of universally accepted standards of proper governance leaves little hope for optimism. Where today do we see principles like transparency, a right to hear and be heard, proportionality and subsidiarity of administrative decisions? Never mind respect for a basic prohibition on abuses of power and process.

Instead, a team of specially mandated judges, prosecutors and enforcement officers with no meaningful accountability to anyone else in Hong Kong deny bail in closed-door hearings as a matter of course. They condemn to prison a septuagenarian with terminal cancer for what would amount to a disorderly conduct misdemeanour elsewhere; a granny in her sixties essentially for waving the Union Jack in public. Call it picking on the weak or schoolyard bullying - it will not do.

Politicians and educators alike pontificate on the need for schoolchildren to love the Motherland. At the same time, they quietly remove all references to the Tiananmen Square crisis from the curriculum. But if the Motherland is so lovable, why not proudly highlight that crisis? Describe in great detail the fair and just actions the Chinese government used to decisively manage it? One either is confident about earning

the love and respect of citizens or one is not. Future Hong Kong generations deserve to know the basis for why their love is expected, and receive an education that empowers them to hold their politicians to the universal standards of proper governance.



Back to Shek Kwu Chau: it will not surprise you to learn that the land reclamation has moved ahead. Quietly, stealthily, behind the safe barriers of “No Access” signs and barbed wire, the typical cowardly approach of governments all over the world ramming their worst plans down

their subjects’ throats. With the full force of the law looming as a clear deterrent to potential protesters.

By the time of its completion, the incinerator’s “state-of-the-art” technology will be anything but. Back in 2013, I quipped that the Titanic, Chernobyl and Deep Horizon were also heralded as state-of-the-art in their time. Believe me, the term is to be taken with a grain of salt.

What matters are the empirically proven, long-lasting, devastating effects on the environment and human, animal and plant life. The cancers, the lung diseases and birth defects that are the norm for incinerators. There may be fewer of them, but that does not mean there is none. You can be sure the government officials trumpeting the “success” of the project will conveniently sweep all that nastiness under the carpet. A truth is only inconvenient if it is admitted. Ask Putin, he knows.

All the next generation of Hongkongers will be left with is a chapter in local school books on how British colonial oppressors (sorry, pseudo-colonial - we never were a Colony, you see) sowed the corrupt seeds that condemned Hong Kong’s last remaining toxin-free beaches. Mark my words...



■ By Ralph Ybema
Managing Director at China Law & Tax
www.chinaltd.nl

SUSTAINABILITY AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Let's take a moment to understand the word "sustainability". There are a couple of forms of sustainability.

Corporate Sustainability, for example. Harvard Business School lists two ways to measure sustainable business practices: the effect a business has on the environment and the effect a business has on society.

In contrast, social sustainability focuses on the human effects of economic systems, and the category includes attempts to eradicate poverty and hunger, as well as to combat inequality.



Data and sustainability are a potent combination.

Environmental sustainability - as this is the Go Green column - adds greater emphasis on pollution and clean air. A UN commission defined it as follows: "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

Basically, we know what we are trying to achieve on the various definitions of sustainability. For a better and green world, we know we have an obligation to future generations. And where are we now?



As always, if we like to understand this, we need reliable data. Why is data important in sustainability? By collecting and examining data on a wide range of sustainability-related issues — from energy use and carbon emissions to even mobile consumption habits — companies can generate insights that would drive their sustainability initiatives. Governments too. Data and sustainability are a potent combination.

Businesses need data to manage the process to be profitable without damaging the environment. Governments must support that by setting goals, standards, laws, regulations and enforcement. Without data, it is hard to measure achievable goals and all these other things that need to be done.

The UN has developed 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as a call for action by all countries. Let's discover where we are currently standing by looking at governments' commitment and efforts for the SDGs Score (pilot version) versus 17 SDG goals:

The USA and Russian Federation are on the low side of the score (0-100), with 32 and 40. China scores around 45. Finland, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands and Austria (a.o.) lead the pack with scores 70-78.

In terms of ranking, 21 countries (OECD) achieved 80% of all 17 Goals; in Asia, Thailand ranked no. 1 with 74.13%, China at 72.38% and India at 60.32%.

The Sustainable Development Report 2022 states:

The SDGs are not being achieved. Success is held back by severe financing constraints facing the developing countries: constraints that have been gravely aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The key to achieving the SDGs, besides preserving peace and lowering geopolitical tensions, is having a plan to finance them. This was Emphasised by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres in his briefing to the General Assembly on major priorities for 2022: "We must go into emergency mode to reform global finance".

There is still much work to do...



■ By Bernard Scheffens
CEO at WSS Asia Ltd
www.wss-asia.com

TIMES AND HABITS ARE CHANGING

It is fair to say that Hong Kong is obsessed with the outdoors, specifically hiking. On any given weekend or public holiday, hordes of enthusiastic hikers clamour up and down the scores of nature trails that criss-cross this great city.



The obsession with hiking is no surprise as almost 75% of the territory is designated as country or marine parks, ensuring that these environments are protected and preserved for the enjoyment of future generations.

While the people of Hong Kong are proud of the luscious environs in which we work and play, collectively, we are not the best custodians of our surroundings. Unfortunately, even a cursory glance into the shrubbery on any hiking trail reveals litter left by those who see the world as their rubbish tip. But there is hope; times and habits are changing to support a more sustainable future for all of us in Hong Kong.

The appetite for change is fast gathering momentum across many industries in Hong Kong, not least in the law. In part, the change directly results from businesses having to manage the impact of coronavirus by implementing more flexible working practices. It is no longer feasible for law firms to hold on to outdated methods such as keeping swathes of hardcopy documents. I would go so far as to say there is no excuse. Document management technology and digitalisation of existing hardcopy documents are powerful tools that allow us, lawyers, to be far more efficient and cost-effective for our clients and vastly reduce our paper footprint.

We cannot and should not wait for the government to take the lead. Voluntarily implementing policies and practices at the business level is the best way to take up the fight. Acting now is why our firm is proudly among a growing community of law firms here in Hong Kong volunteering to sign onto

the Greener Litigation pledge. Our joint commitment is to reduce the impact of our legal practice on the environment and to promote reducing the reliance on paper by our courts.



It is no longer feasible for law firms to hold on to outdated methods such as keeping swathes of hardcopy documents. I would go so far as to say there is no excuse.

Internally we began project PULP (Please Use Less Paper) and have reduced paper usage by 40% in quick time. While reducing paper usage, we have partnered with EcoMatcher to plant trees for every person at our firm working and hired since June 2021. Further, when we reach a 50% reduction in paper usage, we will adopt a forest. We have a way to go, but our success so far illustrates how implementing simple steps such as encouraging staff to use fewer hardcopy documents and investing in software can have a considerable impact.



■ By Troy Greig
Partner at Tanner De Witt
www.tannerdewitt.com

PO LEUNG KUK

Hong Kong was not always the safe city with very low crime rates that we enjoy today. Colonial Hong Kong suffered from rampant police corruption and crimes that today are extremely rare in our territory.

A case in point was the abduction and trafficking of women and children in the late 19th century. Part of this had to do with the phenomenon of 'little sister' or 'mui tsai' which described young Chinese women who worked either as domestic servants in China, in brothels or for wealthy Chinese households in traditional Chinese society. The young women were typically from poor families, and sold at a young age, under the condition that they be freed through marriage when older. This was seen as charitable as the young women would be provided better prospects than they would have had if they remained with their families. However, the absence of contracts or any legal protection in these arrangements sadly resulted in many mui tsai being resold into prostitution.

The plight of abducted or enslaved women and their children was largely ignored by the colonial authorities. Part of the reason was the common British view that many local women were in fact prostitutes. This was underlined during a government enquiry in 1878 during which Charles May, a member of the colonial government, testified that: "I should say that only about 1/6th of the Chinese women in the Colony live with one man either in marriage or in concubinage and all the rest come under the denomination of prostitutes to whom money being offered they would consent to sexual intercourse". The (shocking) establishment view of the Colony was that 80% of local women were prostitutes!



Chinese young woman in Hong Kong, 1878



Charles May, 1914

The young women were typically from poor families, and sold at a young age, under the condition that they be freed through marriage when older.

Charles May was not just anybody, he was in fact a British police officer who spent 34 years in colonial service in Hong Kong, where he served as the first head of the Hong Kong Police Force and thereafter head of the Hong Kong Fire Brigade (now Hong Kong Fire Service).

This abhorrent view of Hong Kong women certainly did not help in ensuring that proper attention was paid to the growing problem of what today we would term sex trafficking. The view of the position of local women in society is also reflected in the education system at the time. According to an Annual Report of the School Inspection, girls were taught needlework and domestic skills by a Chinese school mistress, usually the wife of the schoolmaster. They were not taught English, as according to the Inspector of Schools this would make them dissatisfied with their humble station in life! Boys, of course, were taught English so they could eventually get a job with the colonial government or one of the many European trading houses.



Po Leung Kuk

In 1878 several local Hong Kong notables decided to act. They lobbied the government in order to establish a society to help women and children from abduction. A petition was submitted to the governor at that time, Sir John Pope Hennessy, (hence Hennessy Road), on November 8th, 1878. Clearly, the colonial government did not deem this to be a priority, as it was only approved in May 1880, after much lobbying by the local notables.

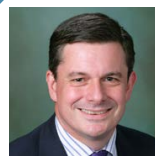
This was even though Sir John was viewed as more liberal-minded, “a new thinker”. Before his arrival in Hong Kong, he had influenced the colonial office to pay more attention to the locals in India, to govern “with a greater regard for the feelings and interests of the Native population”. To be fair, Hennessy was a positive new wind in Hong Kong, where during his term as the 8th Governor he changed many things. During his tenure, Hennessy realised that the Chinese people, who were treated as second-class citizens up to that time, had developed an increasingly important influence on the Hong Kong economy. With that in mind, he lifted the ban that forbade Chinese people from buying lands, constructing buildings, and operating businesses in the Central District. This quickly caused a development boom in the Central District. He also allowed Chinese immigrants in Hong Kong to naturalise as British subjects. Another milestone was to appoint the first Chinese member (Ng Choy, who would later become the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of China) to the Legislative Council (members were then all appointed and not chosen).

At any rate, in May 1880 the “Society for the Protection of Women and Children” was approved by the Hong Kong Governor. The Chinese name Po Leung Kuk was chosen as

During his tenure, Hennessy realised that the Chinese people, who were treated as second-class citizens up to that time, had developed an increasingly important influence on the Hong Kong economy.

Po Leung means “the protection of the innocent”. Today PLK has broadened its scope, following the outlawing of the mui tsai system at the end of the 1930’s, and the subsequent rapid changes in society. It is active in social services (ranging from childcare to the elderly), education (own schools, subsidising schools, community college, education grants), recreation (holiday camps for disadvantaged children), and medical (operating three low-cost medical centres).

The old Po Leung Kuk building is at 66 Leighton Road. Behind its impressive entrance, it also has the Po Leung Kuk Garden and museum, which is open to visitors by appointment. Next time that someone in Causeway Bay asks you for donations for Po Leung Kuk, you will know that is not only a very worthwhile local cause but one of the oldest charitable foundations in Hong Kong.



■ By Daniël de Blocq van Scheltinga
Managing Director at Polarwide Ltd
www.polarwide.com

WELCOME TO THE DUTCH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN HONG KONG

Francis Heymans
Associate membership

Patricius Brenninkmeyer
Young Professional membership

Arno Coster from Ahlers
Corporate membership

**Victor Njo from Malherbe Design
(Hong Kong) Limited**
Corporate membership

Hans Meijndert
Associate membership

Boris Colruyt
Associate membership

Christa Nuijs
from **The Right Mix Ltd.**
Start-up membership

Jelmer Kattevilder
from **Double Dutch Limited**
Start-up membership

Herald van der Linde
Associate membership

Wing Lok Hung
Associate membership

Bart Buiring
from **Marriott International Asia Pacific**
Gold membership



WELCOME TO THE BOARD

Earlier this summer, the Board of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong welcomed three new Board members.



Annemarelle van Schayik
Group Head of Clients
at Telum Media
Chair of PR & Pub Committee

Hong Kong has been home since 2008, when I first came to the city to pursue a degree in Chinese Studies. Fast forward 14 years, and different from what I once thought, I'm still here, working for APAC-focused media intelligence firm Telum Media. I oversee the client management function across the group working with communication teams across all industries.

I've been involved with the Dutch Chamber and the PR & Pub Committee for over four years and am excited to work closer with the team on the magazine, the newsletters and the business directory. We meet fairly regular as there is always a deadline to chase to make sure we have great interviews, contributed articles and so on for the next magazine. New ideas and fresh content are always welcome!

Some fun facts:

- Unexpectedly to most locals, my superpower is that I speak both Cantonese and Mandarin
- Shatin is my hood
- I'm a bit of a foodie – but no endless photos, please



Edgar Ultee
Head of Compliance at Transamerica Life (Bermuda) Ltd.
Chair Finance Committee

I left the Netherlands in 2011. Since then, I have lived consecutively in Hong Kong, Singapore and again... Hong Kong. I have worked for several financial institutions on the Risk and Compliance side and currently cover Compliance for Transamerica Life (Bermuda) - Aegon Group's High-Net-Worth focused life insurer.

I'm proud to be part of the Dutch Chamber and the Finance Committee in particular. I'm impressed with the professional manner in which the Chamber is run.

The Finance Committee has been established as a forum where professionals from financial institutions exchange

information on the latest market trends, share experiences and organise events. Once a year, the Finance Committee organises the Finance Dinner - a high-class event bringing together key representatives from various financial institutions in Hong Kong. Further information on this year's Finance Dinner will follow, which is targeted to take place in Q4 2022. We're also working on an ESG event and a virtual asset event for later this year. More information will follow - watch this space!

Some fun facts:

- I'm originally from Zeeland - the least populated but most beautiful part of Holland (at least in my humble opinion :))
- I enjoy trail running in the Hong Kong hills
- My wife is from Hong Kong, creating a permanent link with this SAR.



Tom van der Lee
Finance Director
at DFI Retail Group
Chair DE&I Committee

We moved to Hong Kong at the beginning of 2020 just before COVID-19 changed our lives. Prior to Hong Kong, we lived in Southeast Asia (Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and Singapore) for 16 years where I initially worked for FrieslandCampina before joining DFI Retail in Singapore in 2016. DFI is a large retail operator; in Hong Kong it operates brands like Wellcome, Market Place, 7-Eleven, Mannings and IKEA. At DFI, I am responsible for finance, property strategy and sustainability.

I am pleased to join the board and look forward to adding value by strengthening the membership base and organising value-added events. The Diversity, Equality & Inclusion (DE&I) Committee organises events on a regular basis, during which members can discuss issues of specific interest with fellow businesspeople, foster new networks and promote their areas of interest.

Some fun facts:

- We are living in Sai Kung, where our daughter goes to school
- I enjoy cycling, running and hiking

STARTING NEW ADVENTURES

Previous Chair of the PR&Pub Committee and Board member Rinske Kuiper, recently moved out of Hong Kong, after twelve years in the city – and twelve years of active involvement in the Dutch community in Hong Kong.

How long did you live in HK?

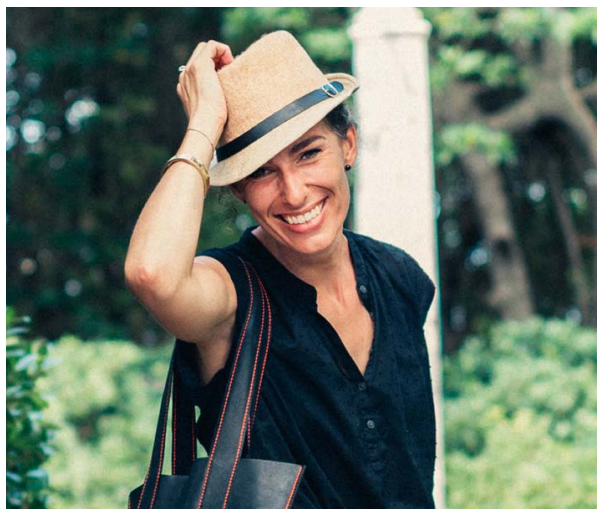
I moved to Hong Kong in October 2010 with my then partner. He got a job offer in Hong Kong and I was about to finish my second master's degree thesis. The move to the concrete jungle was the final push to get that thesis done. When we first arrived in 2010, I remember being so surprised by all the nature and green that I had never expected to see. This was also the time before Eric Kayser came to Hong Kong and when yoghurt ice cream shops popped up in every other store.

Please tell us a bit about your involvement in the Dutch community in Hong Kong.

Soon after arriving in Hong Kong, I was invited to become the chairperson of the Dutch Association in Hong Kong which started my involvement in the Dutch community. Some expats don't enjoy spending time with Dutch people – I mean, why would they move to the other side of the world to still spend time with fellow countrymen? However, for me spending time with other Dutch people made me feel like I was home in a country I didn't quite understand just yet. I enjoyed meeting lots of like-minded people and making the Dutch Association a younger, more diverse organisation. Our board meetings always consisted of lots of great ideas, numerous bottles of wine and resulted in great events. Not only did I enjoy creating a diverse, safe, and open community, but the people in the board also became my friends. Some of them are still amongst my closest friends. After three years, it was time to hand over the chairperson's baton. I stayed involved with their magazine until this was moved to online only. I think it's great for the environment, but I also thought that would be a nice natural end to my involvement after six years.

How was your experience as a board member of the Dutch Chamber?

As part of my role as Sales Support manager for Royal ERU, I spent a lot of time working in China. I loved spending time there and found myself often looking at more ways in which I could further strengthen the relation between Chinese and Dutch businesses. Clearly, I couldn't leave the Dutch community alone, and I asked to be part of the China Committee of the Dutch Chamber.



When the previous chair of the PR&Pub community left Hong Kong, it felt like a natural move to join the board of the Dutch Chamber. Even though we try to be as environmentally friendly as possible, as the former chair of the PR&Pub Committee, I am happy that we still have a printed magazine. We reduced the print runs and whoever doesn't want to receive a paper version can let us know so you can read the magazine online. I'm proud that we raised and discussed topics that are considered tricky, like diversity and equality, challenges in China, hurdles when it comes to management, happiness on the work floor etc. And I'm incredibly happy we started sharing articles on LinkedIn to broaden the reach of both the chamber and the articles of the magazine. As a board member, I loved being the different voice, I enjoyed trying to overcome stigmas and be the female voice in a (still) male-dominated environment.

What's next?

Currently living in France, I am not sure what's next yet. I'm still consulting for SofaSale Service Ltd, which gives me a nice stable base in Europe. We inherited a house here that needs a lot of work, so I am teaching myself how to be an electrician, woodworker, gardener, and all around handyman. I am enjoying the break from a fast-paced, hardworking twelve years in Hong Kong. But I don't doubt I'll be on a board of an organisation here soon.

We are an independent, member-driven, non-governmental, non-profit business association which serves to facilitate business in Hong Kong and Greater China for its members by providing networking, knowledge sharing and company profiling opportunities.

As the representative body of Dutch business in Hong Kong, we maintain close relationships with both the Dutch and the Hong Kong SAR governments.

DutchCham Gold Members



Membership & Annual fees

• Gold Member	HK\$ 20,000
• Corporate Member	HK\$ 8,500
• SME Member	HK\$ 3,500
• Associate Member	HK\$ 3,500
• Young Professional	HK\$ 750
• Start-up Member	HK\$ 1,750
• Overseas Member	HK\$ 2,500

Joining fee waived for 2022

DUTCHCHAM COMMITTEES

PR & Pub Committee



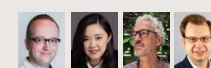
Annemarelle van Schayik (Chair) • Zuba Adham-Bos (editor) • Monique de Raaij • Annemarijn de Boer
• Iris Barzilay • Emily Tunderman

China Committee



Michiel Mak (Chair) • River Stone • Annemarelle van Schayik • Quinten Kah • Graham Wladimiroff
• Bianca Dubbelaar • Tom Bakker

SME Committee



Jeffrey Broer (Chair) • Jackie To • Bert Bulthuis • Tom Bakker

Tax Committee



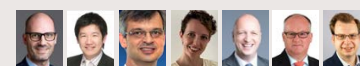
Willem Jan Hoogland (Chair) • Eric Kampman • Jerry Lin • Bas Sijmons • Tom Bakker

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Committee



Tom van der Lee (Chair) • Kashmira Daryanani • Emily Tunderman

Finance Committee



Edgar Ultee (Chair) • Lapman Lee • Martyn van Wensveen • Liza Jansen • Frédéric Radelet • Herald van der Linde • Tom Bakker

Creative Committee



Anoeshka Krijnen • Annemarijn de Boer • May Yeung • Emily Tunderman

Young Professional Committee



Jerry Lin • Julietta van der Ploeg • Fleur Schreurs • Pieter Hoppenbrouwers • Emily Tunderman

PHILIPS

sonicare



Philips Sonicare AI Toothbrush

SenseIQ
Adaptive Intensity

All-in-One
Brush Head

AI-Powered
Sonicare App



^ Based on a study of over 1,800 dental professionals (dentists and hygienists) conducted in United States, Germany, Japan, China, Canada, Netherlands, Australia, Switzerland, Italy, Czech Republic, Slovakia.

